

## BRAVE IDAHO PIONEER WOMAN CALLED TO WELL EARNED REST

By

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Another of Idaho's valiant pioneer characters, in the person of Mrs. Jane Elizabeth Billingsley, has ceased her earthly journey and passed to her reward. Monday, the 2nd of November, 1934, at the home of her daughter, Mrs. B. B. Harger, in Homedale, Mrs. Billingsley calmly and peacefully went to sleep. The passing was in direct contrast to the many years of diligence, activity and service which characterized the years of her pioneer life.



Born in Sheffield, England, May 18, 1854, she came with her parents, William and Elizabeth Symms Thorpe to the United States, at the age of seven years. They came by rail to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they joined an overland caravan crossing the plains in a covered wagon; the children walking the greater part of the way; enduring all the hardships of pioneer days.

Mr. Thorpe had been in Utah about two years when he was accidentally killed. The mother left with 10 children endured hardships that are almost unbelievable. After two or three years, the older sons by this time being nearly grown, the family moved to Samaria, a small village near Malad, Idaho. Here Mrs. Billingsley grew to young womanhood assisting in the activities and duties in connection with a pioneer home. Mrs. Billingsley was a truly self-educated woman. At the early age of 10 years she was engaged by a neighbor lady to do some spinning and the recompense which she received was schooling or lessons during the evening hours. At that time there were no school advantages in that part of the state. From this meager beginning she made the most of every advantage and opportunity for an education. She had an especial fondness for history and for nature study. In later years she had an intense admiration for Abraham Lincoln and every article or story in which the famous emancipator figured were eagerly read. Nature's beauties, the flowers, the sun rises and sun sets and the scenery of hill and dale were constantly a delight and joy to this staunch pioneer woman.

Jane Elizabeth Thorpe and Archie Billingsley were married in Boise, October 22, 1872, in the parlors of the first Overland hotel. The Billingsley home was established near Hagerman, on the ranch later known as the O. P. Johnson ranch. Mr. Billingsley maintained a large hay ranch, which at that time was an extensive enterprise, as he sold feed to the Wells-Fargo Express Co., doing the greatest volume of business of its kind. As we remember the railroad had not yet been built west of Pocatello at this date.

It was during the time that the Billingsley's lived at Hagerman that for a period of two years Mrs. Billingsley did not see a white woman. The only assistance she had in her home and with her children was that of the friendly Indian Women. From different times over an extension of years Mrs. Billingsley made a 200 mile journey from Hagerman to Samaria to her parental home for care at the time of the birth of her children. At the time the Bannock Indians went on the war path in 1878, a friendly Indian warned the Billingsley's of the danger and Mrs. Billingsley took her two small children and rode horseback many miles to a settlement fort for protection and safety.

Mrs. Billingsley, on several occasions, had personal experience in the stage hold-ups. One time while on a stage journey robbers held up the stage and the driver was killed.

Mr. Billingsley gradually worked into the cattle business and when the Snake river country became more settled by ranchers, he went north into the Wood River country where range was open and unrestricted. Here as before, the new and raw country afforded only pioneer advantages and experiences. At this time the home was established on Wood river near what later became known as Carey. For many years the home was in a small log cabin, and when later the new home, a frame house, was built it was the first of its kind in the valley. Always interested in civic and educational advantages for their children the Billingsley home early became a social center. In order to more effectively bring this