

Family Stories: Strength From Our Grandmothers

Family stories can be a motivating research tool for increasing family history interest. Sometimes we are looking for new stories from other family members, both near and far. Often times, the reverse can also be possible coming right from within ones own family members. For example, sometimes through our careers, hobbies, talents or in this posted video as an example from ones grandmother at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6OVPBj-W1g>, the unpredictable is also possible!

Never underestimate the opportunities that may be before us!! How can you connect with your ancestors? This posting shows how a family finds strength to face life's challenges, including a cancer diagnosis, by learning the lives of their grandmothers. This video is only 3:24 minutes in length but it offers a powerful witness that illustrates that families are essential to the future of our posterity in connecting ourselves to our family history roots as well as to our future generations.

My Testimony is Linked to My Ancestry

The longer I live and particularly the longer I serve the Lord, the more I realize that my testimony not only comes from the Lord but from the very roots of my ancestry which are also a part of me. My Eastern European ancestors lived rather humble lives and had many difficult lives to encounter. They lived in rural parts of Poland, Ukraine and Slovenia and when it came time to seek a better life, they immigrated to the United States. My grandmother at the age of 13 was sent to America from Southern Poland by herself some 4,000+ miles because her family could not support her and being a female and the oldest child, she would not inherit any of family's meager wealth while her younger brother would. After arriving to America, she lived in a boarding house for 6 years before she married my grandfather in 1910 in Passaic, New Jersey.

The opportunities in America with freedom were more than Eastern Europe but the early generations did not have an easy life in America because of their lack of education and professional skills. However, their moral strength and sticking to the basics of an honest life and striving to be good Christians were embedded in me long before I was ever introduced to the Church. The difficulty is when more is achieved in this life with wealth and stability, the more challenging it can be to actually be a good Christian. Being mortal means that we are imperfect by nature and certainly can be tempted to be self-centered rather than being benevolent towards others.

I'm very fortunate to realize that as I live my life now in the twilight years, I have been blessed exceedingly to have the family roots that I have learned from my parents, grandparents and through the actions of these earlier generations, I have learned to appreciate who I have become. The proof is that I did not hesitate to accept the Gospel Plan when it was formally presented me because of my family rearing and also by my association with dear aunts and uncles as well even though my family and grandparents vehemently opposed me getting baptized. Consequently, I got baptized in Florence, Italy some 4,000+ miles away from home in New Jersey. I learned from the traditions of my family of hard work, dedication, honesty and ingenuity to use what talents and strengths I was given even though none of my ancestors ever attended college or even graduated from high school. English was not readily spoken in my home because my family spoke in Slovak frequently to keep family secrets from me.

When I listen to stories of previous generations such as the one posted here about LDS pioneers, it becomes very apparent that we are a product of our environment and it is so good to be nourished and strengthened by our family roots as well as the gospel plan which puts us on the straight and narrow path for being the very best person possible. I hope that the stories that I am

gathering will give you heartfelt strength and courage to not hesitate to seek out both your ancestors and particularly among the living who have knowledge that can easily be lost from earlier generations if you don't seek and gather their family stories it before these older generations passed on from this life.

The family is the unit of the church and until we gather all the information on our families to learn from their experiences whether good or bad. We may not matriculate fully if we don't have the building blocks for our ancestors and family. And with the gospel, we have so many more opportunities to grow even stronger and be more focused so that our children and grandchildren and others will be stronger because of our testimonies as we develop them and share them. Technology has changed the world drastically and with blogs, websites and social media opportunities making it very convenient to share our heritage in so many different ways.

Future Family History Story Postings

In future postings, I will share how I have created permanent on-line records for my family not only with my deceased ancestors but equally as important for both my ancestors and Roslyn's so my children, grandchildren and future generations have the complete picture of who there are since 50% of their genealogy comes directly from Roslyn. Family history can indeed be a difference-maker in shaping the lives of our posterity for future generations.