

PAM WHITMER ON RALPH'S FAMILY

Ralph Whitmer



It was snowing when Ralph and Virgie moved from Alpine to Cortez, Colorado. While they were moving, they had a cow that was calving. They waited for days but finally decided to put her in a cattle truck. Unfortunately, the calf's ears and tail froze off. It was maybe 40 below when they left Alpine. And the window was broken in the truck.

When Ralph and Virgie moved to Cortez, I went out to watch them brand the cows. It was my first time. I was put in charge of numbering the cows as they were branded. I stopped at one point. Stopped in my tracks so to speak. Ralph came over and asked if I got 'that number' of the last calf. "No, I didn't get it," I said. He asked me, "What's wrong?" Having been physically abused as a child, I asked him a childish question, "Doesn't that hurt?" referring to the branding. He sat down beside me and said, "Because of the evils in the world, stealing, etc. it's a necessary evil (to brand cows) but I don't promote evil in any form." It was a beautiful way to explain it to me so I wouldn't worry about it anymore.

When our oldest son, Shane, got a BB gun for Christmas, he immediately went outside and started shooting, when he shot some of the windows out of Ralph's shop. I told him, "Grandpa's going to be mad, mad, mad." I started marching him into the house. And I thought, here he goes (Uncle Ralph). Then when Shane saw Grandpa Ralph, he said, "Grandpa, I shot a hole in the window with my BB gun." Pam was waiting for things to start flying. Instead, Ralph said, "It's okay. Just promise Grandpa you won't do it again." He kept him on his lap and loved on him. He

was such a gentle loving man.

I was a junior in high school when Ralph and Virgie's son, Ben, was killed. He was born in 1938. He died in 1961. He was only 23 years old. He was killed in a head on car wreck. The first person to come across it, was Allan, his brother. Then his cousin, Ben Swapp, his mother's family, who was a policeman, came on the scene. Ben died in Allan's arms. When they were at the funeral in Kirtland, Ralph was absolutely broken hearted. He and Virgie wept at the casket. I could hardly stand it. Grandma Virgie had them open the casket twice before they could say goodbye to him and bury him. Ralph didn't have a mean bone in his body. The lady who was also hit, was killed too and she had little children.

Uncle Ralph had great compassion. He gave me permission to heal from my problems. I suffered from physical child abuse while I was growing. I was very traumatized when I married into the family. Uncle Ralph took me under his wing so to speak and always loved on me and comforted me. I totally healed from my abuse and give the credit to my father-in-law.

LOOK-A-LIKES

This is an interesting sidelight that has nothing to do with Ralph or Virgie. Uncle Cecil's grandson, Jared, and my son, Shane, look exactly alike. Allan, who has passed on, always said that Shane looked like Uncle Don. And now both of the boys resemble Uncle Don.

