

Odella Irene Born was born September 4, 1917 to Walter and Lydia (Senske) Born. Her parents came from Waseca, Minnesota to file on a homestead claim near Meers, South Dakota.

Later they worked for Andy Feeny. They also worked on a road grading crew for Gid Creager. Lydia cooked for the road crew, usually there were twenty-four men and sometimes as many as thirty. Odella was the second child. Ervin, her older brother, was born in 1901.

When she was five years old, her parents moved to Sully County from the east of the river and worked on the A.W. Ewert ranch near Blunt, SD. He owned it for a short time, but they lived there for nearly twenty years.

Ervin worked on farms and some of the time helped at home. Odella attended school at South Lake School and for the most part of her grade school days she rode horse back the two miles. She remembered her first day of school clearly. Her mother rode with her to the schoolhouse. Lydia rode a big, tall, sorrel horse and Odella rode a Shetland pony. The men at home teased her and Hank Lauing said the first thing she could expect from school was a good licking. Scared as she was, it didn't turn out that way; however, her folks instructed her that when she first got to school she was to say to her teacher, "My name is Odella Irene Born. I'm seven years old, and my birthday is September fourth, and I was born in 1917."

Odella refers to them as happy times. Her teacher was Elizabeth Brown. Odella loved to do artwork and brought home illustrations of the stories she read at school: "The Little Red Hen," "Chicken Licken," "Peter Rabbit," and others. She traced pictures, colored them and had them all over the walls at home.

The thirties were a period of hard times; dust storms, drought and grasshoppers. She remembers it all so well. Her folks sold some nice yearling heifers for \$13 a head to John Downes, who lived in the "Pocket" south of Harrold. Feed, on the other hand was expensive to buy. They paid a dollar a bushel for shelled corn, \$18 a ton for baled straw and \$21 a ton for baled hay.

She attended high school in Harrold and Onida and graduated in 1936. She worked part time doing housework for \$3.50 a week and finally \$5.00 a week. She wanted so badly to go to college so she could teach, but there simply wasn't enough money to do so. She did save her money and bought eight head of calves.

In 1941 her folks pioneered again, moving to a two roomed house in the "Pocket" next to the river. They purchased some land from Boots Gregg for a little less than \$5.00 an acre. Some thought it was a big mistake for people at their age to be moving forty miles from town; however it proved otherwise, and they were never sorry they moved. They raised some cattle and took in some to pasture. They were able to build on to their little place and paid the entire debt within five years.

In 1942, Kenneth Gregg and Odella were married. They too pioneered, starting out with each having eight head of cattle and a few horses. They didn't have a car, but their mailman, Porter Hall brought groceries out for 25 cents a week. They lived in a rented log house in Joe Creek and in the following year began building a little place on her parents land. Their first house consisted of two rooms and they paid \$100 for it. Over a period of years they were able to build more and also bought some land. Odella earned her teaching certificate and taught for two years, before she had Arthur, her only child, who was born 1946.

Along the way during her married life, Odella taught school. She first procured a Second Grade Certificate by attending summer school for six weeks and then taking a state examination. She was never able to go to college but for many years she took correspondence classes, workshops, extension work and summer school. She also earned college credits by taking two two tours; one to Mexico in 1972, one to the Bahamas in 1973, and one to Nashville, Tennessee. At the age of sixty, she obtained her degree in Elementary Education.

Some of the schools that she taught at were Boot Bar, Busy Bee, Hidden Valley, DeGrey, Plainveiw, Riverdale, Snake Butte, and Harrold. She taught for 29 ½ years. She enjoyed teaching.

In 1978, she moved to Blunt and taught 7 years at Harrold. After her retirement in 1985, she was very active at the Blunt Senior Citizens Center. She even learned to play cards. During her later years, she moved in with Art and Jerilyn and the last few years of her life was a resident of the Highmore Health Care nursing home.

Odella loved animals and was known for her beautiful houseplants. She embroidered and crocheted in her spare time. She also played the guitar and enjoyed taking walks. People who knew Odella knew her to be a real lady.

She is survived by her son, Arthur (Jerilyn) Gregg of Harrold; her grandchildren: Danelle Gregg (Doug Bouvette), Bonnie (Kelly) Fuller, Becky (Tyler) McGregor, and Jim Gregg; her great grandchildren: Taylor, Sierra, and Haley McGregor.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Walter, and Lydia Born; and her brother, Ervin.

## *Celebrating the Life of*



## *Odella Irene Gregg*

1917 ~ 2011



She's honest, sincere, and humble  
 Her laughter and humor will make you smile.  
 Lend me your ear so we can talk about Odella for a while.  
 She comes from parents described to me  
 As good, down to earth, hard-working and kind.  
 Is it any wonder then, that she is the very same way?  
 This type of teacher is not easy to find.  
 She finished high school in Onida and then worked  
 For Boots Gregg as their hired gal.  
 Cleaning and cooking for 8-10 men,  
 Another job she did well.  
 And then there was marriage and teaching and  
 Motherhood at hand – with her love for animals  
 and Oak Hollow with its beautiful land.  
 They tell me you drove a model A back and forth to school  
 and that the kids there knew you were no fool!  
 Was said they ran off 4 teachers before you taught at Busy Bee.  
 You had them eating out of the palm of your hand,  
 Made learning fun, that's what they told me.  
 I was visiting with a good neighbor and his wife –  
 Said he worked for you for 3 years; it was  
 the most enjoyable time of his life.  
 Your home reflected your lifestyle,  
 It was the talk of the town.  
 Filled with collectibles, a painting on the wall,  
 And full of young people every Sunday from all around.  
 You took loving care of your parents,  
 Had one of the first phone lines put in for that reason.  
 You met life with such excitement and love for each season.  
 You have put in many extra hours above what was expected,  
 And on all of your students this is reflected.  
 You've loved your guitar and music;  
 Gave lessons to kids who couldn't afford it at all.  
 More of your dedication to children –  
 In our eyes you walk tall.  
 You have asked for so little  
 and given so much in return.  
 From your example there is much to learn.  
 Unkind words have never been your style,  
 You're too busy using your time wisely, always with a smile.  
 You have liked to travel and broaden your views  
 And whoever follows your footsteps  
 Will have to fill big shoes.

---by Connie Jones

*In Loving Memory of*

# *Odella Irene Gregg*

## **PRAYER SERVICE**

7:00 p.m., Thursday, May 12, 2011  
 Luze Funeral Home  
 Highmore, South Dakota

## **FUNERAL SERVICE**

10:00 a.m., Friday, May 13, 2011  
 United Methodist Church  
 Harrold, South Dakota

## **MINISTER**

Pastor Jenene Earl

## **CASKETBEARERS**

Dan Hall  
 Doug Bouvette

Dan Lamb  
 Tyler McGregor

Dick Hansen  
 Kelly Fuller

## **READING OF POEM**

Bonnie Fuller

## **READING OF OBITUARY**

Ronda Wollman

## **USHER**

Bill Feller

## **PIANIST**

Katherine Hieb

## **SOLOIST**

Dawn Rinehart – “One Day At A Time”

## **CONGREGATIONAL HYMNS**

“Amazing Grace” – “In the Garden”

## **INTERMENT**

Medicine Hill Cemetery  
 Harrold, South Dakota



Highmore, South Dakota  
[www.familyfuneralhome.net](http://www.familyfuneralhome.net)