Juda Andrew Litwinenco

a biography
written by

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with the assistance of

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Foreword

Juda Andrew Litwinenco lived in Campbell County from 1890until 1938. The Litwinenco farm, later the Tolstedt farm, was seven miles west of Herreid. Parts of this article were excerpted from the book Seven Miles West of Herreid, by Drs. Grandon and Vern Tolstedt.

The information contained herein is mostly from the memories of the authors, grandsons of Juda and Maria Litwinenco. The stories are personal, and through this article, Juda Litwinenco is often referred to as Grandpa. Also included are brief biographies of the wives and children of Juda Litwinenco. It is our intent to report not only the tangible details of Juda Litwinenco's life, but to give the reader a sense of him as a person and to paint a picture of life in Campbell County , South Dakota during his lifetime. Time and personal prejudice may have altered facts but every attempt has been made to be realistic and truthful. The vital statistics about this family has been compiled by Betsy Tolstedt.

Juda Litwinenco

The Juda Litwinenco family came from the Odessa area of what is now Ukraine. Although this area is technically Ukraine, the family always considered themselves Russian. (The coal black hair of parents and offspring suggested an Asian somewhere in the background. The daughters were very proud of their black hair and made sure it stayed black as years passed.) Grandpa had other siblings and there was regular correspondence until the First World War. According to Grandpa Litwinenco his father or grandfather was a sailor on the Black Sea for 30 years. This is information from Grandpa to Grandon personally and seems to have merit in that Odessa is a Black Sea port.

Juda Litwinenco (originally spelled Litwinenko) was born June 18, 1862. The exact city of birth is unknown. Immigration papers indicate that he immigrated from Aleksandrowska. This does not mean that this was his home but could be the city where his immigration journey began. At age 20 Juda became a father and widower the same day. His first wife's name is unknown but the daughter's name was Mary. Juda remarried at age 23. His wife was Maria Nesterenko and their first son was born in September of 1886. He was named Sergei but on arrival in the United States was called Samuel. Information from death certificate says Samuel was born in Nicholiow, Russia. A daughter, Regina, was born in Russia in 1888. She became known as Irene.

The decision to leave Russia was largely religious. In the period before emigration, the family had been Baptist. This denomination had political overtones and the story is that Grandpa was beaten and brought home on a door (stretcher) because he had left the church of Russia. This convinced the family to leave. Grandpa was a religious man. Christianity was a guiding light for this kind and generous man all his life.

Grandpa was a Russian landowner and apparently the proceeds from the sale of his land financed the trip to the USA. The information about Juda Litwinenco being a land owner was given to the author by Juda's daughter, Chrystine Litwinenco. She was probably trying to impress on me that Juda was not a serf but rather a man of modest means. The exact time of leaving Russia is unknown, but Juda, Maria, Mary (daughter of his first and deceased wife), Sam and Regina traveled to the USA via Germany, embarking at Hamburg on the ship Columbia, arriving in New York on May 17, 1890.

The method of getting to Hamburg, Germany, is unknown but likely was by train. One family story is that Grandpa and Grandma left

separately, one by train and one by boat, so authorities would not detain them for whatever reason. Certainly they had very little money. The possibility of travel part way by water is real. The Black Sea was a traveled waterway, as were the large rivers such as the Danube and the Dneiper and Don. River traffic was slow but cheap. The author suspects that travel was via rail in multiple stages to Kiev, north into Belorussia, then east through Poland into Germany. It was certainly a formidable trip in the 1880s.

Another family anecdote is that Grandpa's mother was a strong Russian Orthodox Catholic and resented the fact that Grandpa became a Baptist. Since that faith was prohibited by the Tzar, Great Grandma Litwinenco informed the authorities that her son was a Baptist and thus leaving Russia was imperative for political reasons. Certainly Orthodox Catholicism was a state religion and any other faith was not socially or politically acceptable.

Queries of Grandpa, as to the trip at sea left the author with the impression that Juda didn't like boats and was happy to arrive safely.

The family arrived in New York in the 1890. This was prior to the establishment of Ellis Island. They were processed at The Port of New York in New York City. They were flat broke and there was some question as to their admission to the United States. The family story is that Sam was a vigorous, active, charming little fellow who caught the eye of an immigration official who said, "we need children like that", and their immigration was accomplished. There was a problem of money. The immigration officials obtained a job for Grandpa, manual labor of course. The first job he had was scooping grain out of the hold of a ship. This involved catching grain in mid-air from another worker with a large shovel. The second job was in the granite quarries in Vermont. These two jobs lasted several months. There is no information as to where the family lived during this period, but presumably New York. Money was saved and the train was taken to South Dakota. The family had friends near Eureka, South Dakota who helped while homestead documents were filed. Grandon has those original documents. It is likely that they moved in to the home quarter section at least a year before the bureaucracy made it official.

The choice of homestead land was based in part on what was available, but also on its physical characteristics. There were no steep hills, a limited number of rocks, and a small shallow lake. Ground water was present in a shallow well. About 1/4 of the land was marshy and covered with water in wet seasons. Grandpa said the mosquitoes were frightful. The home built in the middle of the quarter section was sod. Strangely, it had a basement; the typical sod house used the prairie sod as the floor. Over the next two decades, this quarter section was increased by three more quarter sections. Other land was purchased and lost because of lack of money. School land, known as the "school

section", was rented for pasture and another quarter section was rented for many years as strictly pasture.

The move to the present location of the farmstead, one mile west of the original, was in about 1900. The location was farther from mosquitoes and closer to the road that had now been constructed. A frame farmhouse was built in 1906. Only one child (Maybelle) was born in that home. The remaining were sod-home children.

Grandpa Litwinenco was a sturdy man, 5'10" tall. He had the heavy hands of a working man. One of his hands was nearly twice the size of the author's, although the author did inherit his short fingers. He always wore a beard with a mustache. These were carefully trimmed. He was always concerned about his personal appearance and family pictures document that he was a handsome man. Grandon's understanding about the beard was that he had a heavy scar on his face caused by an accident in Russia. Supposedly he had fallen and a wagon wheel ran over his face. The beard covered the scar. This shows concern for personal appearance not always present in South Dakota pioneers of that era.

Grandpa spoke Russian, a Russian dialect of southern Russia, German, and English. He likely understood some Ukrainian. The family was encouraged to use English and in later years none of the family could converse in Russian with the possible exception of Elvina.

Religion was from a Russian Bible and family religious services were in Russian. Grandpa never swore and rarely raised his voice. Distress from whatever source was acknowledged by repeated "aye yi yi.

Juda Litwinenco became an ordained minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1913. Every winter Juda would leave his farm to be managed by his wife, Maria, and his daughters, and go to North Dakota to the Russian community to act as a missionary. There are a number of churches in North Dakota that still have active congregations. These churches were originally organized by Juda Litwinenco.

Juda Litwinenco enjoyed music and encouraged his children to sing and play the piano. The two youngest children, Lulu and Maybelle, became accomplished musicians. All of the family had good voices and enjoyed singing. John Litwinenco was a stalwart in church choirs for years.

For some unknown reason, Grandpa did not like accordion music. Possibly he had heard too much of it in Russia. He may have considered it as peasant music and he was no longer a peasant. Grandpa learned that there were 760 musical instruments in the world. He could not understand why WNAX in Yankton, South Dakota chose to highlight the accordion.

Juda Litwinenco was a hearty eater. His taste in food was not for steaks or roasts. He liked casseroles, soups, and stews. Bread was present at every meal and Juda ate vast amounts of bread. He liked all kinds of bread. He did not eat pork or shellfish because of his religious

beliefs. His favorite foods were actually Russian in origin. Vereneki was boiled dough filled with farm cheese and supplemented with vast amounts of sour cream. This was one of his favorites, which he ate enthusiastically. He also like stuffed cabbage rolls which were known as Goulobski. There was also Piroshki which is dough stuffed with meat and rice and baked. Another favorite food was dough like a pie crust, which was filled with sweetened pumpkin. This was called Blachinda. Actually Juda Litwinenco ate anything placed before him and things such as potatoes, beans and lentils were favorites. He ate vegetables and salads when they were available, which was usually only in the summer months. The diet described above is heavy in calories and it is surprising that Juda did not weigh more than his rather standard 200 pounds. Hard work for long hours probably kept his weight down.

Juda Litwinenco was entirely in favor of pictures and picture taking. Pictures were not often taken because it was expensive and he felt that the ordinary activities of life were unimportant. In 1910 Juda and Maria chose to have a formal portrait of two of their daughters Elvina and Lulu. The result of this effort was a beautiful color tinted portrait, which hung in the family living room for many years and then an additional 20 years in the attic. It is amazing that this color portrait has survived without significant damage to this day. In Juda's later years especially when he was working with the Adventist church he was very happy to have his picture taken either as an individual or in a group. It is noted that in the pictures available of Juda that his beard is always well trimmed and he appears to be well dressed.

