

JANE EDWARDS MOSER
A HISTORY

ORAL HISTORY
HISTORY OF WYOMING
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APRIL 1983

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October 10, 1904, Jane Edwards was born in a tiny mining camp in Spring Valley, Wyoming; the second of five children. A midwife was in attendance at the birth, as there were no doctors in the area at that time.

Spring Valley, a Union Pacific coal mining camp, was located just east of Evanston and now no longer exists. The mine closed when Jane, known as Sis all her life, was very young; so she and her family moved to Evanston, where her father worked in the coal mines in Almy. Almy, located to the west of Evanston, is where Sis's father was born and her mother came to live at the age of three. Their respective families came from Wales and England as converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

A short time later, the Edwards family moved to Cumberland, Wyoming, which was forty miles northeast of Evanston and sixteen miles south of Kemmerer. Cumberland was also a Union Pacific coal mining town; also no longer in existence. Actually it was two towns and two mines; Cumberland #1 and Cumberland #2. The Edwards' lived in #1 and this is where Sis started school. School consisted of three rooms and a playground with swings. There was a school board that hired teachers; the Union Pacific had nothing to do with the school system there. During these years Sis remembers playing such games as kick the can, hide and go seek and duck on davey. To play duck on davey, you had a big rock and put another rock on top of it. With a handful of smaller stones the children would throw at the top rock and try to knock it off the "davey."

In school the children were taught the basics; definitely no sex education! Children were also taught in the home; not only values and manners, but how to work. There were plenty of chores to do when Sis was a child. Girls were taught sewing and homemaking arts at home and were expected to perform these types of tasks. Boys generally did the heavier, outdoor chores. The coal and wood sheds had to be filled, ashes emptied, horses and cows cared for, corrals cleaned and water hauled. Sis's grandpa had pigs and she remembers having to take the bucket of pigfood out to the pigs. (The pigs were slaughtered for the families' own use.) Since water was piped into Cumberland, it had to be carried home in 5 gallon cans from the community pump. This was an especially big chore on wash days. Sis admits that children were just as reluctant to work then as they are now! The difference, though, is that then you knew they had better do as expected. She says none of the children in

her family were ever spanked and she never heard her father raise his voice; and there was never a need to.

Cumberland #1 was a nice, clean town with two rows of large two-story homes surrounded by little fences. Although there were no lawns, there were small gardens where lettuce, radishes, cabbage and cauliflower grew well. The houses were provided by the Union Pacific and rent was deducted from the miners' wages. There was no indoor plumbing, so bathing was done in a tub in the kitchen. Water was heated on the stove. There was no bathhouse at the Cumberland mines for the miners, so they all came home black.

Most of the people in Cumberland #1 and #2 were Mormons and they had a church building of their own; it was formerly a house but the wall partitions had been removed. There was a small Catholic church between #1 and #2 but it was not used too often. Travelling was difficult and it was hard to get a priest up there. Sis was the Church organist at age 14 and not only played at all services but also for funerals, where her sister Ethel, who had a beautiful voice, would often sing. If the death was due to a mine accident the man would be buried in Kemmerer and the Union Pacific would run a special train from Cumberland to Kemmerer to accomodate the funeral.

Accidents were commonplace at the coal mines, more at Almy than the other mines of the area. The strike of 1922 was the biggest strike Sis remembers and it helped bring about reforms. The unions inspected the mines and upgraded safety codes. Working conditions improved and all the miners got a raise. Sis remembers all the miners belonged to unions and her father belonged to the United Mine Workers of America. The miners in these camps were paid in U.S. currency and there were both private and U.P. company stores in town in which to shop. There were resident U.P. company paid doctors available to all the residents. Many miners got black lung but Sis does not remember the company extending any special medical help to those victims. After their death from black lung, there was no monetary compensation for the widows at that time.

When Sis was a child, travel was by horse and buggy over dusty, dirt roads. Her father had horses but she never had one of her own.

When the first cars arrived in Cumberland, it was a big event. The wealthier people were the owners, of course, and the ladies always dressed up to go riding the the car. The children of the town were always given rides!

The Edwards family would travel by horse and buggy the 16 miles to Kemmerer to shop. The very first J.C. Penney store was in Kemmerer

then, as it still is, and Sis remembers shopping there. She admits surprise at how this small store grew.

