

THE LIFE OF AMY E. MEYER

^{Elvera}
Amy was born at noon, June 12, 1917 to Frank and Mabel Anderson in Traverse County on a farm near Wheaton, Minnesota. She weighed around 9 pounds and was their first child.

Her dad had been a rural school teacher before he was married and had roomed and boarded at Mabel's parents' home. But he decided he would need more than a teacher's salary in order to support a wife and family so went into farming.

He had grown up on a farm with 8 brothers and 1 sister whose mother had passed away when the youngest children were quite small. So being one of the oldest he became adept at household tasks, caring for his young siblings as well as working outside.

Amy's first home was on a farm near her grandmother and grandfather Larson's farm. Many relatives lived in this neighborhood and often spent Sunday afternoons visiting together.

Her mother, dad and she moved to a farm closer to Wheaton where she can remember a few things which happened there, such as falling all the way down the stairway when she had gone up the steps to visit the school teacher, Julia Anderson, who had come to room and board. This lady later became her uncle Elmer Larson's wife. She also remembers getting stuck in a mud puddle, receiving a nice wicker rocker for a gift and her mother telling that Amy lost a nice ring and saying Amy told her that she gave it to the pigs. Was that true? Would she really do this?

At the next farm home where they lived Amy's first brother, Manley Russell, was born, March 16, 1921 when Amy was 4 years old. Amy was sleeping upstairs when the doctor and a friend of the family came in the middle of the night. Amy was curious as to what was going on downstairs. Kids weren't as smart in those days about how babies came into the world.

One thing she remembers about this place was listening to the phonograph - no radios or TV then. Two records among many they had was "Beautiful Ohio" and "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles".

Another event she remembers is when the hired man set her on a horse for her first horse back ride. She wasn't too interested and as she recalls, never rode again except Merry-Go-Round horses.

Amy's mother liked horses and had a horse which was hitched up to a small buggy and used to go and visit neighbors before she learned to drive the Model T Ford.

The family, 4 members now, moved on again living between White Rock, S.D. and Wheaton. This was where they lived when Amy started first grade in District 40. Amy often walked with neighborhood kids, 1½ miles to this school.

There was a railroad close to this farm. Manley, at that young age, would disappear quickly at times, and once their mother became quite frantic when she found him out by the railroad tracks.

While living here, Mabel had to keep a dentist appointment at Wheaton so she, Amy and Manley rode on the train from White Rock to Wheaton. They stayed overnight in Wheaton with Amy's grandfather Axel Anderson and his second wife Emily. There, with snow on the ground, Mabel pulled her 2 children on a sled to go to the dentist. It began snowing so hard and was difficult getting back to the house. The blizzard was so bad that Mabel and the children had to stay in Wheaton longer than they'd planned.

Finally they got back to White Rock on the train where Frank met them. He had run out of bread while alone so had baked baking powder biscuits which were hard enough to use for ammunition, but at least he'd survived the tough storm alone.

Amy attended only the first grade while at this place; then moved to a big farm house east of Wheaton where she attended second through fourth grades in District 52.

It was while living here that Amy's mother came down with scarlet fever and her dad rushed Manley and Amy to Wheaton for vaccinations, but Amy must have had the germ and came down with it too. A nurse came to stay for awhile, then a hired girl, Martha Nachtigal came after the nurse left. Martha taught Amy how to embroider, a craft she's enjoyed ever since.

Amy still remembers the telephone number at this home -717, a long ring, a short one, and a long one, made by turning a crank on the side of the phone. There were many parties on the line and everyone knew their neighbor's ring so could lift off the receiver and listen to the news or gossip.

One of the teachers in District 52, Florence Winter, was Amy's second and Fourth grade teacher. When Amy met Julien Meyer many years later she found that Florence had been his adviser when he was practice teaching near Moorhead, Minnesota.

Amy's third grade teacher was Grace Williams who taught her to read notes and let her practice on the school organ. There was a piano in Amy's home and she was very anxious to learn how to play and soon was able to play some easy music and hymns. In the fifth grade she went to a professional piano teacher and kept on with other teachers for several more years. At age 13 she played for Sunday School at Augustana Lutheran Church in White Rock, S.D. and was organist there a couple years later for church services and funerals.

