



Thomas Johnston

December 15, 2005

Thomas Ofstead Johnston, of Fort Collins, died Monday evening, Dec. 12, 2005. He lived 96 full and loving years in the Colorado region. Thomas was known as Tommy or Granddaddy to most. He was preceded in death by his wife, Esther Louise; brothers, Robert and Raymond; sisters, Margie and Irene; and grandson, Danny Odell. Survivors include two sons, Thomas E. Johnston of Grand Junction, Floyd F. Johnston of Huron, S.D., and a daughter, Elizabeth Ann Odell of Fort Collins; a sister, Gertrude Olsen of Portland, Ore.; and Jim Johnston of Fallbrook, Calif. "Granddaddy" had 10 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren, Tallulah Cluff and Gavin Odell LeBars, and one more is on the way. His parents were Robert and Hanna Johnston, who lived in Jackson Hole, Wyo., at the time of Tommy's birth. Sadly, his mother died 13 days after he was born from childbirth complications. His father returned to Grand Lake with Tommy, who was then raised in Grand Lake by his grandmother Susan Minor Johnston, a pioneer and homesteader in Stillwater. Tommy attended school at Sleepy Hollow and Hot Sulphur Springs. He married Esther Louise Smith on Nov. 14, 1933, in Grand Lake. They were married 67 years. He was an avid Nordic ski jumper and with the Grand Lake Nordic Ski Jump Team tried out in Canton, S.D., for the 1934 Olympics. Two of his teammates made the Olympic Nordic Ski Jump Team. Tommy made his last ski jump when he was 71 years old at Winter Park Ski Area. In 1944, Tommy was drafted into the Army during the end of World War II. He was 35 years old and had three children at the time. He was

stationed in the Philippines and Japan. Because he was an avid hiker and fly fisherman and very familiar with the Continental Divide area between Estes Park and Grand Lake, he was hired on as a surveyor with the Bureau of Reclamation for the Big Thompson Project. He then worked for the Bureau of Reclamation for 39 years. Prior to working for the 'Bureau,' he hauled mail between Grand Lake and Granby. Not a feat now, but imagine the winters in the 1930s without paved roads, snow tires or snowplows. When Tommy retired from the Bureau of Reclamation in 1971, he and Esther moved to Pueblo. There, he was very active in the E.L.K.S and Eagles. He was E.L.K. of the year in 1988-1989. In 1996, they moved to Fort Collins to be closer to family, in particular his beloved granddaughter, Bonnie Gorton. Tommy loved woodworking and through the years made many toys and furniture for the grandkids. To the delight of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, he loved to play. Cards, games, puzzles, read "funny books" comics or he could just be plain silly. He taught us more than he could ever know about keeping it light and that seriousness was only a momentary thing. We will miss you so! PIP, Granddaddy! A service to celebrate his life will be at 3 p.m. Saturday at Parkwood Estates, where he has resided for the past 10 years. Visitation will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday at Bohlender Funeral Chapel. Internment will be at Grand Lake Cemetery in May 2006, with a final date to be announced later.