Juda Litwinenco did talk to his family about Russia. Usually when he did this he spoke Russian and others present such as grandchildren and son in laws could not understand what he was saying. Juda did not refer to his previous home as Russia but rather as "the old country". There were other English words, which did not exist in Russian that were interspersed in his dialogue. Examples of such words are threshing machine, combine, and tractor. By careful listening to his conversation in the Russian language and hearing English words interspersed occasionally one could usually understand at least part of the conversation.

As Juda became older his speech reverted back to Russian. He had insisted that his family speak only English and as a result his daughters' knowledge of Russian was limited except for daughter Elvina. When he preached or had a family church service the language was Russian. In his later years he much preferred to speak Russian and therefore his grandchildren heard that language spoken frequently. The grandchildren did not learn that language. A few words were repeated frequently. The most common was "yasisnyah", meaning "I don't know". Another word used occasionally was skorra, meaning "hurry". Another word heard frequently during prayers was "dobra". The authors have

never found out the meaning of this word and likely that is because of improper spelling.

In the decade of 1910, transcontinental railroads had been completed. The closest railroad was the Milwaukee road, which was a transcontinental railroad that stopped approximately 30 miles from Juda's home. Juda left the care of the farm to his wife and daughters and went to Portland, Oregon to visit his daughter, Mary. He talked about this trip for several years and while on the trip purchased a leather bound picture book of the route traveled by the railroad. This picture book was in the farmhouse for many years and grandchildren were privileged to look at it. Certainly this picture book was an incentive for grandchildren to travel.

Juda Litwinenco quickly became sick and tired of sod houses. By the year 1905 he had lived in a sod house for 15 years. The sod houses were small dark and dirty and Juda's dream was a new frame house. He traveled the countryside of South and North Dakota carefully observing what other farmers had built. The type of structure was decided on and a plan was drawn up by his son, Sam.

Building of the new house was started in about 1905. The frame house was built by the cooperative effort of the entire family. It had nine rooms and originally did not have a porch or an entry way. Those two structures were added several years later. Juda and his family moved into this house in 1906. This was a wonderful exciting time for the Litwinenco family and they promptly removed their old sod house.

The house the Litwinenco family built in 1906 was reasonably well constructed and survived the harsh South Dakota weather for nearly 70 years. There were some problems with this house as with many new homes and one of these problems was a foundation. The foundation consisted of rocks, which were secured together by concrete. The foundation was not complete being only at the corners and the middle of the sides of the house. This meant that the cold wind in the winter and the hot wind in the summer could get under the house and this resulted in difficulty heating the home. Some type of insulating material was needed, which could be packed up against the side of the house in the fall of the year to keep up the cold wind. Ash from a coal burning stoves was an excellent insulator. The Dakota wind would blow this ash away and so it was a very temporary insulator. In addition to that one had to be very careful that there were no remaining hot coals in the ash for fear of burning down the house, indeed on one occasion a small fire was started on the edge of the house but was put out by the cold wind. Straw and hay were good insulators but tended to blow away and if it was wet they became rotten quickly. Another readily available substance that was an excellent insulator was manure. It did not blow away easily but did tend to smell up the house a bit. This problem was finally solved by building a complete foundation.

Very shortly after the new frame house was completed in 1906 the Litwinenco family decided they wanted a better heating system than a stove in the middle of the floor. It was decided to put a steam heating system into the house. This was an extensive and expensive project. It started out by needing excavation for a basement to place the furnace. This also stored the coal. Holes were drilled in the floors and pipes placed throughout the house along with a radiator in each room. It was a successful project and for several years the family had steam heat. The original insulation project also involved the use of vast amounts of asbestos. All of the pipes throughout the house were covered with asbestos as a protection against the hot pipes as well as insulation. There were problems with the steam heat system and the family only used it about three years. One problem was the expense of the anthracite coal. The other problem was noise. Steam heat tends to have pipes and radiators that make noise whenever they are heating or cooling and Juda Litwinenco hated the pounding noise, it kept him awake all night. Over the next 20 years this steam heat system was entirely removed and for years a simple wood-burning stove was placed in the living room to heat the entire house. The kitchen was heated by a wood-burning cooking range.

The kitchen of the new frame Litwinenco home was a large room that was used for cooking and eating. This was a comfortable situation for the family except for the summer months. In the summer the cook stove in the house created so much heat that eating in the same room was very uncomfortable. The solution was to build a summer kitchen, which could be used for cooking during the hot months and used for storage the remainder of the year. Two such buildings were built about 40 feet from the main house and for many years served as a cooking kitchen, storage room and washhouse. The cooking was done on a stove fueled by kerosene. These summer kitchens became very hot in the summer and life was uncomfortable for those preparing the food. The summer kitchen was a valuable addition to farm life and did make living in the main home in summertime more pleasant.

Sometimes during the threshing season Juda and Maria and family would set up tables outside. This was actually a very pleasant place to eat especially in the late evening when the Dakota wind had decreased. Long planks were set up on sawhorses and covered with oilcloth. Food would be prepared inside and brought out to the makeshift table. Often there were fifteen to twenty men eating lunch and dinner. The amount of food consumed was monumental. Frequently to get enough meat for this crew a yearling calf would be butchered just before threshing started. One summer the author spread the rumor that the family had butchered a sick calf to feed to the threshers. Juda and his son-in-law's thought this was hilarious. The women doing the cooking were not amused.

The installation and eventual removal of this heating system involved exposure to asbestos by many of the Litwinenco family members including children. This exposure was continuous and over many years. There has never been a problem with chronic pulmonary insufficiency or lung cancer among the Litwinencos.

When the new frame house was built in 1906 there were two doors, which gave access to the outside. Each door had a standard deadbolt with a key. The keys were placed on a hook in the pantry and never touched again. The house was never locked, as there was no need for it. Thirty years later Juda Litwinenco was visiting his daughter Elizabeth in Denver, CO. Elizabeth lived in a nice home with modern equipment including a front door that locked automatically when closed. Grandpa Litwinenco did not understand this and when he got up at 5 a.m. he went out on the porch to get the morning paper. The door closed and locked automatically and Grandpa was outside in his night clothes. He was locked out. This problem he attempted to solve by knocking on the door. The family was sound asleep and did not hear his knock. Juda had never heard of a doorbell so did not understand the purpose of that small button. Repeated knocking finally summoned help and Juda was now acquainted with modern inventions such as doorbells and automatic door locks.

The family came to South Dakota about a decade after the Sioux had eliminated Custer. There was considerable travel across the Missouri River at that time. In the winter it was frozen and in late summer it could be forded with a degree of care. We know that Indians passed by the farm to obtain supplies in Eureka, 20 miles east. The question has come up as to whether Grandpa actually knew Sitting Bull. It is possible. Sitting Bull lived about 10 miles away. We know from personal stories that Grandpa did cross the river on occasion and probably knew Chief Gall. Grandpa homesteaded in 1890 and Sitting Bull was still alive. He was murdered by Indian Police in 1891. Sitting Bull may have been living on that reservation at the time.

When Dr John Litwinenco would visit the farm, especially at family reunions, he would entertain his sisters with various nostalgic stories. Most of these stories had a lot of truth to them, but it was hard to tell where truth and embellishment met. A number of these stories pertained to Sitting Bull and the native-American community. The Missouri River is about ten miles west of the farm homestead. According to the story, one winter when the Missouri was frozen hard, allowing for travel to the west shore, Grandpa visited the Indian reservation on the west side of the river. Grandpa Litwinenco may well have gone across to visit the Indians; it was likely that he took food to them. When Grandpa went to visit he was invited to a meal and of course it would have been impolite to refuse. As they came to the big pot of stew simmering on an open fire, Sitting Bull said “dig deep, dog in bottom".

About that time some of the young Indian braves were discouraged about their situation with the white men and put on war paint. The homesteaders got wind of this and were frightened. They all got together and left their homes for Eureka, the nearest town. Grandpa did not go with them. He knew the Indians and was not afraid.

Indians also came east of the river to shop. The trail was near the family's sod house and one winter evening two Indians in a wagon with a team of horses stopped. One man got off the wagon and asked Grandpa if he could come in and get warm. He was welcomed but came in alone. Grandpa asked, "What about your friend?" The reply was, "not cold." The family guessed later that the person who stayed on the wagon was his wife. There was a difference in cultures.

The Sioux became warlike again before the turn of the century. This was the period of the Ghost Dancers. There had been some isolated murders by the Sioux in western South Dakota. Rumors were that there was a big uprising and all the farmers were to be killed. Rumors dispersed more rapidly than the prairie wind on the frontier. The farmers were advised to pack their belongings, poison their wells and go to town. There was an exodus of many people. Grandpa didn't go anywhere. He said he would be happy to give the Indians water from his well, and thought it very humorous that his neighbors all left.

