

GRANDMA ANNA FAGERNESS



Grandma Anna Fagerness with her great grandchild Susan Fagerness (Johnson) taken in 1974 just before Grandma died.



Grandma Anna Jepson (Fagerness) with her Grandmother in 1911. Grandma was 26 in this photo.

My grandmother was born Anna Margarite Jepson on August 10, 1885 in Denmark. Shortly after her birth her parents, Jens Jepson and Laura Smith Jepson came to America and settled at Truesdale, Wisconsin. Her father died when she was about two. Her mother then took her and her two half-brothers, Louis and Willie, back to Denmark. The three children lived with Anna's grandma in Denmark until 1911. Grandma and her half-brother Louis Smith then moved back to America settling in Rushmore, Minnesota. Grandma got a job as a waitress in Wemple's Restaurant and Louis ran a garage. Grandma had not really learned English and her first year was very hard. In stories to the grandchildren she would tell of the difficulties of language and living. The area was still a wilderness and transportation was by horse or train. After a rain the roads (really paths) became very muddy. The area was settled mostly with Germans and not many Danish. She did not know English and that created much frustration. Bedbugs were a problem during that time. She got so infected she had to go to the doctor.

On September 2, 1914 she married Bennett Fagerness. They lived on the 160-acre farm south of Rushmore. They had 4 children, Margaret, Laura, my dad Lee, and Don. In 1932 they moved to the 20-acre original homestead just south of Rushmore. Bennett's son from his first wife, Melvin, took over the 160-acre farm. The homestead 20-acre farm had two small barns—really just sheds. The house had one bedroom, a living room, a kitchen/dining room, and front porch and a back storeroom. Although it may sound big it was less than 500 square feet total living space. It basically was a tarpaper shack. It did not have electricity until 1956 when Harry Osborne, a family friend, wired it for



electricity. When he did that Grandma thought she had died and gone to heaven. She then got a refrigerator, and a TV. She was able to put away all her kerosene lanterns. Unfortunately, grandma never did live with running water (plumbing) her entire life.

The home of Bernard and Anna Fagerness in 1932. They lived in this home from 1932 until their deaths.

There is an interesting story about grandma's house. There were two very bad storms to hit her farm. One was a tornado in 1956 that probably did not hit it directly but the shed that was called the hog barn blew away. But the house stayed. The worse occurrence happened a few years later. A straight-line wind of a very high velocity hit her farm. She had a grove of trees on the north side of the house and a line of trees on the west side of the house along the road. After the storm hit Dad and the kids piled into the car to see how grandma was. We were extremely worried as it was a very bad storm. When we passed the government grain bins we were able to see the homestead. There were trees down all around the house but the house stood (at least 30 trees were blown over). The home was so poorly built we just knew that grandma had received divine protection from that storm. No one will ever convince me otherwise.

Grandma's diet was amazing. She basically lived off of pumpernickel bread and Limburger cheese with coffee. Her entertainment was eating that and crocheting. As she grew older her sight grew worse. She had the patterns memorized and made the doilies and other items by feeling it as she made it. She sold the products for money. Her work was really in demand and she could sell all she could make.



The grandchildren always knew where they could make a nickel. Grandma would pay for wood and corncobs hauled in for the stove. The best payment was for chopping wood. Since that was a constant need it was a steady income for the grandchildren. We did bring in water and dispose of garbage for free however.

Grandma Fagerness (1966) in her normal spot next to the wood stove to keep warm.



The children of Bernard and Anna Fagerness. From the left: Laura (Olson), Don, Grandma Anna, my Dad Lee, and Margaret (Benson).



Grandma Anna Fagerness (left age 64) with her mother Laura Jepson Smith (right) taken in 1949. The children are left Mary Fagerness (Krook) age 3 and Craig Fagerness age 2.

Grandma fell and broke her hip in 1954. She lived with Tina Ailts in Rushmore for a year until she was able to care for herself. She never did regain her ability to walk without a cane or walker. Grandma died in May of 1974. She was really close to us grandkids. We really loved her. She was a wonderful person.