

A Story to Shrink the Gap

By Hannah Grafelman

My Grandma, Donna Dee Tinkham Dudley, grew up in Johnstown, Nebraska in the sand hills. She still lives in Nebraska even though she has moved around more than a few times in her life. She was a teacher, a media specialist, a United Methodist preacher, and most importantly an outstanding mother and grandmother for her five kids and seventeen grandchildren.

Ever since I was very young I have heard stories about my mom and uncles and all the trouble they used to get into. My grandma's stories have always been more of a mystery to me.

This is a story I have heard a lot of times, but it keeps getting better every time so I think it's a good one to share with you.

My grandma was in third grade and her little sister, Mary Jo, was in first. In order to get to school they had to ride a big, white horse named Dutch through two sandy blow outs. The two sisters were running late. Grandma told me, "You know Mary Jo, she loved to go fast." Mary Jo kicked poor old Dutch, which Grandma knew he didn't like very much. She didn't say anything and ended up holding on for dear life as Dutch went faster and faster. Soon he was galloping and Mary Jo was still kicking him. Dutch freaked out and started to buck. He bucked Grandma off and Mary Jo landed on top of her. Dutch fled and the two girls had to walk to school.

Grandma's arm hurt and she complained a little but she didn't cry. They made it to the country school, walked in, and the teacher was teaching the three other students in the school.

The teacher sent one of the students home to get his parents who had a car. The teacher couldn't take Grandma home because she had to watch all the other children. The other parents showed up and they loaded Grandma into their car and drove her home.

Grandma's dad stopped working and took her to the doctor's office in town. The doctor told them that Grandma's arm was broken. He set her arm and put it in a splint. Grandma returned to school the next day, but she didn't ride Dutch, her dad drove her.

To me, my grandma will always be the ageless lady who tells me stories and listens to me talk about the insignificant things in my life. The stories she tells me, especially this one, show my grandma in a new light. They make her easier to relate to, because she had struggles growing up and a lot of them are like the ones I face today. The age gap between us is great but the gap of understanding and knowledge gets smaller every time I hear another story.