Just to the northwest of the farmstead is a range of hills that extends to the Missouri River. About one-half mile north is a hill we called Indian Hill because teepee rings can still be identified. This was an obvious lookout area as one can see for miles. The Indians could locate herds of buffalo, deer, elk, and any enemies. Water was less than a half mile away in potholes along a creek bottom (Lucy Creek a tributary of Spring Creek). It was usually filled with water. It was common after rain to find arrowheads in the fields. On two occasions, a stone hammer was found on the farm.

Because Grandpa had mostly daughters, it was necessary from time to time to have a "hired man." This was usually a farm lad from a big family. His prospects for the future were limited. He was paid a minimal salary but provided with all the food he could eat and a clean bed and room. For this he was expected to work as long as the rest of the family, not drink alcohol, preferably not smoke cigarettes, and get up in the morning with the family. Some days were 2-4 hours and other days 11-18 hours. Sometimes he would be married and the young wife was expected to share household duties with the women of the family. In general, it was a satisfactory temporary arrangement. The personalities involved were multiple.

One such person played the harmonica and guitar and, unfortunately, sang. Songs such as "Show Me The Way To Go Home" and many other so-called western tunes imparted a dislike for western music to Grandon that lasted for years. Another hired man was a Bible-reading manic-depressive who spent his time pointing out to Grandon’s

parents' their sinful ways, while eating vast amounts of Elvina's good cooking.

Did the Litwinenco family use buffalo chips for heating their home? Indeed they did. The author discussed this with the older members of the family and found there were several years in which the family picked up so-called buffalo chips from the prairie and heated the sod house with them. These were not really buffalo chips in that the buffalo had died out at least two decades before. This was the feces of ordinary cattle and since cattle ate the prairie grass, as did the buffalo, this fecal material was very similar. It was a terrible source of fuel. It burned rapidly so that vast amounts of buffalo chips were necessary. It was dusty and there was a large amount of lightweight ash. There were no trees on the South Dakota prairie where the Litwinenco's lived but eight miles to the west was the Missouri River Valley where trees were abundant. The river valley was public land so farmers had no reluctance to chop the trees down in the valley and use them as a source of winter fuel. In the fall several trips were made to the Missouri River Valley and trees cut and logs brought back to the farm to be used as firewood. The trees were mostly cottonwood and ash but as a source of fuel were far better than buffalo chips. One fall in the early 1900s the Litwinenco family had a new hired man. This young man was very sure of himself and didn't need advice from anyone. He accompanied the family to the river valley, helped chop the logs and helped load them. Everyone was on their way home in the late afternoon. The pull out of the Missouri River Valley was long and steep and the horses pulling the heavily loaded wagons became very tired. It was necessary to stop several times and let the horses rest. There were no brakes on these wagons so they tended to roll backward down the hill. Sam Litwinenco advised the hired man to find a rock or a short log that could be placed under the wheel as a wedge to prevent it from rolling backward. The hired man paid no attention to this advice and the problem did arise halfway out of the river valley as the horses needed to rest and therefore forward movement was stopped. The hired man's wagons started to roll backward and this young man was without a method of stopping it so he used the only available material namely his foot. Fortunately the dirt was soft and the only resulting problem was that of a very sore foot.

The Litwinenco family was well known in the community in the 1910s and '20s. This was largely due to their threshing enterprise. With the exception of Mary, none of the Litwinenco girls married local people. With the death of Sam Litwinenco in 1918, and John Litwinenco's departure for California in 1930, the name died out in Campbell County.

The Litwinenco's emphasis on private school religious education created a financial problem. It was expensive to travel to distant schools, which were private schools, not tax supported. As time went on there was a deepening debt on the farm, which ultimately resulted in bank foreclosure in the 1930s. The loss of the Litwinenco farm by foreclosure

in the late 1930s was not due to a single factor but due to multiple uncontrolled factors such as droughts, infestation of grasshoppers, wheat rust, ageing inefficient farm equipment as well as the costs of private schools.

Juda Litwinenco did not learn to drive an automobile until he was in his late '50s. A model T. Ford was purchased and fortunately at that time there were few cars on the road and learning to drive was by trial and error. Eventually Juda did become a moderately good driver but fortunately at that time there were many younger family members who were willing and anxious to drive. The thing Juda had not learned was the use of a clutch and shift and when the time came for him to need a car when he remarried in 1938 it also involved learning to drive with a different shift mechanism. In the summer of 1938 the family decided that Grandpa Litwinenco needed a car. The Herrmann family was visiting from Denver and so that family along with Grandpa and his grandson, Grandon, accompanied them to Denver in the late summer. For a period of a week every used car in Denver was carefully evaluated and finally a very nice 1933 Chevrolet was selected and purchased for a reasonable price. The family had carefully instructed grandson, Grandon, to drive the new car back to South Dakota and in the process teach Grandpa how to drive. Grandon was 15 years old and had been driving for four years so that part of the adventure was not difficult. Grandpa and Grandon drove through the Black Hills where they took the scenic route and then stayed overnight in a motel in Rapid City. The following day on the plains of Western South Dakota where roads seemed to go in a straight lines forever, Grandon decided it was time for the driving lesson. Grandpa knew how to steer the car but the use of the accelerator was another problem. It seemed that in the model T. the speed of the car was controlled by hand and in the Chevy speed was controlled by the foot. Grandpa used the accelerator rather than the brake and there were times the ride was very exciting and it seemed to Grandon that we were either going too fast or too slow. After approximately 20 miles Grandon suggested that the driving lesson was over and Grandpa concurred in this decision. Eventually Grandpa did learn to drive with this new type of shift but was never an accomplished driver and fortunately the ditches were wide and traffic light in both South and North Dakota.

Injuries on the farm were common. One occurred when Grandpa Litwinenco was shelling corn. This involved a machine, which was hooked to a motor either a tractor or a stationary motor by a belt. There were a number of gears with chain drives on the sheller and Grandpa was acting as the engineer while grandson Grandon put ears of corn into the machine. Grandpa was not being careful and his thumb was caught in one of the chain drives and lacerated deeply. Grandpa said “ay,yi,yi” several times and told Grandon to keep on working as he went to the house. Approximately five minutes later Grandpa returned with a

carefully applied bandage and went back to work. He considered it a minor injury and I'm sure that over the years had had many small lacerations and injuries. Our objective was obtained, the corn was shelled and cattle were fed.

A time-consuming winter occupation was that of making and repairing harness for horses. Grandpa was an expert at this and all of his equipment was brought into a corner of the kitchen where a small table was set up and Grandpa went to work. Grandson Grandon was fascinated by this and so was taught some of the elementary tasks of harness making. There was sewing of leather, riveting and cutting. This went on for several months during the winter and Grandon's mother was happy to have the stinky horse harnesses out of her kitchen. Most of the harnesses had been purchased from a farm supply store originally but their repair was strictly up to the individual farmer. To make leather repairs it was necessary to have uncut leather available so Grandpa devised a leather and tanning machine. Hide was obtained when a steer was butchered for winter use. This hide was treated with the appropriate solution of tannic acid and then put into Grandpa's tanning machine. A single horse powered this machine. This horse went around in a circle repeatedly. It was Grandon's job to make sure the horse kept going and it is a question as to which participant disliked their task the most, Grandon or the horse. In any event the operation was a success and leather was processed in such a way that it could be used in harness repair.

The blacksmith shop was Juda Litwinenco's favorite place. It had a forge with a bellows to provide a source of air blowing on anthracite coal. This made a very hot fire and in this way steel could be heated until it was at a white-hot temperature and then pounded into any shape that Grandpa desired. It was the duty of grandchildren to work the bellows and although this got tiresome it was all such a fascinating process that most grandchildren didn't complain. In addition to the forge there was an anvil, a grindstone, and multiple iron working tools.

The horse was the main source of power on Juda Litwinenco's farm. His time of farming from 1890 until the mid 1930s was a time when horses were important in the Dakotas. Machinery of the age was adapted to horsepower. Plows, headers, rakes, mowers, grain wagons, hay racks and manure scrapers were all adapted to horsepower. These were workhorses. The minimum number to operate the farm was 10 but usually there were more than that. Harvesting grain with a header and two header boxes took a minimum of 10 horses, two for each header box and 6 for the header. Originally during harvesting Juda had the job of running the header but as soon as he had sons and son-in-law's who were willing to do that job Juda became a "jack of all trades" doing any job during harvesting that was necessary.

Occasionally there was a horse specifically designated for riding but that was not during the early years. Juda did not ride horse-

back. Likewise there were no horses specifically designated for pulling a buggy for personal transportation. Any old nag could pull the buggy. Speed was not important. Juda liked horses. He fixed their harness, sprayed them with pesticide to keep flies off and had the mare's bred to insure a continuing new supply of workhorses. In 1938 horses were still an important part of the farm power. There was an epidemic of equine encephalitis that year and a number of horses died. This was a devastating event as far as farm finances were concerned. These horses were really never replaced. It was at this time that tractors became the prime source of power. Juda Litwinenco did not like tractors. He was willing to purchase them because his sons and son-in-law's wanted them. Juda Litwinenco managed horses very well. The horses seem to understand him and respond him. Juda's grandson, Grandon, was always amazed when Juda was driving a team of horses and wanted to horses to turn he said "Gee" to go right and "Haw" to go left. The horses were very responsive to Juda's commands but paid no attention when Grandon tried this method of turning the horses. To Grandon's knowledge there were no special commands for left and right in Russian.

