

SENIOR MORTENSEN'S HISTORY **BY Virginia Mortensen Nielsen**

“Well, my Dad was milkin’ cows on the farm and of course in the morning he took the milk to the creamery and I should go after the horses. They were turned out over into the willow patch. He showed me the horses. I drove over toward them. Course the horses must of gone behind the willows when I passed. I looked around and went on up to Gobble Field and follered that into Ephraim. I was down home when Ma come. She says you better get back to the farm. So I was a good boy.” This is Virginia, it was my father you just heard.

For years and years we’ve kept this deep-deep secret in the family. We didn’t ever want it to come out. The time has finally come. It must come out that my father, likely the only one in this whole gathering has been a jail bird. He’ll now tell you about his hilarious experience.

“Well now, if that’s come out, I’ll have to confess. Jack Raspberry Anderson and myself, we went down to Flossy Bishop’s and Gusty Stevens (I forget the other girls name) to a party and had a very nice time. On our way home we passed the arcade. The arcade was there and we dropped in for a sody water. Now this curfew was 9:00. It was a little after sundown and here come the Marshall, of course. His name was Olaf Coffeepot. They called him that but his name was really Olaf Thursbay. He came to the door and he said, “Bill gee bont ye bont,” come and go with me.” So we got some sody water and drank it, but he was a little slow and didn’t drink his so quick. He kind of hid behind the counter so when we walked out, why he didn’t come and as we stepped down to the jail, it’s down off the sidewalk, why he run past the street on the other side and went home. So of course then I remembered there was two cells there and then there was the entrance between them. He put my cousin Allen Folster and Grover Hansen in the one cell, they were older than I was, Dick and Jack and me in the other cell. So that’s the first time I was ever jailed.” Did they keep you overnight? “Oh no, he didn’t keep me overnight, no sir, just I would imagine an hour and a half. He come and said Boys, Now you can go.” So that was it.”

I remember continuing on after Dad’s wild story. And if teenagers think they have it hard by 16, why 9:00 is rather ridiculous. I remember very clearly as a very small child mother kept me in little white nightgowns, and they had lots of pretty fancy work around the top. Father came in and woke me up one morning. He was in his irrigation boots. He said I have something I want to show you. He perched me up on his shoulder and we went down into the North pasture and down into the irrigation ditch. There was a little foal just getting up on its feet. I remember this and think I must not have been four years old. Another time I remember him taking me back to the garden. It was early in the morning and the sun was just coming up out in this country where they all thought God had forgotten them, which I think God remembered most of all, he split a watermelon down the middle. He took one heart and I took the other heart.

This was our breakfast fruit. We had lots of good times doing lots of good things. As the other children came along we had lots of other good times. These are very very dear memories. I think of all the families, ours is the most pioneering family. Maybe the closest. I think that Dad has followed very closely in the feet of his father because he has been the very water conscious person that he has. He has dug drains. He has had heart attacks in drains. His was known in the county as one of the most successful draining men. I was talking to some people the other day, and one man says, "You can't drain this country." Another man says, "Oh yes you can, you go out and see what Senor Mortensen did." I think this is one of the finest compliments that came to him.

Mother was always there. Without her he would only have been half of what he has been. They're very dear parents.