

## **CORDIE OLSON'S HISTORY**

### **Cordie's History read by Bernice Olson**

I was the oldest in the family of eight children. Due to the fact that we lived four miles from town, I didn't start school until I was eight years of age, and my brother Arthur was six. Mother started us both at the same time. I graduated from the eighth grade when I was fifteen. I was in the first graduating class large enough to have graduating exercises. There were fifteen in our class. I had a happy childhood and a good home with plenty of good food to eat. Everybody didn't have that in those days. Mother was a good cook, and she had good meals when we came home from school. On those days when we would move our stove out in the little shanty, the aroma of ham frying would reach us as we brought the cows home from the pasture in the evening. I am the oldest in the family. I had six brothers before getting a sister. Can you imagine how thankful I was and always have been for that sister, Thelma.

We lived out on the farm. One of the unhappy and bad situations in my life was my constant fear of tramps and hobos going aimlessly from town to town begging for food. We received two at our house who were mentally unbalanced and frightened all of us.

On this farm we first lived in a log cabin. A frame lean-to was eventually added, then a nice big frame room was added. I am sure some folks haven't been as happy for a mansion as I was to watch that room being built. It was in the fall of the year; I can just feel the thrill of those days yet.

Then there were the threshing days. Threshing on the farm was eventful. We cooked food for days in preparation. We would have a steaming breakfast on the table for the threshers by the time the sun was up in the morning.

When we children went to school in town we would always look forward to Friday night when our father would come and take us to the farm over the weekend. How happy we were to be able to run around in the cow trails made in deep snow and hunt for eggs in the large straw stacks.

One other event in our life on the farm was the building of the railroad through our farm. That was really exciting. It was nice to have so many people around. They made their camp by our house. One day during this time we made a red caboose. We put about five gallons of whey in a large black kettle on a 3-legged support 3 foot over a brush fire, cooking it all day long, stirring it almost constantly until it cooked down to make one or two quarts of red cheese. It was very good. I have seen both the coming and going of the railroad. The going was a sad affair for us oldsters. For several years after the coming of the railroad all the young people would go down to the depot on Sundays. That was our day of entertainment, aside from attending church. In those days we had a large stage show and we loved to dance, more than the young people do now.

From the time I was a little girl I would walk to town along the track, four good long miles. One time I was walking alone about one mile from town. A group of Indians came running out of the willows. My heart nearly stood still. I hid in the side of the track until they got clear into town.

Another time I remember, my father gave me 75 cents to pay a man for a calf he had bought. When I passed the man's house I was reminded of it, but couldn't find the money. When I reached my grandmother's house I told her my plight. There was a quick decision. My dear old grandmother walked with me back to find the money. I had lost it soon after leaving the farm. We had a nice Sunday dinner with the folks. Then my father drove me into town in his white-topped wagon. Mother liked to have me read to her, especially the book "The Land of the Midnight Sun." Many were the songs my mother taught me as we washed dishes together.

Now I am thinking of the time when I met my husband Orson. One day on our way home from school Dora Rasmussen said to me, "There goes one of the cutest boys in this town." It was Orson. I said, "I don't think he is so cute." Some time later he and his stepmother came out to our farm. He was leaving in a few days to go out on the desert to herd sheep for the winter. I hardly knew him then and I wasn't impressed, but the next summer he started to date me, and I knew then that he was the cutest boy in town and the only boy in the world for me. After his visit to the farm he told his stepmother that, "That girl is going to be my wife someday." His mother told my mother this, and my mother told me after we started to go together. Our courtship was a happy one. Years after our marriage we spent many a happy evening reliving those days. If he were here now we would have so many wonderful things to talk about.

I'm sure thankful for and proud of our five children and their wonderful companions. There are Ray, our oldest, and Ruth; Bernice and George; Helen and Reed; Robert and Thelma; Phil and Blodwen, and their wonderful 16 children and six grandchildren. Then there was George Gordon, our baby who lived only five and one half hours. He was our second child.

All our children and grandchildren are devoted and active in the Church. Helen filled a mission in California during the years of 1933-1935. It was there that she met her husband Reed. Robert and I have both filled stake missions. Robert in 1938-39, myself in 1949-50. Now we have Richard our oldest grandson who is on his way home from filling a mission in South Africa where for the past four months he has been second counselor to the mission president. Prior to his mission he was in the service of his country for two years. Part of that time was spent in Korea where he was wounded.

I worked for several years as second counselor in the Primary. I did so much enjoy the Primary then, and was class leader in literature in Relief Society. For years I gave the teacher's topic lesson. At present I'm a visiting teacher. Oh, how I've enjoyed working in the Church. How thankful I am for the Gospel, for what it has done for me and mine. I pray that we may always have lives worthy of serving His great cause. I know the Lord hears and answers prayers. What would I have done in my life if it had not been for prayers.

I have always been civic minded. I was President of the E. Parvic Club and the Social Hour club. Now I belong to the Daughters of the Pioneers, and I am proud of my parents and my pioneer heritage.

What part of my activity shall I tell first? Sometimes I was embarrassed over the masculine things I had to do, but I would stop and ask myself, "Well if you couldn't be a lady and do things in that line you would have to be embarrassed." I would then sum up both sides while I was guiding the water in the furrows or washing and caring for the little lambs and the old sheep.

Sometimes I would think I knew every sheep and the disposition of a lot of them. Orson used to say, "I can bring a dead lamb home to my wife and she will make it live." There was hardly anything on the farm that I didn't help my father, husband, and son with.

The following is told by Helen:

My mother is now dead. I will finish my mother's history.

Mother was a lady. I never saw her go out without really dressing well. She has always liked nice things, and she always dressed herself very well. She also dressed her children well. Mother had a lot of style.

She sewed perfectly for her grandchildren. She would send little dresses she had made up to me. As many as nine at a time for my little girls, and they would fit perfectly. Just as if she had had the little children there to try them on. She made lovely things out of old things. I suppose that was her chief hobby.

Mother always remembered all the birthdays. If she didn't have a party for us she always honored the day by cooking birthday dinner. It consisted of favorite dishes of the one whose birthday we were celebrating. Every friend, brother, sister, son, daughter, our grandmother always received a beautiful card with one or two dollar bills enclosed in it. I was never late for these birthdays.

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I remember one Easter Saturday morning, our neighborhood gang had planned an unusual Easter hike, but it had snowed a little so we were not able to go. Mother had all 18 or 20 of us sit in a circle on the large kitchen floor where we played games and ate our lunch. When the weather cleared up we marched singing as we went past each friends house. We had good times regardless of the weather.

Mother has pieced and quilted many quilts. She used to say, "When I get old, I'm going to spend my winters doing just that." She has also made many lovely rugs. Later in life, she became so fascinated with needlepoint that's all she wanted to do.

She and father were married October 30, 1901. Father passed away April 14, 1940 of septicemia at age 62.