The first tractor on the Litwinenco farm was a steam tractor. It was purchased shortly after the turn-of-the-century and was managed by Juda's son, Sam. Coal was the source of power for the steam tractor and that tractor used massive amounts of coal. Within a few years it was decided that this original steam tractor should be replaced with a more efficient model. A shiny new steam tractor that was covered with a roof of wood was purchased and indeed it was more efficient but still used massive amounts of coal. It was very poor for pulling a plow or any other fieldwork and therefore Juda continued to use horses. The new steam tractor was great for providing power with a belt on a threshing machine. It was used until the early 1930s when a gasoline powered Allis Chalmers tractor was purchased. After that the two steam tractors were parked in the farmyard and used only for children to play on.

The other machines that Grandpa Litwinenco accepted were threshing machines. These were large wooden machines with a 36 inch cylinder. Juda Litwinenco and his sons had two of these threshing machines, which were used from the early part of the century until the 1930s for commercial threshing. The steam tractor pulled the threshing machine from farm to farm and then the grain would be threshed and the local farmer paid by the bushel. The last of the two threshing machines was used intermittently until the 1940s. There was a large machine shed on the farm and the threshing machine fit into that so that it was protected from bad weather and therefore lasted for years without use. Finally in 1950 it was taken apart by several of Juda's grandchildren and made into a small boat. It was made of excellent oak hardwood.

The most important activity that Juda carried out was sharpening plowshares. This was nearly a daily affair as plowshares became dull

very rapidly. The other activity was sharpening the blades on a sickle. This also was a daily activity during the hay-mowing season. The grindstone was turned by foot power. The operator would sit on a small seat and turn the grindstone with his legs and then sharpen the sickle by holding it in the proper position on the grindstone. It was a slow time consuming procedure without electric power.

Juda Litwinenco was a wheat farmer. It is true that they raised many other things on the farm including cattle and other small grains but wheat was the main product. The type of wheat he liked best was called durum. This was hard northern spring wheat that was excellent for bread. The problem with durum wheat was low yield and susceptibility to disease such as wheat rust. Other varieties of wheat were developed, which were more drought resistance and rust resistance and reluctantly Juda made the change to those varieties of wheat. Durum wheat is still grown in many areas of the Dakotas especially farther north than the Litwinenco farm.

The first few years Litwinenco's lived in South Dakota they made their own flour for making bread by grinding the wheat they had raised. This was time-consuming and tedious work so they were pleased to find several flour mills within twenty miles of their home and subsequently they would take a wagonload (about 50 bushels) in the fall of the year and the mill would exchange this wheat for ground flour. This was whole wheat flour and the family ate that for years. In the 1920s it became fashionable to use white flour. The trade name of this flour was Occident. It could be purchased in a variety of local stores in 50 pounds sacks and this was much easier than driving many miles to exchange their wheat. The family felt they had come up in the world when they started using white flour. The flour was made white by bleaching it. This process destroyed some of the essential nutrients in flour but the final product looked good and tasted good. It is interesting to speculate as to whether the longer lives of the older children in the family was related to the type of bread they ate as compared to the white bread eaten by the younger children.

There were two other products that Juda Litwinenco liked to grow. One was Timothy hay, which was a wonderful cattle feed but not very drought resistance. The other grain was millet. This was an Eastern European grain that served as food for people as well as cattle feed. It's straw was excellent fodder for cattle and horses.

By the time the terrible decade of the 1930s ended, Juda Litwinenco had been farming in northern South Dakota for 50 years. Yields of wheat had been gradually going down. He attributed this to droughts, grasshoppers, and plant disease. He did not realize that part of the problem was his own personal method of land management. One of Juda's methods of preparing a field for seeding was to wait for a dry day with a heavy wind and then to set fire to the stubble of last year's crop. This burned not only the stubble but also weed seed and mice and

gophers. After burning the stubble all that was needed was to seed the field. After many years of this type of land management there was no longer any humus or fertility left in the soil. It had become nonproductive. Juda knew that spreading manure on fields would increase productivity but there was not enough of it and he did not have the heavy equipment necessary for this job. Commercial fertilizers were available that were expensive and not always completely successful. Eventually after Juda's retirement from farming his fields were restored to productivity by proper land management.

Juda Litwinenco was sick and tired of stock tanks that leaked and had to be repaired several times a year. The standard stock tanks on the farm were a round structure made of wooden barrel staves with a wooden floor. As long as these pieces of wood were wet the tank did not leak to any great extent but when dried out leaking of water was vigorous. In addition these wooden tanks were easily broken by cattle pushing against them and horses accidentally kicking them. Metal tanks were not much better in that they were easily bent and rusted rapidly so leaks were frequent. Grandpa Litwinenco's solution was a tank made of concrete. The site was prepared, proper reinforcing rods obtained and forms built to contain the mixed concrete. The tank was approximately 15 feet across and had walls at least a foot thick. This tank did not leak and cattle and horses could not damage it. This cement tank was successful for about twelve years but did have problems. One of the problems was dirt. Not only were there dust storms but cattle would defecate into the tank and sometimes even walk into the tank with their filthy dirty feet. This meant that at least twice a year the tank needed to be cleaned out. Often this was a job for grandchildren who were strong enough to use a shovel or a bucket. It was a dirty job cleaning out the slime and dirt from the bottom of the stock tank. In the 1930s there were no heaters available for the stock tank so each morning in the winter it was necessary to chop a hole in the ice so the cattle and horses could get water. Large chunks of ice were chopped out of the tank and thrown into a pile nearby. The water coming from the well was approximately 40 degrees and the cattle liked that water better than the water near freezing which was in the tank. The cement tank was more resistant to damage from axes, picks and shovels being used to remove ice in the winter.

In 1936, Grandpa had a small herd of cows. One of them coughed all winter and the family was sure that this cow had TB. In the spring, the animals were tested. It only took a few minutes and the federal health inspector told Grandpa there was no TB. The children had not been allowed to drink milk from that cow. In later years, when the author learned about TB, he wondered how the test was done. A culture could not have been done; as this took 6 weeks. The standard tuberculin test was not used. Since a positive test result does not mean active tuberculosis, that test would not have been useful. In addition, the

tuberculin test takes at least 48 hours. How many cows were killed unnecessarily? The type of TB that humans contracted from cattle was not pulmonary, but mainly kidney tuberculosis. That can kill as rapidly as pulmonary tuberculosis. Bovine TB could affect other body organs such as intestines and lymph nodes.

In 1936, Grandpa took Grandon to school two miles away on those days when the weather was bad. On good days Grandon walked, as had all the Litwinenco children. Grandpa looked at the thermometer one winter morning. It was -36 degrees Fahrenheit and he decided that it was too cold to go to school. The next day he forgot to look at the thermometer and took Grandon to school. It was -54 degrees, which is the all-time low for the farm.

Blizzards were a constant threat in the winter, and rural people became expert at weather forecasting. A blizzard is a combination of dry snow and wind. It obscures visibility, even if it is not actively snowing. Frequently, the wind is out of the northwest and it gets colder very rapidly. These storms are a threat from October to May. Deaths still occur almost every year as a result of blizzards. On the farm, one couldn't remain in the house during a blizzard, as cattle had to be fed and watered and eggs gathered in the chicken coop before they froze. It was about seven miles to town. On a warm winter day Grandpa took a team of horses and a wagon and drove to town for supplies. The home trip was started at which time an Alberta clipper arrived with heavy snow and sudden cold. Visibility was zero and Grandpa got down in the wagon box as low as possible. He released the reins on the horses and expected to freeze to death. The horses kept walking without guidance and after a long time stopped. Grandpa, still believing he would freeze to death, finally looked out of the wagon box. To his surprise he found the horses standing in front of the barn door waiting to be let in. They had found the way against lack of visibility and landscape covered with snow. Grandpa stayed in the barn for most of the night as it was 50 yards to the house and visibility was near zero. Only the foolish ventured out in South Dakota blizzards.

The climate in northern South Dakota varies from very hot to very cold. Juda Litwinenco knew how to dress for either problem. In the summer his standard outdoor clothing was a long sleeved shirt, bib overalls and high top shoes. There was always a straw hat present. The winter clothing was more complicated. Next to the skin were Long Johns usually made of cotton as cotton was much more comfortable than wool. This underwear extended from the ankles to the wrists. It opened in the front with buttons and had a button down flap in the rear. It was heavy cotton and they were very warm. Over the Long Johns were a cotton shirt, cotton trousers, and some type of a jacket. Twenty years after Juda Litwinenco's death his personal possessions, which had been placed in large cardboard boxes in the attic of his home in Max, North Dakota were brought to Grandon who lived in Bismarck, North Dakota. Among his

possessions there was a variety of clothing including 13 pair of Long Johns. About half of these were new in that they had not been worn and there was a variety of styles. Several of them were wool but mostly they were of heavy cotton. These Long Johns were given to a charitable church organization that knew about North Dakota winters.

