



# Elsie Rinehart A Legacy of Love



"I believe in the holiness of friendship, knowing that my life is a tapestry, woven from the silken threads of many beautiful lives that have touched mine." So wrote Elsie Rinehart on January 1, 1978 at age 95.

Born Nov. 29, 1882, in Cincinnati Ohio, the youngest of four children, Mrs. G.R. Rinehart passed away at Cardston Alberta Dec. 15, 1978. Spanning a period of 96 years, her life was an example of rising above difficult circumstances and proving there is beauty in every stage of life.

As a young woman, she earned a B.A. degree at the University of Cincinnati and became a teacher. Later at the state University at Columbus, she attained her Bachelor of Science degree. It was there that she met her future husband, Rus Rinehart. They were married more than 66 years.

In 1918, the Rineharts moved to a ranch south of Cardston, within sight of her beloved "Old Chief" mountain, and bordering on Montana. The city girl who loved people and savored happiness, beauty and fun, now lived all the rigors, hardship, and loneliness of the pioneer

woman: Undaunted, she worked at bettering her prairie environment.

Old Chief school was built in 1918-1919, but after the first year no teacher was available. Mrs. Rinehart was asked to teach. Since she had a new baby, she agreed only when the school equipment was moved to a log house adjacent to the Rinehart ranch home. Here, with the aid of teen-age school girls, and a four year old son she managed school and home duties, often with the baby in the classroom. When the school inspector came, he reported it as the most informal school he had ever seen, but doing first class work.

To fulfill a need of an uplifting bond for the lonely rural women, the Neighbor's Club was formed in Mrs. Rinehart's kitchen in 1948. Upon hearing about Alberta Women's Institute's affiliation with A.C.W.W., this club soon became Old Chief W.I., with Mrs. Rinehart serving some time as president. She reached out and became District IV correspondent to the Lethbridge Herald. Her work with A.W.I. included help in compiling the "Book of Ideas", and her generosity in funding the publishing costs

with all moeny from sales going to A.W.I. For her dedication to A.W.I. efforts, she was awarded a life membership in this organization. Reaching out further, she attended the A.C.W.W. conference in Australia in 1962 at age 80, spending nine weeks touring and visiting rural groups there. No better ambassador could have been sent.

Space does not allow me to tell of her many other accomplishments, not of her involvement with eye banks through her daughter Helen, nor her involvement with youth groups such as the Campfire Girls. Suffice to say that wherever she saw a need, Mrs. Rinehart sought a solution. She was dedicated to making a better world. Even in death she carried through this resolve. She donated her body so that needed organs would be available to medicine.

Mrs. Rinehart loved people, flowers, gardens, books, letter friends, family—she loved life; and the way she lived it is an inspiration to all whose lives touched hers. She will be sadly missed but fondly remembered.

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Kathryn Habberfield