

History Question of the Month

What Union resident demonstrated the qualities exemplified by our faithful, resourceful, pioneer women, who overcame extreme difficulties in raising their families settling our city?

Answer

Mary Maude Smith was the daughter of Frank Edell Smith and Katy Marie Jacobson. She was born in South Cottonwood (Murray) on November 7, 1889. She was about one year old when her family moved to Granite. The family lived on a 20 acre farm east of Sandy for a while before moving to a farm at the mouth of Bell's Canyon. Fortunately she learned many skills that would come in handy raising her children and running a farm.

Mary Maudie Smith, married Clarence Proctor, March 28, 1911 in Union, Utah. They initially settled in a home east of Clarence's parent's place before moving to the property given to them by Clarence's father located at 1882 E Creek Road. They, and Clarence's two brothers dug a 250 feet deep well on the hill above their place to provide water for their homes. The couple also built a house near Creek Road, as well as a cellar, coal shed, chicken coop, pig pen, barn and stable. They raised hay and grain to feed their cows. They planted a small orchard and shade trees and raised berries and currants to supplement Clarence's income, working at the Murray smelter. On February 7, 1920 Clarence died from the flu, leaving Maude with three small children to raise and a farm to run.

Three years after Clarence died, Maude married Rufus Hyrum Walker. He was the brother of Clarence's brother's (Ira) wife. They had one son before the couple was divorced. When Maude's oldest son Allen graduated from high school, he took over full responsibilities for running the farm. He also became partners with his uncle Melvin and ran his grandparents farm. In the summer of 1932 or 1933, the house burned down while the family was in Salt Lake. The neighbors helped in providing furniture and clothing so they were able to set up housekeeping in the detached two car garage on the property. Ed Howcroft and Clyde Proctor rebuilt the house on the old foundation. It was much like the old house, with the exception of an indoor bathroom that was added.

During the winter of 1933-34, blizzard conditions stripped off the curtains of the chicken coops. Maude and her son, Allen, worked all night trying to repair them to prevent the coops from filling up with snow and freezing the chickens. In the spring of 1934, Maude was severely burned on the face and hands with hot roofing tar. She was hospitalized in intensive care for some time. On August 9, 1940, her son, Allen, was killed in an accident in Sandy, on State Street. He had run out of gas and was pushing the car across State Street when he was struck by a tanker truck and killed. Maude also took

care of her aging mother and an aunt. At age 76 Maude tripped and broke her hip. She underwent surgery and was doing well when she suddenly died on April 9, 1966.