To top this all off in very cold weather there was an ankle length sheepskin coat. It had a large turn down collar that could be extended up to cover the back of the head and ears. The head was covered with a fleece-lined cap, which could be tied under the chin. On his feet Juda wore laced up farm shoes and these were covered with rubber overshoes. The hands were covered with heavy mittens usually fleece lined. With all this heavy clothing on it was possible to get very warm when doing heavy work. Fortunately the sheepskin-lined overcoat was easily removed for vigorous work. Sheepskin lined overcoats were quite expensive and Juda was very proud of his.

North central South Dakota rarely gets enough rain. It seems the crops are always short of moisture or the wind dried things out. During one such time Grandpa got the family together for prayer to the Lord for help with the moisture situation. About 500 yards east of the homestead was a creek with several spring fed ponds. Grandpa used to keep a water tank in one of these ponds. It was a wooden, half-barrel like thing on a wagon. It was used to haul water for the steam tractor. After the prayer son, John asked Grandpa whether he should move the water tank. The expected rain would cause the creek to come up and the tank would be lost. Grandpa's comment was "what for?"

Juda Litwinenco was an optimist about rain. He was sure that eventually rains would come and planted crops would thrive and there would be green pastures for his cattle. Apparently in the mid 1920s there were two years in which spring and early summer were very dry. In the late summer rain arrived and there was plenty of green grass for cattle to graze on as well as hay to feed the cattle in the winter. In 1934 and 1936 the rains did not come in late summer or fall and consequently Juda Litwinenco did not have feed for his cattle in the winter. It was necessary to sell many of these cattle at a very low price and this certainly was a blow to the Litwinenco farm economy.

There were always dogs on the Litwinenco farm. These were working dogs and their job was to help with cattle, to act as a watchdog and to supervise the multiple farm cats. Juda Litwinenco didn't pay much attention to dogs but seemed to relate well to them and the various dogs enjoyed being with Juda. He seemed to have a special quiet relationship with all farm animals but especially dogs. When Juda decided to leave the farm and retire in the late 1930s a dog went with him. It was a beautiful collie named, Gyp, and this dog became the family dog in North Dakota for many years.

Maria Nesterenko Litwinenco (11/67-7/31)

Maria Nesterenko was born in November 1867 in Elecevet Hrad, Antonovak. This presumably is in the area, which is now the Ukraine. Maria's parents were John and Tekla Nesterenko. Years later after emigration to the United States Maria received a letter from friends in Germany. On the envelope was written that the addressee (Maria) reads Ukrainian. This was likely true but if so her Ukrainian linguistic ability was never discussed by her daughters. Maria married at age 18 immediately becoming a stepmother. Maria was Grandpa's second wife, the first wife died in Russia during childbirth. Their son, Samuel (Sergei), was born in September 1886. A daughter, Regina (Irene), was born in 1888. Maria died of a rare malignancy, a malignant melanoma of the eye, in 1931. The author was then seven years old and does remember her. The most striking thing was that she had a glass eye, which she wore intermittently (her eye had been removed approximately 4 years before her death). As a seven-year-old, Grandon had questions as to whether she could see as well with the glass eye as with her other eye. He was a little afraid of her and was her third grandchild. She had black hair and a no-nonsense attitude and grandchildren automatically behaved. Maria was a dominant force in the family. She was a major decision maker and financial decisions were frequently hers. To her credit she raised seven daughters, each of whom were strong personalities and were prototypes for the women's liberation movement years later. Students of social trends in the United States point out that Americans changed after World War II at which time there were many more women in the workplace. This was not true of the Litwinenco sisters. Each of them worked outside the home in a variety of jobs; however, the most common job was that of teaching school. This employment happened both before and after World War II. The Litwinenco girls probably learned this work ethic from their mother, Maria.

Maria knew how to manage a family. For example, a little trick Maria taught her daughters about food was that if the meal wasn't ready at the regular time, to set the table as though the meal was ready. The men would think the meal was prepared and wait patiently while the food cooked.

Every farmhouse in the Dakotas had trouble with flies. Flies loved barns and houses and from early summer until late fall there were

millions of them. Getting rid of flies was a constant problem and Maria Litwinenco was an expert fly exterminator. In the early years on the Dakota prairies there were no insecticides that would kill flies therefore it became a mechanical process. Maria always had fly swatters around and the entire family engaged actively in swatting flies. It was a losing proposition as there were just too many flies. Another method of getting flies out of the house was to open a door and several people would start at the opposite side of the house waving dish towels so the flies would be forced to go towards the open door and to the outside. When the room was free of flies the door would be closed and shades pulled until it was ready for mealtime. Another method that Maria had for killing flies took place only in the fall months. Freezing weather usually started in mid-September. In the morning the flies would be found in sheltered areas of the side of the house. They were very stiff because they are cold-blooded creatures. In the frosty early morning Maria would take a broom and sweep the flies into a dustpan and put them in the stove and burn them. This was a highly effective method of destroying thousands of flies but there were always plenty remaining for the next morning. Flies were present year-round but in the midwinter there were fewer of them. Sometimes on a sunshiny January day there would be several large black flies flying around the inside the house.

The author was present when his grandmother, Maria, died in the farm home. She was in her early 60s and the guiding light of the family. Grandon was a sad little boy because everyone cried for weeks. Maria's death was in July 1931 at the family home near Herreid, SD.

Pictures of Maria show a stern black haired woman who does not seem to smile. There is one exception to this and that is a picture taken on the porch of the family home near Herreid. This shows a smiling vivacious woman and it is Grandon's opinion that the later was the personality she imparted to her daughters and son, John.

Maria had a no-nonsense attitude about grandchildren and Grandon's repulsive habit of chewing on his shirt collar was noticed by Grandma Maria. Her trick to get him to stop this habit was to sprinkle pepper on his shirt collar each night. This was not an immediate success but within weeks Grandon did stop that habit.

Maria believed that her daughters should be well-dressed when they went to school each fall. She took them to town and bought a variety of fashionable clothing and charged the clothing to her husband, Juda. Sometimes Juda did not have enough money to pay for this clothing immediately and at the time of Maria's death there was still a very significant debt at the general store in Herreid.

Although Maria frequently worked in the field with her husband Juda, her main responsibility was homemaking. There were usually an adequate number of family members to do the field work. Nevertheless, there are multiple pictures of her in a variety of harvesting scenes. One

can speculate that her reason for being in the field was that she truly loved being with her husband, Juda.

Saturday was a day of rest for the Litwinenco's. They were 7th Day Adventists. The family developed a tradition of inspecting their fields of grain on Saturday afternoon after their private home church service had been completed. Juda and Maria followed by their children would walk through the fields of wheat inspecting the progress of their growing crop. There was always wind in northern South Dakota and the growing grain would wave dramatically in this wind. Maria wore a long cape, which would spread out over the wheat in a dramatic fashion.

Grandma Emma Poradum Zaharee

Juda Litwinenco was a widower from 1931 to 1938. At that time he remarried. His new wife was Emma Zaharee. She had a large family of her own and had been a widow for several years. Juda Litwinenco had known her for many years. Emma had originally come from the Ukraine and spoke that language as well as Russian. She had a home near Max, North Dakota and it was in that home that Juda and Emma chose to live. They lived an active life in the Max, North Dakota Seventh Day Adventist community until they died in 1951. Emma died three weeks after Juda. She had been ill for months with a cancer and had not told anyone about her pain.

After Emma had been married to Juda Litwinenco for five years she related to her stepdaughter, Elvina, that those five years of marriage to Juda were the happiest of her life. This information was not a surprise to the Litwinenco family who knew very well that Juda was a kind, thoughtful and generous man.

The Children of Juda Litwinenco

Juda Litwinenco had 13 children, 10 of whom lived to adulthood. These ten included two sons and 8 daughters. While Samuel (Sergei) died at a young age, the other children married and moved out of the area. Elvina was the only child to stay in Campbell County.

How did Russian emigrant farm girls from the wilds of northern South Dakota meet and marry men from Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and southern South Dakota? The answer is religion. The meetings took place at the Seventh Day Adventist Academy near Redfield, South Dakota and the Adventist Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. When Tom and Chrystine Carner retired from the trials of educating North Dakota rascals, their choice of place to live was in Lincoln, Nebraska, near Union College. Later they shared their home with Maybelle Litwinenco Edwards. This became a second family home for the Litwinencos.

Mary Litwinenco Wolodko Swanson (8/12/1882 – 2/15/55)

Mary Litwinenco was born in Russia. Mary Litwinenco was born in 1882. The death certificate says that she was born in St. Petersburg. It is highly unlikely that this is the St. Petersburg of Russian historical fame. It is always possible that there is a lesser-known St. Petersburg in the Odessa area of South Russia. Mary would have been 8 years old when the family came to the United States.

