



Back Story

Footprints from the Past

August 2017



National Family History Month – now in Australia, coming in October in US

I was excited when I saw a blog mentioning National Family History Month. Then I went to check it out and discovered...in Australia it's celebrated in August. In the US, we don't observe this month long celebration until October.

I'm going ahead and posting a few possible activities for the month, posted by Steve Anderson in Family Search. That gives us a little time to get the wheels turning on what we can do in October to recognize National Family History Month.

"To celebrate this month, there are a number of easy and enjoyable activities that you can be a part of. Below I've listed several activities that you can start doing to keep in the spirit of Family History Month.

August is turning into a busy writing month. All the submissions for *In Celebration of Sisters* have been accepted or rejected. Now we're in the midst of all the formatting and revising. There's an editor on board for this project, which I'm hoping doesn't slow the process down. There's some wiggle room in the schedule, but not a lot. The official publication date is November 2018.

Grandma Jones' Kitchen is also undergoing a heavy revision. There's lots of new recipes being added and a few new pictures. This will be ready by Grandparents Day, September 10th.

I guess it's a good thing that the part-time job slows down to barely a crawl during July and August. It gives me more free afternoons to plop my rear end in front of the computer and work away. Besides, it's too hot right now to go outside and work in the garden anyway.

Happy August, and stay cool my friends!

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Publication News

Purpose magazine accepted an article for their upcoming November 2017 and February 2018 issues. The themes are gratitude (November) and ministry (February).

I'm finishing up two short stories that will go in my writing group's anthology. It will come out late November.

1. **Start researching your family tree**—Starting your own family tree is a lot easier than you might think. Start by talking to your parents and other family members. What they tell you can provide you with some great clues to where to start looking for information. There are some great online genealogy sites to help you get started. These sites all provide excellent guides and easy to follow helps to get you started. Visit www.familysearch.org, (free) Ancestry.com (\$), MyHeritage.com free), and many other genealogy websites to take the first steps to get started.
2. **Record some of your parents' memories of their younger years**—You think you know your parents until they start talking about things that happened before you were born or things that they never spoke to you about when you were a child. One day your parents will be gone and you will not be able to go to them to get their advice. Why don't you do it now and have it preserved so that you can enjoy and their posterity for generations to come can benefit. Not sure what questions to ask? Visit the FamilySearch.org Wiki and see hundreds of thought provoking questions.
3. **Post your photographs on the internet for others to enjoy**—Many of the online genealogy websites mentioned above provide a safe place to store and

share family photographs. You can also add stories with your photographs. Now, when kids have to do a family history report for their school project, it will be as simply as logging on to a family history website and downloading some pictures, a story or two and some historical facts. It just doesn't get any easier than that.

4. **Begin writing down some of your own life stories—**Most people think that writing a personal history is such a huge task that they never get around to writing it. But if you break it down to answering just one question a week, it's amazingly fast and simple a personal history comes together. I would give almost anything to have had even just one of my ancestors write down some of his/her thoughts and have them to read today. What a priceless legacy to leave to your posterity.
5. **Record the voices of your young children or grandchildren and keep them to listen to when they are older—**We all love how adorable our kids and grandkids sound when they are young and their high angelic voices say the cutest things. But before you know it, those kids grow up and those sweet voices fade away and are forgotten. Take an hour or two one evening and spend some fun family time recording your kids sharing stories with you and singing their favorite songs. It's quick and inexpensive and will be a treasure forever.
6. **Visit a cemetery and take pictures of family tombstones—**This not as gruesome as you might first think and it's very easy to do this from the comfort of your home. With internet sites like BillionGraves.com and FindAGrave.com, it's amazingly easy to find an ancestor's tombstone. Both of these sites have millions of pictures of tombstones from cemeteries throughout the world. Try it. may be surprised at how easy it is.
7. **Call a relative you haven't heard from in a long time and reestablish those family connections—**Most calling plans allow you to call anywhere in the United States and talk as long as you want for no additional cost. So, you can't use the excuse that it's too expensive to call Aunt Fern in Sheboygan. Take a minute and think about a family member you haven't spoken to in a while and give them a jingle. It's time to renew those bonds with that cousin or aunt you haven't heard from for so long. It's time to catch up with what's happening with them.
8. **Cook a family favorite dish and invite family or friends over to enjoy it with you—**Every family has a dish that has been handed down for generations. Why not cook a family dish each week during this month and explain to your kids where it came from. You say you don't have any family dishes that were passed down? Well, create some, write down the recipe and tell your kids that you are starting a tradition that you want them to pass down to their kids."

1911

I'm still working on my short story, *Dear Arlie*, which will be in my writing group's anthology at the end of the year. The inspiration for the story is a postcard that Millie wrote to her friend Arlie Shinkle in 1911. Arlie later sent the postcard to her friend Pauline. Years later, I ended up with many postcards and photographs from our elderly next-door neighbors, Bea and Pauline.

