

Otto Fife: Sheriff, Outdoorsman, and Entertainer

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My Great-Great-Uncle Otto was born on November 1, 1900 in Cedar City. He married Violet Bailey Fife on October 24, 1926, and his wife was born in 1905. Otto was Iron County Sheriff for eight years and was a hiker that hiked through the Zion Narrows 60 times. He was a performer for singing, storytelling, and an entertainer for kids.

Uncle Otto learned about defending property from his dad in 1931 when they "caught two fellows shooting pheasants on their farm, in the cottonwoods. One of the shooters was taken before Justice S.T. Leigh and was fined \$25.00." When he was a sheriff, my grandpa, Boyd Fife, told me that he hunted rabbits with Uncle Otto. They would go hunting by Beryl and use the spotlight on the sheriff car to find the rabbits for my grandpa to shoot. Uncle Otto taught kids about the law, and they were called Junior Sheriffs. My grandpa remembers visiting the jail and the courthouse. Uncle Otto brought in a desperado who was a safecracker and drug addict to talk to the kids.

Uncle Otto was a guide in Death Valley for 11 years. Once, when he was hiking the Zion Narrows, the water level rose and they had to wait 2 days until the water went down. He took big groups of people down the Narrows, and, in 1967, there was a 60-year old woman on the hike who got sick from phlebitis and couldn't walk. She had to be helicoptered out.

Uncle Otto was a storyteller and entertainer. He sang in a lot of groups in Cedar City and volunteered to be the choir librarian in 1920. My grandpa said, "He was always telling funny stories and jokes." I found an article from December 8, 1966 that told how he entertained 7th graders and told them stories about the Narrows for almost two hours.

Otto Fife died May 29, 1979 at his house. He was planning to talk to a group of people that day. I wish I could have met him!