

Delora Elmira Crow Hulse

At a glance:

Born: March 22, 1868, San Bernardino, California

Died: May 29, 1944, Pioche, Lincoln County, Nevada

Maiden Name: Crow

Race/nationality/ethnic background: Caucasian

Married: James Madison Hulse (1886)

Children: Dora, Eva, Minnie, Emma, Ella, Effie, Stella, James G.

Primary city and county of residence and work: Pioche, Lincoln County, Nevada

Major fields of work: Wife, mother, daughter

Other role identities: Rebekah Sisterhood



Delora Crow Hulse

Photo courtesy of UNR Special Collections.

Lincoln County wife, mother persevered despite hardships

A humble life of family and simple pleasures can be as significant as a life of wealth and accomplishments. Such was the long and happy life of Delora Elmira Crow Hulse.

She was born on March 22, 1868, in San Bernadino, California to Hyrum Lewis and Martha Sanford Crow. She was one of nine children. The Crows were California pioneers, but in 1873, the family moved to Pioche, Nevada where Delora continued her schooling. As a young girl she suffered an accident playing ball when she fell and

severely injured her knee. Her knee became bent and even though the family traveled to San Francisco for additional medical attention, her knee remained in a bent position for the remainder of her life. However, this injury didn't stop her from living her life to the fullest.

In March 1886, at 18 years of age, she married James Madison Hulse in Panaca, Nevada. The March 27, 1886, edition of the *Pioche Weekly Record* reported, "the newlyweds and guests adjourned to the Panaca Social Hall where the happy crowd danced until broad daylight the next day. The ball was the largest and one of the most pleasant ever given in Panaca."



The Craw Sisters of Pioche. Emma Crow Matlie, Cecelia Crow Succetti. Delora Crow Hulse, Rose Crow Harris, Phoebe Crow Garrison.
Photo courtesy of the UNR Special Collections.

In 19th-century America, women were often defined and judged by how well they carried out the role of wife and mother. Women married and most often immediately became pregnant. Many women went on to have seven to 10 or more children. The 1850 census shows the infant mortality rate as 28%.



James Madison Hulse and Delora Hulse with daughters Eva, Winnie, Ella, and son James Gordon Hulse.
Photo courtesy of the UNR Special Collections.

was one of those communities.

Her grandson, Dr. James W. Hulse, recalls spending time with his grandmother in her three-room home down the street from the “Million Dollar Courthouse” located on Lacour Street in Pioche. He recalled she lived very simply. The house did have running water but no central heating. There was a coal stove but no indoor bathroom. As a young boy, he helped her with splitting wood and bringing coal in for the coal stove. He

Delora’s life followed that pattern. She had her first child in 1886 but tragically the infant girl passed away in 1887. Another six daughters were born during the years 1886 through 1900. Three of those little girls didn’t live past the age of 5. In 1905, a son, James, was born and the family was complete. Delora was now 39 years old.

During her lifetime, she had farmed with her husband in Horsethief Canyon, later called Hulse Canyon, and later the couple ran horses and cattle. “Low prices and hard times forced them to dispose of their cattle, ranch and holdings,” and her husband, James, then found employment in the local mines.

In 1923, he passed away from heart disease. Just two weeks later, their eldest daughter Eva Hulse Slaughter died, leaving her four children, ages 2 years old to 14 years old. Delora’s youngest child, James, was 18 years old and he quit high school and went to work in the mines to help support the family. Eva’s children were taken in by Delora’s sisters and the Hulse family, like many other families, persevered. Neighbors and family helped, and Delora raised chickens and sold eggs. Small town communities rallied around their neighbors when tragedy occurred, and Pioche certainly

spent many nights with his grandmother as his family lived just next door and as the oldest of seven children, he found solitude at the home of his grandmother. Additionally, as she became older, he read to her and wrote letters for her.

He said she was a card player, but at home only and her game was solitaire. However, the *Pioche Weekly Record* documented that a younger Delora Hulse, “Mrs. James Hulse,” was a Whist player and belonged to the Pioche Hiawatha Whist Club. In 1908 she won a “handsome sofa cushion, embroidered in autumn leaves, the work of Mrs. Freudenthal.”

His eyes twinkled when he said she was a “closet” smoker and preferred to “roll” her own. Prince Albert in a can was her choice of tobacco. Women did not smoke cigarettes in those days and certainly didn’t advertise it if they did. He mentioned there were women in Pioche whose apron pockets always had little brown burn holes created by cigarettes hastily hidden from prying eyes. Another recollection he made was his grandmother’s hair never turned white. She had dark brown hair until the day she died.

By the end of the First World War in 1918, America’s elderly were facing living the remaining years of their lives in total destitution. By the mid-1930s, lifetime savings of millions of people had been wiped out. Delora had been living very frugally ever since her husband died in 1923, dependent on money from family members and odd jobs. Dr. Hulse mentioned how independent his grandmother felt when she received her first \$25 check from Social Security and when it increased to \$30, she believed it was a mistake and returned it to the Social Security Administration.

During our interview, he showed me the ancient book in which his grandmother had listed births and deaths of family members. Generally, this information is contained in family Bibles, but Delora Hulse kept her information in the *“Everybody’s Complete Encyclopedia: A New and Up-to-date Dictionary of Facts and Essential Information in History, Politics, Science Biography, Art, Literature, Geography, Games, Sports and Religion.”* She was a woman who believed in science.

In May 1944, Delora Hulse fell and sustained a fractured femur. She was bedridden for a week during which Dr. Hulse stated she spent talking to her family and friends. On the 28th of May, she passed away and her death certificate lists the cause of death as “shock from fractured femur.”

Dr. Hulse told me his grandmother was a longtime member of the Rebekah organization which is a branch of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Their mission as stated on their website is: To live peaceably, do good unto all, as we have opportunity especially to obey the Golden Rule, Whatsoever ye would that other should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.”

Delora Elmira Crow Hulse is buried in the Pioche Odd Fellows Cemetery alongside her husband, James Madison Hulse.

Researched by Mona Reno and Marcia Bernard Cuccaro. Written by Marcia Bernard Cuccaro.

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Sources of Information

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