

## Emma Catherine Ploen

Sept. 15, 1892 - March 22, 1997

**SHELBY** - Emma was born in a sod home in Hayes County Nebraska Sept. 15, 1892. She was baptized in a German Lutheran church Nov. 13, 1892 by Pastor Firmhaber. This church was in the Red Willow Creek area and was made of sod; it was a building 24x30 feet and was 10 feet high. Her parents were German immigrants from the southern area of Russia north of Odessa; a colony called Hoffnungstahl, Russia.

Emma's grandfather, Jacob Ludwig Schaffert, and family left Russia in the 1880's and moved to Hayes County Nebraska where they homesteaded. Her father, John Jacob Schaffert married Louise Reutter June 14, 1886, and had a homestead 1 miles east of their church, St. Johns in Hayes County. After several years of drought and very poor crops the family moved to Shelby, Iowa. The family at that time had four children. Her father worked on the railroad. After Emma's mother died at a young age, Emma had to quit school and helped her father raise two younger sisters. This was the start of Emma helping others which she did throughout her life. Of her four sisters and one brother, only one, Lydia Fogarty of Grand Island, NE survives.

Emma married Hugo A. Ploen from Minden, June 14, 1922 in Omaha, NE. They made their home in Shelby for the rest of their lives. He was a banker in Shelby and they had two children, Rex and Carolyn. He died in 1960. She led a very active life. She was a member of the Presbyterian Church, Eastern Star, American Legion Auxiliary, Presbyterian Women and other ladies clubs. Emma loved to bake and cook. She enjoyed her garden which she maintained until age 95, was an avid reader and she kept track of sports, politics, science and the weather. She knew the dates of all of her families birthdays and never missed sending a greeting.

She is survived by her son, Rex (Ruth) of St. Augustine, FL; grandson, Jeffrey (Gail) Ploen, along with great grandchildren, Zachary, Gretchen and Hollis of Englewood, CO and grandson Lt. Col. Jason (Maureen) Ploen of Monterey, CA; daughter, Carolyn (George T.) Van of San Jose, CA; grandson, Gregory Van of Valencia, CA, and granddaughter, Heidi (Edward) Fallone, along with great grandchildren, Emma and Andrew, and other relatives.

Funeral services were held March 26, 1997, in the First United Presbyterian Church in Shelby with Pastor Mike Ploen officiating. Burial was in the family plot in Shelby. Knutson Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

