



by Bev Smith

A LIFESTORY CAPTURED BY CHANCE!

This life story was told in the knick of time. Little did we know that this would be Grandma's last time with the family where she could share her memories? We had no idea how meaningful these stories would be.

The entire family had gathered for Thanksgiving dinner. Grandma was now at a time in her life when it was easier to recall days of long ago than what she did yesterday. She had settled in her favorite rocker by my mother's desk and seemed to be lost in thought. The rest of the family was finishing up the turkey and the pumpkin pie and the feeling of sleepiness was settling over most of us. Everyone settled in the living room for a little time for family gossip and rest.

There were conversations taking place around room when one of the children sitting near Grandma's chair asked her about what it was like when she was a little girl. When she started talking the whole room fell silent and became interested in what Grandma had to say. Soon all the children had gathered around her chair and were enthralled with the tale she began to spin.

Grandma's parents immigrated to the United States from Denmark. She told that her mother came at the age of 15. She wasn't sure about her father, but she knew that they met and were married in Gibson, Illinois on December 5, 1883. When the family heard the tales of the west it must have sounded exciting because they decided to pull up stakes and move out west.

There were ten living children in her family so it was quite a job to prepare a large family for such a long



Grandma

trip. Grandma was about 11 or 12 and one of the oldest. She told of going by covered wagon all the way to Amity, Oregon. She didn't recall or tell much about the harshness of the trip but seemed to dwell on the special things and some adventure. It seemed that the passing of time and her state of mind helped her feel like that little girl again as she shared her trip.

The only thing she shared about her time in Oregon was about her church and the Pastor that led her to the Lord. She kept a picture of the Rev. and Mrs. T.L. Jones and that picture is one of the treasures in our heritage album. (See the photo above).

After only two years the family decided to move again by covered wagon back to the mid-west to be with family. She told how they got as far as Gordon, Nebraska and had to settle in for the winter. Here they experienced the ruggedness of frontier living. She told of the sod house they built on the wind swept prairie.

One incident that seemed to move her was the memory of the day her parents had taken the wagon and gone to Gordon for supplies. The children were left at home and told to stay in the house. Not long after their parents left they heard the sound of horse's



Rev. and Mrs. T. L. Jones

hoofs and realized there were Indians coming for a visit. Apparently the Indians watched as the wagon pulled away and thought the house was empty. The children headed for under the bed with their hearts racing and remembering all the stories they had heard on their travels out west. The Indians came in and took the meager supplies that were left in the house, but did not know that several pairs of eyes were peering out from under the bed.

The family only lived out the winter on the prairie of Nebraska before moving on to Arnold, Iowa. It was there Grandma met and married Grandpa who also emigrated from Denmark when he was six years old. That is a whole other story. 🍷

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