

# FINDING GRANDMA

One regret I have is that I never sat down with my paternal grandmother to talk about her life and record her memories for posterity. After her death my father and uncles would tell me how unimpressed she was with herself and that she even asked on occasion, “Why would anyone want to know about me?”

When financial difficulties forced my family to move into Grandma’s old house, a flood of happy memories came rushing back, along with the regret. One night a few days after moving in, I looked through several of my grandmother’s old photo albums and a box of keepsakes, which included old letters my uncle had written, old temple recommends, and even my grandfather’s funeral program. After looking at this memorabilia, I wondered if there was more.

I felt impressed to look in the attic and was immediately led to a sack that contained an old blue binder that looked destined for the trash can. In that binder I discovered the beginning of a life story my grandmother had written 30 years before. I found out later, to my astonishment, that no one in the family even knew it existed. My father and uncles were right—Grandma was so unimpressed with herself that she didn’t even tell anyone she had started writing a life story!

That night I read every single word on those eight pages, and as I did,

I learned a lot about my grandma—what life was like for her in high school, how she met my grandfather, and how hard it was for her to close the movie theater she and my grandfather had operated together.

I felt her presence as I read those pages, as if she were telling me not to worry any longer about not completing the oral history I had intended to do. Reading about my grandmother’s life in her own hand was absolutely priceless and lessened the regret I had been feeling for so long. It was a reassurance of the Lord’s tender

mercies and a testament that family history isn’t just finding out about ancestors we did not know in this life. It’s also about discovering more about those we love dearly and with whom we spent precious time here on earth.

When I sit down with other family members to write their histories and they ask me why anyone would want to know about them, I’ll assure them that their stories are worth telling and that their posterity will thank them, just as I thank my grandma for leaving her invaluable account. ■

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