

Biography - Aistead

Local History

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Yakima woman awarded first pioneer certificate

By BETH McCormick
Herald-Republic correspondent

Mrs. Lorena (Lola) F. King Aistead, 88, says she has done just about everything in her lifetime except fly in an airplane.

Last week, she received the first Pioneer Certificate awarded in Yakima Valley by Washington State Genealogical Society. The certificate verifies that Aistead is a pioneer, born in Washington Territory prior to statehood.

She is hesitant to talk about her life, saying her father really was the one with the interesting history. He was kidnapped by an uncle from Germany to work on his ships, she said. He skipped ship while docked at Port Townsend, ending up in Haddlock on the Olympic Peninsula. He changed his name to King, as he didn't want his parents to find him and force him to return to Germany.

Aistead speculated her parents probably met while her father was in business. He owned a small store in Haddlock.

Aistead was the oldest of five children and recalled growing up in the small mill town. Her father also worked as a pilot, steering ships through the treacherous Straits of Juan De Fuca and the San Juan Islands.

She said electricity was something she grew up without, and remembers she always wondered how the wireless telegraph machine worked when she would accompany her family to Port Townsend, the largest city in the area.

Aistead attended Bellingham Normal to become a teacher, but after completing two years, married her husband, George, at the age of 17.

They were married in Bellingham and resided there while her husband worked out a con-



LORENE AISTEAD
... 'seen everything'

tract to a shingle bolt camp. Her first child, Alta, was born in Bellingham.

They moved back to Port Townsend, where her husband worked as a fireman on Coast Guard boats.

When everyone was talking about the homestead land available in Canada, she and her husband pulled up stakes and moved to the wilderness near Alberta, where they homesteaded 160 acres. There he managed a country store and her second child, Edna, was born.

The house they built there was the first frame house constructed in the area, she recalled.

As soon as they completed the residency criteria to own their homestead in Canada, Aistead said they moved to Renton and her husband worked on the waterfront.

After a long career on the waterfront, including being presi-

dent of the Longshoremen's Union, George Aistead decided to retire to the farm.

The war had just broke out when they moved to their 750-acre dairy farm in Easton. Planning to hire much of the work done, they found there were no employees to be found. They had moved to the farm for a change and found it was tough to retire, running the dairy without much help. The farm was a family venture, she said, with her daughter Alta and her husband as partners.

Aistead said they moved to Yakima in 1946, where she has remained since.

"I've seen everything," she reminisced about her life. "I've sure had a full life, I tell you that much."

She said she has written a history of her life over the years. She remembers as a young girl her teacher saying that she didn't think anyone in the class would see another turn of the century when 1900 arrived.

"I'd like to give it a try," she smiled. She will celebrate her 100th birthday in two years.

To be eligible to receive a Pioneer Certificate, honorees must have resided within the borders of Washington on or before Nov. 11, 1889, the date the territory became Washington State.

Applications forms may be obtained from the Washington State Genealogical Society Pioneer Project, D. Ackerman, chairman, 3235 Alderwood Ave., Bellingham or by writing P.O. Box 1422, Olympia, Wash., 98507.

Information may also be obtained by contacting a local member of the Yakima Valley Genealogical Society at 248-1328.