Holidays were always big occasions in Sis's family. Each Decoration Day, the Edwards's made the long 40 mile trip to Evanston by horse and buggy. This is where their relatives were buried. The town always had a big celebration. Labor Day and the Fourth of July were the BIG holidays; celebrated with races, games, food and always, big dances.

The people in these towns were friendly and quite close and there were no clashes between ethnic groups. The towns were usually quiet and Sis does not remember any rowdy activity.

At Christmas time whole families went house to house, singing carols and visiting neighbors. At New Years, the Edwards' home was always open, the table always set, so visitors could come and eat at anytime. Doors were never locked.

Vacations for the Edwards family were trips to Salt Lake for the LDS Church Conferences. The family would board the train at Carter for an exciting trip through the mountains to Salt Lake. Once there, they would stay with relatives. There was always a fair at conference time so the family would stay over for that.

Carnivals came to Cumberland and Sis remembers getting a glass with 1917 imprinted on it at one carnival she attended.

Sis began dating at age 16 in Cumberland. Usually everything was done in groups, such as dances and picnics. Her father was very popular with the teenagers and they would often come to her home for a night of entertainment. Her father played the mouth organ and she played the piano and all would sing.

Radio was also very popular at this time and the family would sit around the radio and listen to mostly musical programs.

The Cumberland mines closed in 1930 and many miners were transferred to Rock Springs, Benton or Superior. The Edwards family moved to Superior and that is where Sis met Nicholas Moser, who would become her husband. He was working in the coal mines there, but was from Rock Springs, born on M Street. They dated for about a year, going to dances in Rock Springs at the Playmor--which was on the corner where Gambles is, and to the movies. Sis was 28 when she and Nick married. Her mother accompanied them to Ogden, Utah to her Aunt Mary's house, where they were married by a Justice of the Peace. (She was a Mormon and Nick was a Catholic at the time.) Since it was the depression (1932) she did not even have a new dress for the occasion. Upon their return to Superior there were many wedding showers given for the Mosers.

The new couple lived in Superior where Nick mined and was a member of the union. Most of the women were homemakers and few worked outside the home. People were friendly. The women met at Triple H clubs and at church meetings.

Superior also did not have indoor plumbing. Water was piped in, which made lawns, flowers and trees possible, but drinking water had to be hauled in and carried home from the town hall. They did have electricity and when a new modern convenience came out the women of Superior had it, including electric irons, vacuums and refrigerators. Cooking was done on coal stoves which Sis found far better than any stove she's had since!

The typical day began at 4:00 a.m. for Nick Moser as he left for the mine. He came home at 10:00 a.m. for breakfast. Sis always make her own bread and on occasion made soap. Her husband helped with the household chores--even dishwashing! Together they drove to Rock Springs every Saturday to shop.

When the Mosers were first married, family planning was not thought of; people expected to have families. Sis was afraid she'd never have children since it was two years before Nicholas II was born. Nicky was her only child, though she had wanted more.

Sis was cared for constantly throughout her pregnancy by a doctor because it was thought that she couldn't carry the baby to term. At delivery she was attended by the doctor and her aunt who was a midwife, in her home. Her baby weighed less than four pounds. She was given no education on pregnancy or childbirth and such subjects were never discussed even among the women.

In Superior, the LDS Church and the Community Church shared a building for a while until the Community Church got its own building. The LDS Church building was donated by the Union Pacific and the coal was even supplied for free.

In 1963 the mines in Superior closed and the Mosers moved to Rock Springs. The Lamplighter Motel was newly built for Sis to manage and Nick and Sis lived there for three years. Nick died there of cancer. Sis stayed on for a while, but then moved to her present home and went to work at the hospital, managing the dining room.

Sis Moser is a staunch Democrat, but the first time she voted, at age 21, she voted for a Mr. Fern, a Republican, because he was a friend. That was the first and last time she voted Republican! Voting has always been an important right to Sis and she feels most Wyoming women felt that way.

Sis remembers Ed Hershler---her family used to visit his family at their large ranch; he was an only child. They were big ranchers and he became a lawyer so she wasn't surprised at his success.

Sis believes the Democrats worked for the working class of people and doesn't believe there was any corruption in the city governments. She did not want to comment on the Republicans! Politics were never too controversial. She did go to political rallies, but admitted the attraction drawing the young people was the dances given after the rallies.

