

John P. Curtis

John P. Curtis passed away on December 1, 2009 after a brief illness of 1 week's duration. He was 88 years old.

John was born in Paso Robles at the Sutton Maternity Home as there was no hospital in the area at the time. He was born on February 2, 1921. His parents were I.T. (Ignatius Taylor) and Amy Curtis, who were ranchers in Indian Valley northwest of San Miguel.

John's mother, Amy Jessup, was a member of one of the area's pioneer families. She was born in a homestead cabin in Indian Valley on February 4, 1887 during a dry winter which brought no rain until the day she was born. Her parents were Harry and Sarah Jane Jessup who arrived in the San Miguel area when the surrounding country was thrown open to homesteaders. Together with Amy's grandmother, Lucy Densmore, her parents established homesteads between Indian Valley and Vineyard Canyon in 1886.



John's father, Ignatius Taylor Curtis, arrived in California from Delaware in 1907. Though trained as a teacher, I.T. was working in the McKittrick Oil Fields when he met Amy Jessup while she was the school mistress at the town's 1-room school house. I.T. later moved to Indian Valley where he and Amy were married in 1915.

John and his twin sister, Kitty Bell attended the Eagle School (Indian Valley School), a small country school house northeast of the intersection of the Indian Valley Road and the Hare Canyon Road (to Bradley) where their mother Amy had once taught. John and Kitty Bell later attended Paso Robles High School (Class of 1938).

In 1941, Camp Roberts was being built and John was working there as a construction equipment operator when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7th. John immediately joined the Navy, and was assigned to the U.S.S. Gillespie (a destroyer), as a torpedo man. John and the ship were assigned to the Pacific Theatre throughout the war years. The ship saw a great deal of action in battles with the Japanese Imperial Navy, but was never severely damaged. John was mustered out of the service after the surrender of Japan in August of 1945.

While in the service during the War years, John received only two leaves. On his second leave, he returned to the San Miguel area and married Margot Work. They were married November 17, 1944 at the Congregational Church in Paso Robles. Margot was the daughter of Robert and Mard Work who ranched in Hog Canyon. The Work Ranch is today owned by Margot's brother: George Work and his family.

After John returned from the service at the end of World War II, he and Margot resided on the Work Ranch in Hog Canyon. For the next 10 years, John operated the ranch (farming operations) for Margot's parents. In 1954, they moved to the Curtis Ranch in Indian Valley and into a new house that they designed and built at that location. Operations on the Curtis Ranch included cattle, barley and alfalfa with forays into sugar beet and tomato production. While in Indian Valley, Margot and John's four children attended Bradley Union Elementary School. The three oldest Curtis children attended Paso Robles High School (Classes of 1966, 1964 and 1961).

John was a member of the Board of Directors for the Paso Robles War Memorial Hospital (closed in 1978), the Salinas Valley Fair, and the Bradley Union School District. He was also a member of San Miguel Masonic Lodge No. 285 (now closed).

In 1968, John and his family moved from Indian Valley to a ranch near Dillon, Montana. In 1977, another move took the family to a ranch near Davis Creek, California. In 1987, John and Margot retired to nearby Alturas, California. While in the area, John was an active member of Alturas Masonic Lodge No. 286 (now closed in due to lack of members) and had recently received his 50 year service pin. He conducted most of the Masonic funerals in Northeastern California.

John was preceded in death by Margot who passed on in 2006 at age 81 after an extended illness. In the same year, John's twin sister, Kitty Bell Basquez of Filer, Idaho (formerly of San Miguel) died suddenly at age 85. His sister, Betty Renard of Atascadero (formerly Betty May of San Miguel) passed on in January 2009 at age 92.

John is survived by his four children:

1. John D. "Jack" Curtis of Martinez, CA;
2. Sean Curtis of Alturas, CA;
3. Dr. Mary C. Curtis of Iowa City, Iowa;
4. Deirdre Curtis Hill of Cedarville, CA.

John has two grandchildren, John Hill and Alice Hill, who attend the College of the Siskiyous in Weed, California and Willamette University in Salem, Oregon respectively.

A memorial service followed by Masonic funeral rites are planned for December 21, 2009 at the Federated Church in Alturas, California. Internment of ashes will be in the Alturas Cemetery at a later date.

Parents: Ignatius Taylor Curtis (1881 - 1946)
Lucy Amy Jessup Curtis (1887 - 1966)

Spouse: Margot Ruth Work Curtis (1924 - 2006)

Children: John D. "Jack" Curtis
Sean Curtis
Dr. Mary C. Curtis
Deirdre Curtis Hill

Siblings: Elizabeth Jane Curtis Renard (1916 - 2009)
Katherine Bell Curtis Basquez (1921 - 2006)
John P. Curtis (1921 - 2009)
Harry Leland Curtis (1886 - 1946)
Sarah Elizabeth Curtis Riggin (1889 - 1966)

Birth:	February 2, 1921	Death:	December 1, 2009
	Paso Robles		Klamath Falls
	San Luis Obispo County		Klamath County
	California, USA		Oregon, USA

Burial: Alturas Cemetery
Alturas
Modoc County
California, USA

From the "Find A Grave" website - www.FindAGrave.com 160763353

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