

I am Mabel Jorgenson. I will be speaking for myself and my three sisters, Bertha Lambert, Clara Harrington and Hannah Rasmussen. We are all proud to say that we are in our 80's. I will be 88 on April 22, 1984 which is Easter Sunday, Hannah is 86, Clara is 85 and Bertha is 81.

We are of Norwegian heritage. Perhaps that has something to do with our longevity. Our parents came to America from Trondheim Norway. Mother arrived in 1882 at the age of 16, father was 19 when he arrived in 1884. They met here and were married July 22, 1895 in Sioux City, Iowa.

In 1897 when I was a year old we moved to the Westerville community where my three sisters and three brothers were born. Two of our brothers are still living. Peter Hanson who also lives in Vermillion is 83 and Ingvold who lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin is 79. Our youngest brother Melvin died in 1974 at the age of 67.

Our father was a carpenter and painter. Some of the houses he built still stand in the Westerville area. We also know that he taught Norwegian in a school in Canton. We still have some of his books.

We attended the Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church at Westerville. During those years the men sat on the right hand side of the church and the women and children sat on the left. Our father always had a special place on the aisle since he needed to leave his seat to read the lessons and offer the first prayer each Sunday. He was also the Sunday School Superintendent. He was the church custodian and the official bell ringer for the Sunday services, it was also his responsibility to toll the bell for all of the funerals held there. His compensation for years of custodial work was a plot in the Westerville cemetery.

I was baptized in Sioux City and confirmed at Pleasant Valley Lutheran. My father insisted that I should receive my confirmation instruction in Norwegian. The other six members of the class received their instruction in English. At that time, confirmation was known as "Reading for the minister". Hannah and Clara were also baptized and confirmed at Pleasant Valley. Bertha was baptized there but was confirmed at Trinity Lutheran on Main Street here in Vermillion. Their lessons were in English.

We grew up speaking Norwegian in our home with English being our second language. I do not recall having any difficulties with English when I started school. However, I do recall that Clara and Hannah conversed in a mixture of Norwegian and English when their schooling started.

Because of our father's failing health we moved to Vermillion in 1910. He died in 1913. Mother was a devout Lutheran, attending Sunday School, Church and Ladies Aid was of the utmost importance to her. Following father's death she worked very hard at various tasks to provide a home for seven children ages 16 and under. She died in 1957 at the age of 86.

We attended school in Westerville and here in Vermillion. We all eventually married. My husband and I lived near Wakonda until 1927 when we moved to Vermillion. I worked at Meisenholder Dept Store for 16 years and at the Vermillion Civic Council for 12 years. I continue to do volunteer work there. My husband died in 1957. We had 5 children three of whom are still living. Clara has lived in Vermillion since moving here with our family in 1910. She was employed at Northwestern Belle Tele Co. for 38 years. Her husband died in 1962. She does not have a family. Hannah and her husband lived in Lake Andes for a time, they returned to Vermillion and in 1936 they moved to California. Her husband died

in 1980. They had four children, three of whom are still living. Hannah returned to Vermillion in 1983, she and Clara now share a home. Bertha and her husband lived in Vermillion, and moved to California in 1941. They returned in 1946. She was employed at Dakota Hospital as head cook for 20 years and as food supervisor for 10 years. Her husband died in 1964. She has one son.

We were not very active in Ladies Aid as it was once called because we were always employed away from home. The meetings then were always held in the afternoon. Bertha and Hannah managed to attend Ladies Aid the most often. Mrs. Thorvald Oden once told me about the time she left Ladies Aid wearing the wrong hat. She said the one she wore home belonged to Hannah. Of course, they were alike and back then no one ever went to a church function without wearing their hat.

Since our retirement and the establishment of circles we have tried to be more active. In the early years, some of us held the office of Secretary, that was before circles as we know them today.

Bertha and Clara have each been a three year member of the Altar Guild. One served at old Trinity and the other in our present church.

We remember the church suppers, lutefisk dinners and the big bazaars. We also recall Dakota Day when a chicken dinner was served in the basement of the old church. The ice cream social was not always held on the church lawn. One year it was held on the lawn at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Guy Endriessen on Lewis Street where Rena and Garret Algra now live. Another time it was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Paulson, parents of Mrs. George Carter, now deceased, who lived on a farm north of Vermillion. Then as now, weather permitting there was always a crowd to enjoy the good food and the fellowship.

I remember that once a year the ladies of the church would serve a dinner for the choir. My children who then were choir members were most appreciative of this.

My hearing loss is somewhat of a handicap, however, I enjoy attending circle meeting and TLCW even though I do not always hear everything that is being discussed.

My sisters and I want to thank Esther Knutson for involving us in this project and we also thank the members of TLCW for this opportunity to reminisce and share a little of our family history with all of you.