

Our forebears

Early in the year 2002 I received a call from my cousin, Norma, urging me to draw a pen and ink rendition of Grandpa Nielsen's home in Draper. I felt honored to be asked, and, seeing the finished piece, chose to use the drawing on my Christmas card as well. As I began to draw I also began to think. I thought about the exceptional forebears who brought untold gifts into my life. While I never knew Grandpa Nielsen, I have heard many stories, told and retold, about his life, labors, sacrifices and joys; and I don't remember how many times I sat shoulder to shoulder with grandma on the piano bench and sang her beautiful compositions with gusto in my little boy voice. Grandma was my only audience, but her gentle smile was a standing ovation to my ears.

I have wondered, sometimes, if—as grandma and grandpa went about their daily, seemingly mundane, activities—they realized that they were laying a lasting foundation for their children and grandchildren. Through the labor of our ancestors land was cleared, seeds were planted, and barren land was made a garden spot long before we drew our first breath. Homes were built, beginning with dugouts and log houses and giving way to lovely homes such as the one that grandpa built. We now enjoy a legacy of comfort built upon the hard labor of our forebears. I have often wondered if we honor them enough . . .