We know little about Mary's personality or the quality of her life. We do know that at the age of 24 she married Carl Wolodko, another Russian. The marriage took place in Mound City, South Dakota with a Justice of the Peace officiating. Mr. Wolodko's address was listed as Gale, South Dakota, which is a farm community approximately six miles from the Litwinenco homestead. The Wolodko family then moved to Max, North Dakota where children were born in 1906 and 1907. It is interesting to note that Max, North Dakota was the community that many years later became Juda Litwinenco's home. It is a Russian community and certainly Mary knew how to speak Russian and would have fit in well in that community. The Wolodkos moved to Portland, OR where four children were born.

Mary lived in the Portland area the remainder of her life. Her husband, Carl, died at an early age and she married Carl Swanson who died about 1950. Mary had lifelong contact with her-half sister Elvina, and did return to the farm for a family reunion in 1949. It is likely not a coincidence that One of her daughters was named Elvina and that her

sons were named John and Samuel. Mary's death was from complications of diabetes in 1955.

Samuel Litwinenco (9/23/1886 – 11/1/18)

Uncle Sam was born in Nicholiow, Russia. He would have been 3 ½ years old when the Litwinenco family arrived in the United States. He grew up in South Dakota and in addition to local rural schools, had some agricultural training at what is now South Dakota State University. The state university at that time provided a high school for farm boys. It was called the Aggie school. This school existed until the 1970s and served a real purpose in South Dakota. It is unknown how long Sam went there, but probably two years. Among the things he learned was the technique of adobe building with clay and straw. There is a house several miles east of the Litwinenco farm home close to Herreid that is weathering well in 2002. Sam assisted in building this house for traveling preachers to use. The adobe construction was remarkable. Sam loved machinery and was apparently a farm mechanic. He married Chrystine Merkel, and their son, Wilton, was the oldest grandchild in the Juda-Maria Litwinenco family. Sam's death in 1918 from the flu was a family tragedy. He was in his 30s. Apparently as a farmer in his 30s he was too old for WWI service.

Sam's mechanical genius was a family legend. He kept steam engines and threshing machines functioning in the days before acetylene and electric welding apparatus. In a short period of 15 years, Sam became a well known farm businessman in the community especially with his contract threshing of small grains. The rule on threshing was that the Litwinencos did their own last. This meant that many times threshing was done in December.

Sam Litwinenco was the foreman of the threshing crew. His job was to keep the machine running smoothly so that the grain could be threshed in an efficient manner without any waste time. The threshing machine would be placed between two stacks of harvested grain and men with forks would throw the cut wheat into the threshing machine. If something happened during the process, the men doing the heavy labor of feeding the threshing machine would get a rest. They were paid by the hour so a rest was looked forward to. If the workers who were throwing the un-threshed wheat into the threshing machine put in too much at a time the machine would get plugged up and cease to function. This would cause a delay with a rest for the entire crew. At times these men loading the threshing machine would purposely try and overload the machine. Sam Litwinenco watched closely and if he saw this happening

he would speed up the machine by increasing the power on the steam engine and the crew loading the threshing machine were not successful in plugging it up. The amount of wheat being threshed increased tremendously during these efforts to plug up the machine and the rest of the crew didn't like the extra work. Sam kept everyone working at a steady pace

Sam Litwinenco loved motorcycles. He not only owned but also sold Harley-Davidson motorcycles. There are stories that Sam would drive 150 miles on his motorcycle to see his younger sisters in school at Redfield, South Dakota and then return late at night so he could be home to go to work in the morning.

Irene Litwinenco Bates (7/18/1888 – 8/18/78)

Irene would have been nearly two years old when the family arrived in the United States. Her name is listed as Regina in most of the documents related to immigration. The reason for her using the name Irene is unknown but likely because it was more of a contemporary American name than was Regina. Juda and Maria Litwinenco wanted their daughters to have a good education. Their oldest daughter, Irene, went to the Sheyenne River Adventist Academy. She was the first graduate of that institution and her name was listed as Regina Litwinenco. During her final year in that school she served as a secretary to the North Dakota Adventist Conference.

Irene married Frank Bates. She was the one in the family not dark-haired; her hair was sandy colored. She was delightful company and always kind to her nephews. She also was gifted with sarcasm that could wither any ostentatious loud-mouth. Her life was in some ways tragic as she was always poor and could not travel and visit her family. She had a domineering mother-in-law who lived in their home until near the age of 100. In spite of this, Irene's lively spirit and enjoyment of good verbal repartee persisted. Irene died in 1978 at the age of 90.

Chrystine Litwinenco Carner (10/2/1890 – 3/16/91)

Christine Litwinenco was born October 2, 1890 at the family homestead. The city of Herreid did not exist at that time and the closest community was Eureka, South Dakota. Doctors were not available and neighbors were at least a half-mile away and in most cases much farther. It was only a few months after arriving in South Dakota that Christine was born. When the family moved from the original homestead to a new

farmstead approximately one and a half miles away Christine would have been about 10 years old. It must have been an exciting time for the young Litwinenco children to move into a new home.

Christine went to local schools for her primary education and then attended an Adventist Academy in Elk Point, South Dakota. She graduated from High School and then attended Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska where she received a degree and met and married Thomas Carner in 1918.

Chrystine was a teacher, and it was truly a vocation for her. She taught in North Dakota and Nebraska for over 40 years. Her ability as a disciplinarian was legendary. Her subject was English.

While living in Bismarck, ND Grandon frequently met Aunt Chrystine's former pupils. At a PTA meeting in Bismarck, Grandon went to the 5th grade room and introduced himself to the teacher as the parent of one of her pupils. The teacher asked him if he knew a Mrs. Carner. Of course, he responded affirmatively, and there was a pleasant conversation about Mrs. Carner who was alive and well. It was then that Grandon noted in this former pupil of Aunt Chrystine's the same mannerisms and dignity that I had observed in his aunt for years. Another incident involved a patient of Grandon's. Several days after a major surgical procedure. The patient greeted Grandon with a big smile when he made rounds. She said to him "I just found out who you are. You're Mrs. Carner's nephew". Grandon's surgical expertise had been placed second. Her memories of Mrs. Carner were first.

Chrystine loved to talk about school teaching. Her diction and grammar were perfect. Considering that her original language was Russian, she had no residual accent.

One incident brings out her ability as an instructor happened in Nebraska the last day of the school year. An eighth grade teacher who was doing her first year as a teacher was well known to Chrystine because she was an Adventist church member. The doors to the school-rooms were open and this young pedagogue was in her room with a student and his parents. There were angry, parental voices and crying. It appears that this young teacher had flunked the student and the parents were very unhappy. Finally, the young teacher came to Chrystine, who went to the parents and student. She fixed a piercing eye on the student and asked, "Young man, did you deserve to pass?" The young man burst out in tears and said, "I lied, I cheated, and I changed my report card." The day was saved and hopefully the young man benefited.

Chrystine was a religious person. She studied the Bible daily and was a true believer in Christianity.

Her home in Lincoln, Nebraska became a second family home. She lived to be over 100 and died peacefully at home in 1991.

Katherine Litwinenco Harvey (11/14/1892 – 6/24/78)

Katherine Litwinenco was born Nov. 14th 1892 at the family farm home near Herreid, South Dakota. This was two years after the family moved to South Dakota and Katherine's first home on the prairie was a sod house. She attended rural grade schools and high school at the Plainview Adventist academy in Redfield, South Dakota. She attended college at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska and this is where she met Norman Harvey. She and Norman were married in 1925 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Katherine was also known as Katie or Sadie.

Katherine was a feisty lady. Considering that she married Norman Harvey, she had to be. Katherine was a school teacher for many years and could be a tough disciplinarian. One day when Grandon was in the lower grades, he recalls being shocked at her harsh discipline of a student in the school yard. That can't be his nice Aunt Katherine.

Katherine had a paranoid streak and never did believe that men landed on the moon. "Just a show for TV." She was always suspicious and sometimes rightfully so. She was the one person in the family who had an active antipathy toward the Seventh-day Adventist church. This was likely due to the churches frequent requests for money in Katherine's younger and more affluent days.

Katherine did Grandon a real favor when he was a pre-teen. Ice skating was popular in the winter and Grandon's dull, clamp-on-the-shoe skates were unsatisfactory. She had a pair of shoe skates (which were figure skates) that fit Grandon. He then had the best skates in town next to the rich kids that had genuine hockey skates. Grandon's ice skating abilities were always limited, but he has been grateful to Aunt Katherine since age nine for her gift of shoe skates.

Christmas, a time of giving, was a problem to Katherine. She didn't have much money, because of her profession as a school-teacher as well as being married to a free-lance inventor. To solve the problem of gifts for nephews, she would buy a package of balloons for a nickel. The nephews ignored all the expensive sweaters and other clothing and played with the nickel balloons. The nephews were happy, and Aunt Katherine was solvent.

