

12 Grandma was a quiet woman who never seemed to be very healthy. She had an open ulcer on her leg which she nursed for at least thirty years. She enjoyed piecing quilts and made some very beautiful ones. Gardening was also a favorite of hers and she had a big lovely garden in the twenties which produced a lot of vegetables. Later, in the thirties, there was such a severe lack of moisture that gardening was not as successful. But Grandma always had flowers around the house and plants indoors. They were very important to her.

Having attended school briefly as a child, Grandma could not read or write except for her own name. She probably had attended the German school in Jansen until the third grade but she had to stay home and help with the farm work instead and had no time for schooling. Though she felt more comfortable speaking the German language or the low German dialect, she learned enough English to be able to communicate in English when necessary.

Grandpa John J. Friesen considered himself a farmer but he tackled many other jobs to supplement the family income. The years of the depression in the 30's were very hard. Grandpa and his cousin were horse traders. They would buy, train, trade and sell horses. Harnessing and hitching these totally untrained horses to the wagon, they would walk them home. Some times they were so wild they would lift the rear of the wagon off the ground.

In the horse and buggy days, Grandpa Friesen ordered a train carload of White Dove flour to be shipped to Meade from Jansen Milling and Elevator Company. Keeping enough for his family to use, he sold the rest of the flour to others in the community. Because the flour came from their former home, the people were very eager to purchase it.

At various times Grandpa ordered train case loads of No. 2 white oats to be shipped out from Kansas City. This he sold to farmers for horse feed when they were unable to raise enough to feed them.

In later years, he would also go to Colorado and buy a pickup load of apples which he would sell to friends and neighbors at a small profit. He also sold Fuller brushes and Foster products such as extracts, liniments, etc.

In 1939 several families from the Meade community decided that since the years of the thirties were so barren, perhaps the new settlement in DeRidder, Louisiana had better possibilities for making a living. The cut-over timber land was cheap. The rainfall was greater there than on the Kansas prairies. Thus, in 1939, Grandpa, Grandma, Aunt Anna, Aunt Margaret and Uncle Albert moved to DeRidder. Those were obviously years of a real financial struggle but they did have lots of strawberries to eat. When Mom and Dad went to visit them in May of 1941 they took Marvin and Dan along.

Mom and Dad had just sold a calf for \$60 and this money they used for the trip in their '39 Ford. Gasoline cost less than ten cents a gallon and they took food along from home to eat along the way. They left at 1:30 a.m. in order to be able to drive down without having to pay for night lodging. They arrived at DeRidder at 10:30 that night. It had been a long day. Mom and Dad brought back lots of strawberries when they returned to Meade. These were a real treat but unfortunately it rained just before these berries were picked and they quickly got soggy and had to be canned in a hurry. A lot of them had to be thrown away.

Later, in 1941, Grandpa and his family moved back to Meade. They had no home to go to so they purchased a small house in town. This was special for us when we were children because our other relatives and friends all lived on farms. Actually, the church frowned on their members living in town but Grandpa and his family were unable to find a farm on which to locate. It was after their return to DeRidder that Grandpa and Uncle Albert got the job of hauling freight from the Meade depot. They would meet each train to see if there was any freight that needed to be hauled somewhere.

Grandma died on May 17, 1945 after having suffered three strokes.

In March of 1946 Grandpa married again. His new wife, a soft-spoken, gentle widow, Mrs.

Maria Willems Friesen, was from Inman, Kansas. Unfortunately, the marriage did not last and Mrs. Maria Friesen moved back to Inman in 1948.

As the years went by Grandpa's health failed. He was a diabetic and in time required nursing home care in Montezuma, Kansas. He died on April 9, 1961 at the Meade Hospital. He had intestinal cancer and also suffered a stroke. He was 78 years old.

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Grandmother Mrs. A.H. Friesen was the eldest daughter of Henry F. and Margaretha R. Friesen Loewen. She was 14 years old when her mother died at age 37 of a heart attack, leaving nine small children of whom Grandmother was the oldest. Her mother did a lot of knitting and one evening she experienced severe pain in her arm. She shrugged it off thinking that a good night's sleep would certainly make it feel much better. The next morning, Grandma's father, Henry Loewen, talked to his wife before going out to do the chores. She rolled over in bed and thinking she just wanted to sleep longer, he went out to do the chores. When he came back into the house later and realized that she was still in bed, he knew something was wrong. She had died while he was out doing his chores.

Our great grandfather, Henry Loewen, then married a widow with seven small children of her own, Mrs. Maria (Weins) Doerksen. This made the family number eighteen and in time they had four additional sons of their own. Of these four sons, only Isaac W. and William W. grew to adulthood.

Our grandmother, at age 16, was expected to be responsible for much of the work involved in taking care of this large family. There were countless meals to prepare, laundry and mending to do as well as gardening and all the other work involved with raising such a large family in those early days on this Nebraska farm. She often felt that her stepmother expected more from her than from her own children and this did not make her work any easier. Therefore, she was more than ready to leave home at the age of 19 and marry our Grandpa A.H. Friesen.

Just shortly before the wedding was to take place, Grandpa was seriously injured while helping a neighbor with a broken wagon loaded with lumber. The main axle of the wagon had broken. Rather than unloading the heavy load, the neighbor asked Grandpa to get under the wagon on his hands and knees and push up on the load with his back while the man tried to repair it. Grandpa tried to talk him into unloading the lumber first but at last, very reluctantly, Grandpa crawled under the wagon. The load fell, crushing his chest and causing a large laceration on his head. There were many anxious days for the young bride while awaiting the outcome of the injuries. The wedding was postponed for two weeks but at last, on November 24, 1901, Grandpa, still pale and weak, married Grandma at the home of Grandma's father and stepmother near Jansen. Before the ceremony, Grandma had to mend the badly torn shirt Grandpa had worn the day of the accident. He had no other shirt to wear to his wedding.

On December 6, 1906 Grandpa and Grandma A.H. Friesen moved to Meade, Kansas with their three young daughters, Margaret, age four, Marie, almost three, and Helen, age one. Helen cried all the way to Meade on the train because of a severe ear infection. In those penicillin days she had to suffer a lot of pain.

Grandma and Grandpa were part of a group of Mennonites who moved from Nebraska to the "settlement" about 18 miles southeast of Meade. Meade County was sparsely settled at the time by a few ranchers who were very happy to sell their land. There were no roads and they simply cut across the prairies with their wagons and buggies.

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