

Idahoan Legacy Roots: The Ingram Family

A beautiful drive along the Clearwater River takes you to the town of Orofino, Idaho. My Great Grandparents William Bryan Ingram and Bessie May Johnson lived here and in the surrounding areas from the 1920s until their deaths in June 6, 1963 and October 14, 1977 respectively.

William Jennings and Sarah Ellen (Bryant) Ingram

The Ingram's family found their way to Idaho from Kentucky and Kansas. William Jennings Ingram and Sarah Ellen Bryant, were from Kentucky and William Bryan was



William Jennings and Sarah Ellen (Bryant) Ingram Family

Born in Kansas on March 2, 1897. William Jennings Ingram was a staunch Democrat and supported the work of William Jennings Bryan, a leader of the Democratic Party. So when his son was born, he took part of his own name and part of Bryan's and named him William Bryan Ingram. By 1910, the family had found their way to Nez Perce, Idaho as per Federal census.

Phillip McLanthon and Mary (Groom) Johnson



Bessie May Johnson's father also came west from Illinois. Her father Phillip McLanthon Johnson born May 7, 1854, then later died on April 12, 1927, crossed the plains in 1865 with his parents settling first in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Here is where he met and married Mary Groom on December 24, 1881.

Photograph of Phillip M. and Mary (Groom) Johnson

They then homesteaded in Peck Idaho. Bessie was their only daughter, one of five children born to the couple, born May 14, 1903.

William Bryan and Bessie May (Johnson) Ingram

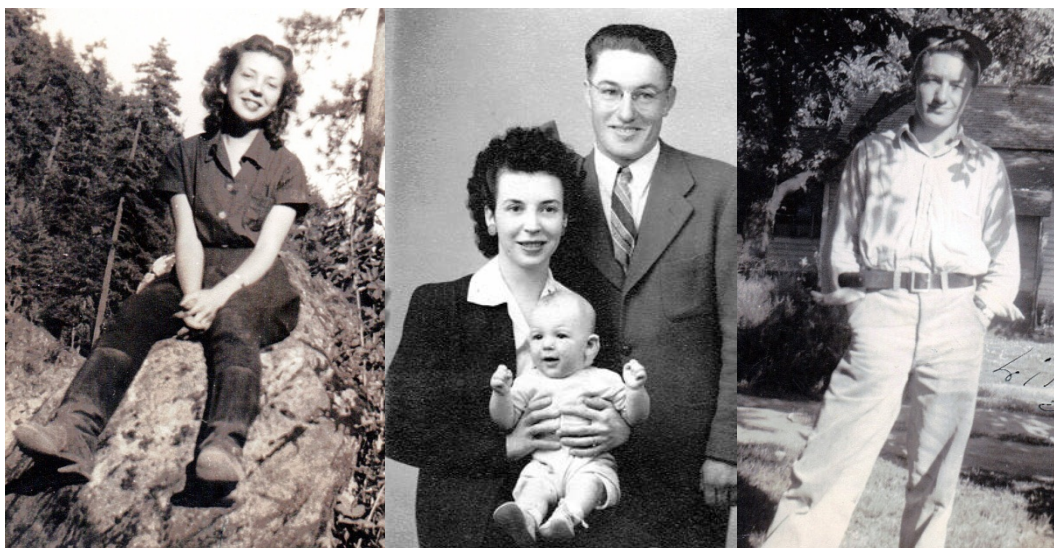


William and Bessie married in Lewiston, Idaho on April 10, 1920. They had three children, one being my Grandmother Lovetta May Ingram, born March 20, 1921 and then died May 4, 1996.

Photograph of William & Bessie (Johnson) Ingram

Originally from Peck, Idaho, they leased a farm on Russell Ridge outside of Nez Perce, Idaho on the southern edge of the Camas Prairie. In the summer of 1937, my Grandfather Leland Leroy Litchfield, born May 8, 1920 and then died August 22, 2001, worked on their farm hoeing beans and fell in love with Lovetta.

Leland Leroy and Lovetta May (Ingram) Litchfield



Left: Lovetta Ingram (1939); **Center:** Litchfield Family; **Right:** Leland Litchfield

They were married July 19, 1940, which Bessie noted in her diary entries:

July 12 -- Hot awful hot. Litchfields came up for Lovetta taking her home with them to become Mrs. Leland Litchfield soon. I'll sure miss the kid. Oh gee I will but these things have to happen I guess. . . .

And then on the day of the wedding:

July 19 -- Hot oh me got up bright & early and went to Lewiston to see Lovetta and Litch married. Ate dinner 14 of us at the Majestic café. Had a lovely dinner. . . .

In 1943, William and Bessie moved again, to another farm outside of Orofino. Here, they hired transient workers who came by the farm looking for work. This was when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps were being operated across the country employing young men during the depression. One such worker was nicknamed Popeye

and became a dear friend to the Ingrams. He was sent to fight in WWII, and became a prisoner of war. He wrote to them from the Philippine Military Prison camp: ". . . Dear folks. Longing to see you. Wonder how you are . . . ?" And as Bessie always believed, sure enough one day their dear friend showed up on their doorstep, a survivor of the war's atrocities including the Bataan Death March.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Ingrams ran fire prevention camps for the Clearwater Timber Protection Association. William ran crews of young men piling brush and building fire roads while Bessie cooked for the crews.

Photograph of Bessie & Lovetta



William had passed before I was born, but I remember being very young and visiting Bessie at her trailer in Orofino. She had a flower garden and this is my only memory. They were buried side by side in the Weseman Cemetery in Orofino, Idaho. I'm privileged to have family members and documents to help me put their life story together. However, there is a certain thrill to think of all I don't know about them. I think that's what people would call the genealogy bug, and I'm happy to have been bitten by it. --- Rozalyn Litchfield Larson, the Great Granddaughter of William and Bessie Ingram.



Submitted by Rozalyn Larson on May 3, 2012

URL: http://idgenweb.org/legacy_roots/ingram_wj-se.html

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