Katherine had a great sense of humor. In her late life, Betsy and Grandon Tolstedt visited her in the nursing home. She was diabetic (she denied this for 40 years and ate a diet of coke, candy, and ice cream and lived to be 94). The time arrived for the afternoon urine specimen. We left the room and a few minutes later the mission was accomplished and we were allowed to return. She looked at Grandon with a twinkle in her eye and said, "I don't know why they always come to me for that urine

sample. There are at least a dozen people around here who could give them a sample."

Katherine died in 1987 at the age of 95. She did not die of complications of diabetes.

Elizabeth Litwinenco Herrmann (12/12/1894 --9/18/1996)

Elizabeth Litwinenco was born in 1894 in the sod house on the original 160 acre Litwinenco homestead. Her education was at local grade schools and then private Adventist Academies and Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Then Elizabeth married Lewis Herrmann who was from Colorado and as a result of this marriage she lived most her life in Denver, CO.

Aunt Elizabeth was the middle girl of the seven. Because there were so many girls and so few boys, there was not enough manpower for outside work. Elizabeth was frequently selected. This did not seem to have a bad effect on her abilities as cook or homemaker. She was a kind and generous person, one of those people who represented stability throughout her life.

On one occasion Elizabeth was entertaining a family group in her home in Denver. Grandon was in attendance was his wife, Ardis. Ardis's cousin, Harriet, was a neighbor of Aunt Elizabeth and she also was in attendance. Ardis was explaining to her cousin, that the family group in attendance was largely of the 7th Day Adventist faith. The meal was over and Elizabeth served coffee. Since 7th Day Adventists generally proscribe the drinking of coffee Ardis explained to her cousin that these were sinning Seventh-day Adventists. Elizabeth was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church all of her life. In spite of her beliefs she did not accept the Adventist prohibition of coffee drinking.

John Litwinenco (2/25/1897 – 7/4/75)

John Litwinenco was born in the sod house on the original Litwinenco Homestead in 1897. His older brother, Sam, would have been 11 years old at that time and it is likely that the elder Litwinenco's rejoiced at the appearance of another son who would certainly be able to help with farm work in due time. John would have been the seventh child of the family. It certainly must have been a vigorous noisy active household living in a small sod house.

John was a man who enjoyed living. His love of athletics was lifelong; horseshoes, baseball, tennis, bowling, golf, and especially boxing. He was appointed to the United States Olympic Boxing Team in

1920, but disqualified because he had received $20 expense money playing baseball. There were always boxing gloves around the farm and noon hours on summer working days after a large meal were spent encouraging young men of the crew to box. Many an afternoon's work was curtailed because of an aching head. John was usually not an active participant in the noon hour boxing. He was big and tough and an aggressive competitor, and local toughs would not fight with him. He played to win no matter what sport. In later years his sport was bowling.

John's occupations were legion: farmer, county assessor, horseman, teacher and finally physician. The later occupation he took up in his late 30s. He became the old reliable family doctor and practiced until nearly 80 years of age. His true love in medicine was surgery and he would have taken formal training but that was unusual in the 30s.

John was a story-teller and many of the incidents herein related are from his mouth. His stories always had some element of truth in them; they were never dirty and foul language was never used. An example of John's embellishment of story telling happened in late 1947. Donn Herrmann, Howard Hanson, and Grandon took a driving trip to the west coast. North of San Francisco Grandon was driving, Donn was asleep in the back seat and Howard Hanson (who was blind) was riding shotgun. Grandon bolted a yellow light and was stopped by an officer of the law who let Grandon off with a lecture when he discovered Grandon was a disabled veteran. This story was told to John Litwinenco who altered the facts slightly in later versions of the story. He had Howard and Grandon changing seats and Grandon was giving directions to Howard because he couldn't see and was driving. Grandon was disabled, so he couldn't drive. Donn was sleeping in the back seat and kept on sleeping during the whole encounter. In addition, the officer found Howard and Grandon didn't have driver's licenses which alarmed the officer who gave them a lecture on the failings of the State of South Dakota in not providing I.D.

John did not drink any type of alcoholic beverages. As a result, he was always a target for his friends at the golf club. There were repeated attempts to spike his Coca Cola at the 19th hole. John loved the camaraderie of the 19th hole, and assured me no one had ever succeeded in spiking his Coca-Cola.

John was a great eater. In later years he did get heavy, which he hated, but not enough to quit eating. On one occasion while visiting the farm near Herreid he told his sister, Elvina, that the food she was serving was too rich and she should change her cooking as soon as he left.

The author visited him in Claremont, California, his home of many years. The family went for a late breakfast at the Country Club. Grandon and John's order was an omelet, hash browns, toast, orange juice, coffee, and beef bacon. John said to Grandon, "and of course you are going to have side order of pancakes", which of course Grandon did.

Elvina Litwinenco Tolstedt (2/10/02 – 12/2/68)

There had been no surviving children in the Litwinenco family for a period of five years. Elvina was born in the new sod house after the mile and a half move to the new farm. The original homestead henceforth became known as "the other place". Elvina was the oldest of the children that would become known as the three little girls.

Elvina was a farm person. She considered it an honor and privilege that she could carry on as the matriarch of the family home for years. She was not an outwardly religious person and her relationship to the Adventist church was mostly one of belief rather than conformity. She had strict moral standards and didn't hesitate to confront errant acquaintances. For example, once she directly accused a high school acquaintance of Grandon's of being an army camp follower. She believed smoking was wrong but was known to use a little rum in cooking. As a cook she was unsurpassed and meals were feasts.

Elvina had a failing for fast automobiles and speed. She had lost the sight in one eye resulting in poor depth perception. That, coupled with her "lead foot" probably was involved in her accidental death in 1968.

Ludmilla Litwinenco McCully (4/14/05 – 2/24/75)

There is no information as to when or why Ludmilla change her name to Lulu. Certainly she never wished to be called Ludmilla. Her oldest brother, Sam, would have been 19 years old when she was born and it is likely that her childhood duties on the farm were far different from those of her older sisters. One year after Lulu was born the family moved into the newly erected frame house. The move to that house must have been a wonderful occasion for the Litwinenco family.

The census bureau lists her as Ludmilla, but to thousands of friends she was Lulu. An accomplished musician, she continued her musical work for years. Her life with Harold McCully led her to friendship with many well-known people. Authors, politicians, and congressmen were among her friends. She lived an active life in the Washington, DC area after WWII. Lulu was one of those people whom everyone liked.

Maybelle Litwinenco Edwards (1/14/08 –1/24/99)

Maybelle was the youngest of the Litwinenco family. By the time she was born several of her older sisters were away at boarding school and the family was living in their spacious new home. Maybelle's life as a child was vastly different than her older sisters. By the time Maybelle was in school automobiles were available and roads had been improved. There was also train service in the nearby town of Herreid. The family was much more mobile and Maybelle learned to drive at an early age and in her teens became the family chauffeur.

Aunt Maybelle was a delightful person. Laughter, charm and friendliness were always with her. She was the youngest of the family and probably retained the closest ties to the family home.

Maybelle learned all the cooking secrets of her older sisters but in the making of angel food cake and chocolate fudge, she had no peer. Perhaps because of this, Maybelle always had a weight problem (too much). She carried her weight well and dressed very well, so was always an attractive person. She tried all the weight loss methods on the market and was frequently temporarily successful. In later years she just gave up and I think that is when she did lose some weight. At age 87, she was alive and thinner than ever. Her pancreas was still putting out insulin and she had not had any heart attacks. This speaks well for a diet of butter, eggs, and cream.

Maybelle was an independent soul. She did what she thought was right and spoke her mind freely.

Related Thoughts

Family Names

In addition to the variations in the spellings of names noted previously, there are some others that bear noting. One family story related to Grandon by his mother is that the last 3 children, born 1902, 1905 and 1908 did not have middle names. These three “little girls” decided in pre-teen years to choose middle names for themselves. Flower names were popular (e.g., Elvina Violette Forget-Me-Not Litwinenco and Ludmilla Viola Litwinenco), except for the middle name Beulah for Maybelle. There is a question as to Irene’s name, as the census bureau lists her as Regina and in various places it is listed at Irene Regina. Some spelling variations appear to be related to misunderstandings with the census bureau. “Katherine A.” might be a variation of “Katerina”. “Chrystine Ina” might have derived from “Christina”. Ludmilla of course became Lulu as Ludmilla suggested “old country”.

Foreign origins

The community in South Dakota where Grandpa lived was largely German in origin. Many of the German families came to the United States via Russia but their language was German. They were, and are, known as "Germans from Russia". Common names of neighbors were Deibert, Klein, Schaefbauer, Werner, Brandner, and Huber. These are hard working people. Their German heritage has survived two wars with Germany and remains important to this day.

To the west of the farm, the ethnic background changed completely. It was largely Dutch, and remains so today. Common names were VanBeek, Vander Waal, Nieuwsma, Dornbush, and Huizenga. Although these people respect their ancestral heritage, it is far less important to them than heritage is to the Germans.