She remembers one Sunday evening while sitting near the organ a mouse came out on the pedals. She was a bit shaky about playing for the rest of the service, but Amy thinks maybe the mouse got frightened by the music and she never saw it again.

Going back to Amy's pre-teen years, it wasn't all play although she and Manley had a pretty nice playhouse in the grove where a big wooden box, the kitchen, had an old kerosene stove, rooms were partitioned off and an old bed spring hung between two trees. They also had fun with their dog, a good farm dog named Shep.

Amy's job was to sit in the basement churning butter. Cream was put into a big stone jar and she had to push a wooden dasher up and down until the cream turned to butter. Then her mother took over, put it in small crocks, some for the family to use and the rest to take to town to trade for groceries.

Amy didn't especially care for cleaning and packing eggs into a big crate to bring to the grocery store to sell after taking out what was needed at home to use for cooking and baking. Another task was to clean the lamp chimneys.

The first casserole that Amy learned to prepare was scalloped potatoes. She got in on a lot of potato peeling, especially when meals were prepared for the threshing crew.

It was on one of those threshing days, on August 19, 1927 that Donald Oscar came to join the family. He was the only one of the five children to be born in a hospital, at Wheaton, MN. Mabel could not be at home with the threshing crew coming in to eat at noon. An aunt and a cousin of Amy's came over to help out with the cooking as Amy was only 10 years old and not capable of preparing such a large meal, but could peel potatoes and wash dishes and help take lunch out to the crew in the afternoon.

Amy was a bit disappointed in getting a brother as she had one and would have liked to have a sister. She made the remark "Ch, another stinkin' boy." But as it turned out she and Manley welcomed him home and thought he was pretty nice and almost fought as to who could hold him, and he needed lots of holding as he had colic for a few weeks and cried a lot.

It was while living at this place that Amy had to walk along a country road, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to school all alone. When her dad bought a new shiny black Model T Ford, she was happy to get rides to school in that. As she recalls, the price for that was \$660. Her mother hadn't driven the Ford and Maxwell owned previous to this, but learned to drive the new car.

When the weather was cold and stormy her dad would hitch up the horses to a sleigh and take Amy to school. One day the weather was so bad that only the teacher and Amy were there all day. That was fun! When it was time for school to be out Amy's dad came to bring her home.

Kids had to dress warmly in those days. There was a big stove in the corner of the school room and when it was cold it took most of the day for the room to get comfortably warm. The girls didn't especially care for the long underwear they had to wear with black stockings worn over that. On Sundays and special occasions they could wear light colored stockings-no slacks then.

Lunch was carried to school, usually in a syrup pail. It consisted mainly of sandwiches, cookies, cake and fruit, often wrapped in inner wrappers saved from cereal boxes and napkins. Sometimes during the winter the students took turns making hot cocoa to drink or soup on a kerosene stove in the entry of the building. Water was kept in a stoneware cooler, pumped from a well outside and carried in.

At noon and recess time games were played such as tag, pump-pump pull away, soft ball and others.

At this time there was no radio or TV, but as soon as radios came out Amy's uncle Elmer Larson bought one. He owned the John Deere implement at White Rock, S.D. and lived in Minnesota about a mile from town. He often worked evenings but always got home in time to put on his head phones and listen to "Amos and Andy" at 10:00 P.M. every night. Of course all the relatives were fascinated by this radio and took turns putting on the head phones to listen to the broadcasts.

Amy loved to read and spent a lot of time doing this at her home after checking out school library books. She also enjoyed when the teacher made an assignment to write a poem and she still enjoys reading poetry.

When Amy went into fifth grade her father obtained a job working for Elmer in his implement at White Rock and assembled farm machinery. They left the farm and moved to a big house owned by Lindbergs. This had electricity, the first one to live in

with that luxury. It was in Minnesota, just a short distance from the South Dakota border. There were several homes on this hill. Now Amy was able to be accompanied by other children and walking to District 40 again. Manley was going to school by this time.

Soon they moved in to White Rock where a house was purchased. This is where Amy's sister, Mildred Ione, was born, January 5, 1931, and also her youngest brother, Kenneth Edward on June 2, 1933. Amy attended school here from 6th grade through her Senior year at High School.