During Prohibition in the 1920's, Kemmerer was a big bootleg town with much manufacturing of whiskey; wine was also made by the fairly large population of Italians. Sis was in charge of the primary children in her church when she was a teenager in Cumberland. At that time there was a little Italian girl who was sick in the Kemmerer hospital and needed to be sent to Salt Lake to the Primary Childrens' Hospital for more extensive care; Sis was to arrange for this. While making these arrangements, a well known man of Cumberland, who owned a butcher shop, asked to help Sis, as he would be going to Salt Lake, also. He bought the sick child's train ticket, brought her from Kemmerer to the Carter train station and helped put her on the train. Because she was on a stretcher, they rode in the baggage car. Sis noticed two very large trunks the man also put in the baggage car, but paid them no mind. The man then rode in the baggage car with the sick girl all the way to Salt Lake. When they arrived the man wired Sis to tell her the child was safely in the Childrens' Hospital. He visited the child several times and even bought her a watch. Soon after, Sis heard that on that very train there had been the largest transport of bootleg whiskey to cross the Wyoming-Utah line to that date....found in two large trunks!! Sis said all the bootleggers were rich then and always could buy their way out of jail. She said also that she thought the butcher that had helped her and the sick girl was a fine man anyway. (Sis would not allow me to tape this story, but gave me permission to print it if I left out the names of the people.)

As a child, Sis wore dresses much like girls wear now, but usually with little aprons. Sis always had a red velvet dress for Sundays, and always changed into play clothes right after church. In the 1920's, Sis said she dressed just like a flapper like the rest of the kids. She did not cut her hair, though. She wore it long and twisted up in the back. Every week she had her hair marcelled at a beauty shop because her father thought she had such pretty hair.

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Sis describes the Boom as people just looking for work. As for the rise in crime she says it stands to reason the more people the more crime. As for the 60 Minutes broadcast about Rock Springs, Sis thinks they exaggerated the crimes and feels the town should never have been called Sin City. When new people came to town the good came with the bad and Sis does not blame the newcomers for crimes. There may have been some dishonesty in the city government a few years ago, but the media blew it way out of proportion.

Rock Springs has progressed with the boom--shopping malls, parks, streets paved, sidewalks, grass and trees planted. The cemeteries are now beautiful thanks to the present city administration. We have grown with churches and beautiful progressive schools.

Sis has had a good, happy life and has enjoyed living in Wyoming. She thinks the coal camps were good places to raise children. Lots of good people lived in the camps. Having her home, good schools, good churches and good friends is what makes Sis happy.

As far as the future of our country, Sis quotes the Bible prophecies about floods, earthquakes, pestilence, how you won't be able to distinguish the seasons and wars as to the fact that these things are being fulfilled in these days; she thinks there will probably be another war but does not see of what good it will be to send our boys to battle now.

Sis Mosers' Words of Wisdom for her posterity would be to "stay close to their church." It is what has made her life a happy one.

NAME: Jane Edwards Moser

PRESENT ADDRESS: 608-2nd

1.-Present profession or occupation:

2. Occupations followed in the past (give dates):

3. Date of birth: Oct. 10. 1904 Place of birth: Spring Valley Wyo.

4. Date of moving to Wyoming:

5.-Full name of parents (give mother's maiden name)

Thomas Edwards Jane Rowbottom Edwards

6. Names of brothers and sisters (and to whom married):

Thomas Youngs.
(Jane) Ethel.
William

7. Schools attended (give dates):

Cumberland, Evanston

8. Places of residence in Wyoming (give dates):

Spring Valley
Evanston Cumberland, Superior, Rock Springs

9. Military service (dates, awards, area served, rank, etc.):

10. Political offices held (give dates):

11. Political affiliation:

Democrat

12. Religious affiliation: F. D. S.

13. Marriage (spouse's name, date and place of marriage):

Nicholas Moser.

14. Children (names, dates of birth, grandchildren, etc.):

child } Nicholas Moser II. great } Angel Nicole Kate
 } July 27. 1934. grand } Ryan
 } Nicholas IV

grandchildren } Nicholas III, Sandy, David, Scilla

15.-List of clubs and societies of which you are a member:

Relief Society - LDS Church