

Louisa (Aschenbrenner) Amberson (1875-1970)

A bride at fifteen ... a widow at thirty-two with nine children to raise

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Louisa Aschenbrenner was just fifteen when she and Halvor Amberson were married on September 7, 1890 in Taylor County, Wisconsin. The groom was a 32-year-old widower, a man twice her age. At the time of their marriage, Halvor operated a store in Stetsonville, Taylor County.

Louisa was born on April 11, 1875 in Markt Eisenstein, Bohemia (now Zelezná Ruda, Czech Republic). She immigrated to the United States in 1877, at the age of two, with her parents, Georg and Monika (Bredl) Aschenbrenner and her one-year-old brother Edward. The Aschenbrenner family would make their home in northern Wisconsin. In 1880, they were living in Hamburg, WI, a farming community just down the road from Stetsonville. By 1895, they were living in Little Black, another community about three miles from Stetsonville.

Halvor was the son of Ole Amberson who had emigrated from Norway with his family and settled on a farm, also in Little Black, Taylor County, WI in 1880.

A year after their marriage, their first child Raymond was born (October of 1891). After that a new baby arrived every two years, until there were nine children in the family. The first four children were born in Stetsonville.

Sometime between 1897 and 1899 the family moved to southern California and Halvor went into the citrus business. They soon had a home at 1163 North Gordon Street in Pomona in Los Angeles County, surrounded by orange groves. (In the US Census of 1900, Halvor is listed as a fruit grower living on North Gordon Street in Pomona.) Halvor joined a cooperative known at the time as the Southern California Fruit Exchange. In the late 1880s, citrus growers in southern California were organizing themselves into cooperatives. Their goal was to increase their profits by (1) increasing their efficiency in harvesting, packing and shipping the produce, (2) increasing their bargaining power with wholesalers and packers and (3) pooling their risks. The Southern California Fruit Exchange was formed in 1893 in Claremont, on the eastern border of Los Angeles County. Before long, the exchange expanded to include orchards and growers in nearby Pomona, as well as those in a number of other communities in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. By 1905, the organization had 5,000 members, or 45% of the California citrus industry; at this time it changed its name to the California Fruit Growers Exchange. In 1908, the cooperative underwent another name change, this time to Sunkist Growers, Inc., the name by which it is known today.

The children of Louisa (Aschenbrenner) and Halvor Amberson:

1. Raymond Hermann Amberson:
Birth: October 31, 1891 in Stetsonville, WI
Death: January 4, 1986 in Pomona, CA
2. Ella Louisa Amberson
Birth: November 13, 1893 in Stetsonville, WI
Death: December 5, 1986 in Los Angeles Co. CA
3. William Edward Amberson
Birth: May 1895 in Stetsonville, Taylor Co. WI
Marriage: July 4, 1935 in San Diego, CA
Spouse: Rhea Lysle Merchant
4. Florence Monica Amberson
Birth: August 10, 1897 in Stetsonville, WI
Death: May 29, 1971 in Pomona, CA
Spouse: Gerald Vincent Curran
5. George Halvor Amberson
Birth: October 25, 1899 in Pomona, CA
Marriage: About 1929
Spouse: Lillian C.
6. Esther Sylvia Amberson
Birth: October 17, 1901 in Pomona, CA
Death: September 25, 1963 in Los Angeles Co. CA
7. Ruth Lillian Amberson
Birth: October 6, 1903 in Pomona, CA
Death: January 30, 1997 in Los Angeles Co. CA
Marriage: June 28, 1927
Spouse: Paul Talmadge Barnum
8. Violet Ann Amberson
Birth: January 2, 1905 in Pomona, CA
Death: December 8, 1996 in Fresno, CA
Marriage: June 18, 1930 in Riverside, CA
Spouse: George Samuel Gotobed
9. Edna M. Amberson
Birth: May 17, 1907 in Pomona, CA
Death: January 17, 1997 in Los Angeles Co. CA

Sources: Census records for Little Black, Taylor Co, WI and Pomona, Los Angeles, County, CA; Find-A-Grave.org; California Death Index, 1940-1997; Pomona City Directories, available at Ancestry.com; Paul Hefti, genealogical research investigator with the international probate research firm, Brandenburger & Davis; personal recollections of family members.