

My Grandma's Story

By Jean Stene

This is a story of my Grandma. She was born in Iowa in 1881. Her maiden name was Wynkoop. She and her husband lived on their homestead near Hahn's Peak. My Grandma cooked for the gold miners who were working there. In 1912 they sold their homestead and moved by covered wagon from Hahn's Peak to Mancos with their three children in tow, the youngest being seven years old.

All went well for awhile. They bought a ranch and had cattle and horses. Then the Spanish Flu hit. My Grandfather died in January, leaving my Grandma a widow. She was such a good cook, she was soon employed at the Indian School for Children near Mancos.

She sold the ranch in 1932 and moved to Greeley. Her daughter started going to Colorado State Teachers College. When she graduated and her other daughter married, she decided to move to California. There she opened a boardinghouse in Long Beach. When she retired she moved near her daughter so she could watch after her granddaughter, Bernice.

While she was there she got addicted to a contest that was in the local paper. It ran daily. They would run the first line, and she would finish with a quip. You could only win once a week. She would enter, win, and then put in entries signing her daughter's name and then start down the list of friends. Her entries would win four or five times a week. They paid five dollars for each winning entree.

During all her moves and adversity she never lost her sense of humor, love of dancing, or the love of cooking for friends and family.

One of the stories I heard her tell was when she went to the hospital when she was diagnosed with cancer. She'd start laughing just to tell it. Here is how she would tell it:

"When I was being admitted to the hospital, this young, good looking intern came in to ask some questions. This is how it went:

Intern: 'Were you ever married?'

Gram: 'Yes.'

Intern: 'Did you ever have any children?'

Gram: 'Yes, three.'

Intern: 'Did you have any stillborn?'

Gram: 'No.'

Intern: 'Are you still married?'

Gram: 'No, I am widowed.'

Intern: 'Have you ever had any extramarital relationships?'

Gram: 'Young man, are you propositioning me?'"

The intern's face turned bright red as Grandma kept her very straight face but she could hardly wait to tell all her friends and relatives and have another laugh each time! That was my Grandma. Always quick-witted, even in serious times.