Juda Litwinenco's back ground was pure Russian and the area in which he settled had few Russians. There was an occasional Irishman, Englishman, and Scotsman, but they were interested in ranching as opposed to dirt farming.

Were there problems for those people whose ethnic backgrounds were in a distinct minority such as my grandparents? There probably were minor difficulties, but Grandpa Litwinenco was friendly with all his neighbors. He learned German and so had no language difficulties. If there were problems, the problems had to do with their church. Being a Seventh Day Adventist amidst a large Lutheran and Catholic German population was not easy. The Seventh Day Adventist religion was considered as an odd-ball religion because of their designation of Saturday as a day for rest and church attendance.

If there were animosities of an ethnic origin in the community, as described in Roolvag's books about South Dakota, it was not apparent to the author. Since his last name was German, Tolstedt, it fit in well in the area. He was never considered to be a *real* German because he couldn't speak the language. In Grandon's high school German class, there were only 3 out of 23 that did not speak German fluently.

Religion

Juda and Maria were raised in the Russian Orthodox Church. At some time before leaving Russia, they became Baptists. The exact year is

not known and considering the political implications of Baptists, it seems likely that this change had something to do with emigration.

Personal conversation with Grandpa indicated that he had been to the city of Constantinople. This sounded very important to his grandson, but Grandpa seemed to think it was as important as going to Herreid. As far as is known, the family was Baptist on arrival in the United States Just how Grandfather became 7th Day Adventist is not clear. Very likely Adventist missionary work started soon after many of the South Dakota homesteads were proved up. Grandpa became a minister and preached in churches in North Dakota. He was said to have preached two sermons, one in Russian and the other in German.

The change to Seventh-day Adventism came in the late 1890s or early 1900s. Supposedly, Grandpa, from his own reading, decided that Seventh-day Adventism was the true church and adopted that faith. They did not attend a local Adventist church, as none was available. The closest was Mobridge. Mobridge was about 35 miles away, but that distance was as the crow flies and the roads were unimproved. A better road was about 50 miles. In spite of the lack of a church, prayer services were held at home on Saturday morning. After a liberal helping of baked eggs, the Scripture was read in Russian and then everyone kneeled on chairs and Grandpa said a long prayer. It seemed a very long prayer to Grandon as a pre-school child. The opportunity to learn Russian was neither taken, nor was it encouraged, by any family member.

The ministers came to the farm for a visit from time to time. They usually came in the fall after harvesting. This was for the so-called Harvest-in-Gathering; i.e., a church donation. There was seldom an announcement of their coming. Elvina used old flour full of weevils as a cake mix for dog food. It seems she had done so on one of these occasions. The preacher and his wife arrived hungry. They expected a meal. Seeing the cake they ate some of it and later complimented mother on her excellent cake. Elvina did not have the heart to tell them they were eating dog food.

Grandpa spent many winter months in North Dakota in the Russian community as a lay Seventh-day Adventist minister. To Grandon's knowledge he did not have any formal theological schooling, yet managed to be instrumental in starting at least five Russian Seventh-day Adventist churches in North Dakota, most of which exist to this day.

Juda Litwinenco served the Seventh day Adventist Church of North Dakota for nearly 40 years. His position was that of a gospel minister. This was not a full-time occupation and usually he spent about three months a year in North Dakota returning to South Dakota for the main farming activities of the summer. It is the author's understanding that he received some small payment for his services to the church. He was provided with food and lodging while in North Dakota and also provided with money for transportation. As a result of his many years of service to

his church he did receive a pension from that church in later years. It amounted to $ 27 a month. This does not seem much by today's monetary standards; however, that amount would be worth $300 a month in 2002. Considering the rural area where he lived, which was an inexpensive area, he had enough money to live well. He did not receive Social Security although that program was in existence before his death. Since he had not made any payments into the program he was ineligible.

The spelling of the name, Litwinenco, apparently came about because there was another individual in the North Dakota church who spelled the name Litwinenko. That person did not pay his bills, especially church tithes, and Grandpa did not want any confusion, so he changed the spelling of his name to "co".

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church believed in what is known as tithing. This is a process in which a church member will pay a certain percentage of their income to the church. The Adventists believed that 10 percent was the proper amount. It is very difficult to determine the exact income of a farmer. Juda Litwinenco believed in a church tithe but in general the profit on his farm was rather small, never the less it was apparent to his children and grandchildren and that Juda Litwinenco gave a very significant amount of money to his church.

Grandpa was a true believer of the Christian faith. Seventh-day Adventists are not known for their tolerance of other faiths, especially Roman Catholic and Jewish, yet Grandpa treated every neighbor and acquaintance as a trusted friend. In other words, he evaluated men as individuals. This is noted in his friendship with the infamous Paul Polson.

Mr. Polson was a bachelor who lived about four miles northwest of the Litwinenco homestead. He was what is known as a hermit. Cleanliness was not his strong suit. The pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room was a repository of dirt, garbage and spit from chewing tobacco. Juda Litwinenco and son, John, were the only neighbors who would stop at his house to eat. Grandon suspects that Grandpa's earlier years in Odessa and Istanbul conditioned his sensibilities to Mr. Polson's lack of culinary asepsis. This relationship is mentioned to show Grandpa's attitude towards his fellow man.

All the Litwinenco children remained Seventh-day Adventist to some extent. Only Aunt Katherine expressed strong opinions against the organized Seventh-day Adventist church, although she did not feel this way about the principles of the Adventist faith. The family as a group and as individuals retained a life-long adherence (in varying degrees) to the Adventist life style prohibitions and work on Saturday.

Juda Litwinenco believed in the Seventh Day Adventist regulations relative to personal habits and diet. The use of any form of tobacco or alcoholic beverages was strictly prohibited. The reason the Seventh Day Adventists prohibited tobacco and alcohol was that their interpretation of the Bible was that one should not eat or drink anything, which might be

harmful to one's body. Juda and his family did not eat pork, in fact they did not raise pigs on their farm as Juda believed that it was not only sinful to eat pork but also sinful to sell pork to one's neighbors. Fish was a permissible food, however such things as lobster, crab and oysters, which had an external skeleton, were not permissible. The use of foul or vile language was discouraged and Grandon never heard his grandfather, Juda, use any swear words. Women were not expected to wear any type of jewelry including wedding rings or engagement rings. They were not to use makeup such as lipstick but well fitted dresses and high heels were permissible. For many years Juda Litwinenco's daughters did not wear dresses that were red in that they had been taught that only a harlot wore red.

The Litwinenco's were not vegetarians. The meat they ate was mostly chicken and beef. They did not eat pork and did not use lard in their cooking. They used corn oil for cooking and bought it in five gallon containers, which when empty were adapted to farm use in many ways. When the Litwinenco children started going to Seventh-day Adventist boarding schools in the early 1900s the Litwinenco's diet changed. The boarding schools they attended served vegetarian food. There were probably several reasons for this but most important was that it was far less expensive than to serve meat. These boarding schools made it possible for students to work to pay for tuition costs. Some of this work was in the kitchen and as a result Litwinenco girls brought back home new cooking ideas. These ideas were a variety of vegetarian foods. The one, which Grandon remembers best, was called Protose. This is a flour, peanut butter, and tomato mixture that is baked and could be used as an hors d' oeuvres or after school treat. There were a variety of other vegetarian foods, which the Litwinenco's ate. Some of these originated in Russia but the origins of the food was not important to the Litwinenco family. These foods included Blachinda (pastry filled with pumpkin), Vereneki (a rolled dough filled with farmers cheese and boiled), Ghoulobski (cabbage leaves stuffed with rice and meat) and sauerkraut. The cabbage crop was not always a success and therefore sometimes the Litwinenco's did not have sauerkraut. The Litwinenco's ate a large amount of bread, especially Juda Litwinenco who had several pieces at each meal. They also ate rice, which was inexpensive and kept well.

When the family became Adventist, a big question came up as to whether it was sinful to process the milk on Saturday. The initial decision was that it was sinful, but Uncle John, a teenager at the time, volunteered to accept the sin as his and separate the cream. This story was related by Grandon's mother, whose stories, like her brother John's, were always truthful but usually embellished.

There is a story related to religion that has been confirmed by each of the three little girls, Elvina, Lulu, and Maybelle. Grandma Maria apparently had worked in the home of a family of wealth in Russia. In

appreciation of her services, she was given some jewelry of modest value, which she had brought with her to America. The conversion to the Adventist faith and its protestation of jewelry brought another dilemma to the family. There was no ready market for the jewelry, and besides, if it was a sin to wear it for one person, was not it a sin for another? Therefore, the problem was resolved by digging a hole and burying the jewelry. The three little girls heard about this from their older brothers and spent several summers digging holes in the yard in search of the lost jewels, which didn't seem to them to be quite so sinful. Their search was in vain and the Russian jewels are still missing. Litwinenco heirs remain convinced there is jewelry buried somewhere on the farm.