

## THE LIFE of SUSIE MONLUX CAIRNS

Charles Monlux , a young widower, left the family home in Ohio after the Civil War's end, spent some time with Iowa relatives before settling in Spencer, South Dakota with his second wife, Ellen Frances Morris. To this union Susie Monlux and her brother, Charles W. were born. Susie, two years older than Charles was born May 27, 1885. The farm family went through many hard times, crop failures, cyclones, blizzards and droughts as many other Dakotans did.

Susie and Charles attended country schools nearby. Getting to school was a challenge in winter with heavy deep snow covering roads and fences and with severe low temperatures.

When Susie was thirteen years old the family left South Dakota and went to the Palouse country in Washington State and helped with the planting and harvesting in large grain fields owned by a relative.

Susie graduated from high school and enrolled at nearby Washington State College at Pullman. She did not finish college due to a bout with typhoid fever. Doctors gave up on her recovery, told her parents she could not live but unknown to them she had a moment of consciousness just long enough to hear the doctor's remark and at that instant she made up her mind that she would prove him wrong. That determined attitude remained with Susie all during her lifetime.

The Monlux family was looking for independence so about 1904 they left for Idaho, settling in Boise on a farm on the bench(south Curtis near the freeway) and a few years later they moved to a small farm(Benjamin Lane and Emerald area). This farm was in the family name until 1964. While living here Susie rode her horse to Boise to attend Link's School of Business.

At this time large and small canals were being built to carry water that would soon come to the Boise Valley when Arrowrock Dam would be finished(about 1914). Susie worked many months with the kitchen crew that followed the workmen who worked with their horses and equipment to excavate for the canals, such as the New York and the Ridenbaugh. Mr. Morrison and Mr. Knudsen, who later formed the world-known MK Company were in charge of the irrigation project that Susie enjoyed working with.

On Sundays Susie was a faithful Sunday teacher at Cole School at Fairview and Cole.

Susie packed fruit at several packing plants that were established along the railroad between Meridian and Boise(Beatty and Perkins). It was at a fall packing time that Susie met Charles Cairns who managed the packing businesses. They were married in Boise on May 8, 1912 and moved to Charles' Meridian farm. She became a busy farm wife and mother of three, Helen, Donald, and Arnold(1914,1916 1920 respectively). She tended a big garden, made and sold butter, cooked for hired help, canned many quarts and various other activities that are farm related. Susie really preferred outside work and finally took over the dairy part of the daily chores. She thoroughly enjoyed driving a team of horses for some jobs around the farm.

Susie became a very active part of the Ladies Aid of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Meridian serving as president, 1922-1934. The group did much to raise funds for the Church by cooking dinners and inviting the community, cooked food sales, bazaars and other projects that came along.

In 1924 the Occident was formed. This was a civic group.. Susie was a charter member and



served three times as president, the last time she was in her mid-eighties. She accepted in order to keep the club going. Much credit must be given to the Occident Club for establishing the Meridian Library. Susie was always available and willing to help on any worthwhile activities that came along. She was a tireless worker.

Susie always had a great interest in schools and education. She served several years on the Meridian High School Board.

For fifteen years she taught the Grandmothers Sunday School Class in the Methodist Church.

From 1954 until her death in February, 1975, Susie had several bouts with cancer but she always fought back as she did with typhoid fever as a college girl—that same attitude of “I’ll show them!”.

Susie Monlux Cairns is buried in the family plot at the Meridian Cemetery beside Charles and son, Donald, who died tragically at the family farm June 21, 1934.