Her father was president of the school board and handed her her diploma upon graduation after she's given her Valedictory speech. The classes became smaller each year with the declining population in town and there were only 4 in her graduating Senior class, Doris Dodds, Fern Miller, Donald Camerud and Amy.

Amy's dad became manager of the Texaco gas station there and Amy became an expert on pumping gas and helping out at times when her dad became ill, etc. These were difficult times with the drought, bad dust storms and the depression of the '30s. But there was always food on the table and milk to drink as her dad had a cow on the outskirts of town and even sold a little milk to neighbors. He became a substitute mail carrier on a rural route for awhile. This was a good paying job which he would liked to have kept. He also sold brushes for some time which didn't bring in much profit.

Everyone's wardrobes were quite small, not much money to spend for clothes. Garments for children were often made from adult clothing and flour sacks and feed sacks made of printed fabric.

Amy was happy to get \$35 at the end of the year, her salary as church organist. One year she used \$15 of that to buy a dark green coat with a nice fur collar and a Princess Eugenie hat, in vogue then, to match the coat. She often baby sat for neighbors, long evenings at times, for 25¢ or 35¢ a night, and maybe 50¢ occasionally.

The best sidewalk in town was in the block in front of Amy's home. So this was used for rollerskating by Amy and friends. A river was on the edge of town on which when frozen was used by ice skaters including Amy. She enjoyed having her dad go skating with her when he had time. There was also a rink in the middle of town. Croquet was a popular game in the summer and many enjoyed walking on stilts. Amy's stilts were not very high.

There was a town hall in which many school plays, operettas and programs were given as well as bands coming in to play for dances, and at times traveling groups presented entertainment.

One evening while Amy was busy at school typing parts for a play to be given, Myrtle Meyer, Amy's English teacher, came there with Bertel Malm, who later became her husband, and her brother, Julien. Amy was introduced to them. The girls in school had seen Julien's picture on Myrtle's desk and had seemed to admire him, but Myrtle said that Amy hadn't paid much attention to it.

It wasn't long after that when Myrtle asked Amy if she'd like to attend a house party at Weisers near Rosholt where Bertel and Julien would be playing in a small band. That was Amy's first date with Julien.

After that there were many more dates. Amy had her first taste of lefsa at Julien's home 6 miles south of Rosholt. His mother Carrie was an excellent cook, loved to crochet and sew and was able to do outside work such as milking cows, working in the fields, gardening, etc. She and her husband Louis were very active in Trondhjem Lutheran Church not far from their home. They were the first couple married in that church.

Julien and Amy were married June 16, 1935 and had the same anniversary date as Julien's parents, his aunt and uncle, Meito and Clara Meyer, and his paternal grandparents, Matthies and Torbjor Meyer.

From here on, the remainder of her story can be read in Julien's story of his life such as where they lived and where their children were born.

AMY'S INTERESTS AND HOBBIES

1. READING - Started at an early age and continues on.
2. MUSIC - Played piano for singing groups at High School and churches during teen years, and has continued playing at churches where she's lived. She also plays piano or organ at the Meadow Lane Nursing Home for church services and other activities and at Our Redeemer's Chapel at times. Was Ladies' Aid pianist for several years. Gave piano lessons at Holt, MN 2 years. Loves listening to the old standard tunes and Country Music on radio KLOP at Madison, MN owned by Julien, son Maynard and friend Terry Overlander, and the good music on KSCR in Benson.
3. SEWING - Sews some of her own clothes and many garments for her family and friends. Has made a few quilts.
4. CROCHETING - Made afghans for all her children and herself, and one for each of the grandchildren as they graduated from High School. Has made many doilies, collars, vests, etc.
5. KNITTING - Made many sweaters, vests, scarves, mittens, caps.
6. BAKING - Rolls, breads, doughnuts, cookies and some Scandinavian delicacies such as lefsa, fattigmand, Krumkake, Sand Bakkels. Her doughnut making partner is Gilma Jossart, a dear friend who lives across the street.
7. CHURCH - Taught Sunday School, Bible School for several years. Held many offices in Ladies' Aid, WELCA, Circles and Hospital Auxiliary.
8. OTHER ACTIVITIES - Joined Zetetic Study Club in 1966. After being a member for 25 years went on the Honorary list. Had held all the offices in that organization and served on committees. She is a member of the neighborhood Birthday Club and also of the Good Will Club.