



ETHEL WHITMER

March 31, 1914 - 1985



Historical Profile

Ethel was born on 31 March 1914, in Alpine, Arizona to her Father Angus Van Meter Whitmer (35 years old) and her mother Jennie (30 years old) as the eighth of 17 children. Her older siblings, Angus, Ralph, Cecil, Harold, Chuck and Genevieve were 11, 10, 7, 5, 4 and 2 years old when she was born. One brother Lealand Claude died shortly after birth of whooping cough on 8 August 1906, before Ethel was born. Another brother Ray V, who had been born in 1915, died of pneumonia on 3 May 1917 when Ethel was only 2 years old. The year of her birth, World War I was sweeping across Europe. It continued to rage through 1917 and brought the birth of Ethel's little brother Afton in 1917.

According to David Keith Whitmer the Whitmer children were raised, "in the lusty rugged and amazingly beautiful White Mountains of Alpine, Arizona where the mountains reach 8,000 feet in the sky of neverland. Alpine is now a resort but in the early 1900s it was a very small place where farmers raised their cattle, vegetables and did whatever it took to feed their families. The Whitmer children knew the Blue well, a place where the cattle

grazed in the winter. All the children were raised riding horses. It was a place where everyone had to work and work hard. Seventeen children were born here. Four died.

1918 brought the end of the war, but also the spread of the flu pandemic to the world, and the birth of another brother, Lawrence, to Ethel's family. In 1919 Two births took place far away that would greatly impact Ethel's life. Her future husband William John Pringle was born in Pennsylvania and another future husband John Becker Shearer was born in New York City, New York.

Then in 1921 a little sister Mary was born, followed by Von, a little brother, in 1922. Then in 1925 twin sisters Faye and Fern were born into the family. 3 years later in 1928 twin sisters Bertha and Blanche would be born but not survive the birth. These were the last of her siblings to be born to her parents. Ethel was 14 at the time.

One year later, when 15 years of age, Ethel experienced the collapse of the stock market that would bring about the Great Depression beginning in 1930, greatly impacting the Whitmer family sending several of her siblings throughout the West



*Ethel
&
Bill*



in search of good work and requiring her large family to work together to make ends meet.

Ethel's family were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and according to her younger sister Fern's account, "Church and religion was our whole life. We all got up and went to Church. I don't know if I learned a lot. My parents were so busy I wasn't given much time. Church and Sunday School on Sunday, Relief Society and Mutual on Tuesdays, Primary Wednesdays. Dances on the weekends. Family prayer sometimes around my parent's bed."

Ethel and Genevieve were said to be almost like conjoined twins. Both were beautiful. Both had a wonderful place in my life. They were both beauticians. Both resided in Silver City, New Mexico most of their lives.



Ethel didn't marry until she was 31 years of age. William John Pringle, known by many as "Bill" married Ethel on 25 November 1945. She was 5 years his senior. The two of them moved to Silver City, New Mexico where they did well financially. They never had children and instead devoted their lives to business. Aunt Ethel had her beauty shops, and Uncle Bill had a hardware store and managed a bus depot as well.

New Mexico was known for its desert climate, rugged wilderness, and for being a land of enchantment. Oil and gas production, agriculture, and mining were main industries in this mostly rural state during Genevieve's time there. As advances in air conditioning made living in the desert more bearable the population grew accordingly, rising from just under 200,000 in 1900 to nearly 700,000 by 1950.

The next decade brought the dawn of the Atomic age and the end of World War II (1945), the Korean War (1950), a Polio Vaccine in 1953, and the Vietnam conflict stretching from 1955-1975. During this time Ethel would see her father Angus Van Whitmer pass away at the age of 76. Ethel would have been 41 at the time. Ethel's mother Jennie would live another 11 years until 1967 when she would also pass away at the age of 83. Sometime between these two events the marriage between Ethel and Bill came to an end. That same year as the death of her mother, on 19 August 1967, Ethel would remarry to a man named John Becker Shearer.

This was a time of great change in culture, in technology, and in global events. Martin Luther King would lead the nation in a civil rights movement. United States astronauts would land on the moon in 1969. Beginning in 1970 Ethel would begin to see her siblings also begin to pass, starting with her dear sister Genevieve in 1970 at the age of 61, and her brother Angus in 1977 at the age of 74.

In 1980 when Ethel was 60 years old her second husband John Shearer passed away. They had been married for 12 years. Two years later in 1982 her older brother Ralph would pass away at the age of 77 followed the next year in 1983 by her brother Cecil at the age of 75. Then in 1985 at the age of 71 Ethel passed to the other side. At her passing, she reportedly left a great deal of money to the family, having no children to leave it to, her younger sister Mary tried to distribute it evenly to those that were still living.