As I'm working on the story, I'm posting snippets in my online writing group, Tuesday Tales, where we write to a different word or picture prompt each week. To go along with the story, I'm using old photographs from Bea's old scrapbook. Here's a few that I've used in the story. I'm not sure of the names or exact dates of the photos, but they're in the same time frame as my 1911 story.





Story of the Month: A Stitch in Time



A Stitch in Time

Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, Minneapolis, 1928

“Gunther, look here, your name means ‘warrior,’” Astrid called across the room to her husband.

“Warrior? That name doesn’t fit me. I’m the most peace loving man you’ll find. Where are you finding that nonsense?”



“From this magazine Anna sent me from the old country. I sent her one of our American magazines, *Woman’s Way*. She sent this back to me and it has an article on what different names mean. You are ‘warrior’ and my name, means ‘divine strength’.”

“Tell Anna not waste her money sending you any magazines. We’re American’s now. You read American literature.” He pointed a finger in Astrid’s direction to make sure she understood. “And you’re not to be wasteful with our hard earned money, paying postage to mail her these women’s things. We must be frugal with the earnings. The bank ... the news I read is not good. We must be diligent caretakers of our small savings.”

Astrid’s jaw tightened and her lips thinned. She was a careful custodian of the household’s funds. She wasn’t a spendthrift that deserved a lecture from her husband on the necessity of economy. Had she not been a good wife and mother, sewing the children’s clothes and patching and mending them to extend their life? Had she not scrimped in the market these many years, purchasing only what was necessary? Had she not gardened and canned to preserve the harvest, just as her mother had taught her in the old country? Her mouth opened to retort, then she clamped it shut, stopping the words from being uttered.

Gunther was a good man and had been a good husband these many years. He, too, worked just as hard and provided for the family after they’d immigrated to the United States. Although at times he could be stern and overbearing, he wasn’t any worse than her father had been. Both were good Lutheran men who believed in the sanctity of their church and their marriage, even if they did think they were the boss, the head of the household.

Astrid folded and slipped the magazine into the needlework basket sitting next to her chair. She’d look at it tomorrow, when Gunther was at work, and after her household chores were taken care of. For tonight, she’d just let it be and let him think that he’d ‘laid down the law’. She picked up the piece of stitchery sitting in the basket and laid it out over her lap to find where she’d left off. Seeing her place, she pulled the needle that was threaded with the sapphire perle cotton. She sat working on the blue border outlining the hardanger heart set in the corner of the fabric. As her needle flew in and out of the natural colored material, the blue and white stitches grew, accenting the scrolls and flowers flowing throughout the tablecloth, embellished with a heart in each corner. With each stitch Astrid calmed. By the time she sat the project aside, she was peaceful and full of loving feelings again.

“I should have this finished in a few more evenings,” she commented to Gunther, where he sat in his easy chair reading the newspaper. “It will be Ola’s gift on Christmas Eve. A tablecloth for her first Christmas as a married woman in her own home.”

“It will be good to see her. Have you spoken with Sven? Is he coming too?”

“Yes. He rang up the last week and said they were coming. He requested sweet potato lefse. Lots of it. He laughed and said that’s one thing that Gretchen doesn’t make very well. Don’t tell her he said that! He did add that her gingersnaps more than make up for her not too tasty lefse.”

“Are the children joining us for Lucia night also?”

“Ola and Jeffrey will be here. He’s never heard of Lucia night, so he’s quite excited. But not Sven and Gretchen. They are visiting her parent’s neighborhood that night. Ola’s coming over the day before to help me make saffron buns.”

Astrid paused, unsure about bringing up the next question, after their earlier conversation about finances and frugality. She plunged ahead anyway. “I was thinking that I could pick up the Swedish meatball mix at the meat market this year, the one over on East Lake Street. Unless you think it’s too costly. I could make my own again.”

“No. No. The meat from the market is a good idea. At Ingebretsen’s? A fine man he is. The meatballs from his mix is quite delicious. We’ll splurge a little this year.” He rubbed his stomach. “Why, just talking about it makes my mouth water to taste one right now.”

“You’ll have to wait until Christmas Eve my darling husband. That will give you something to anticipate as we count our blessings through the advent calendar.”

Astrid, or Ingrid, or Gretchen – we have no idea who stitched this lovely tablecloth, or where she lived, or anything about her life. All we know is that she spent many hours of her life stitching, to have the talent to embroider such a lovely piece. The precision and intricacy that this work shows, is testament to the many hours of practice the woman that created this beautiful piece had.

It’s a remnant of someone’s life, passed down through generations, and at some point it made its way into a Texas antique mall. Not anymore. Now it graces a table in my workroom where I can admire the work and honor the stitches of this unknown woman’s life.