

Jensen, Fredrik Young

A Journal and a Cemetery

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One day, back in early 2007, I was looking at an old brown book with a worn black binding and yellowed brittle pages. I saw this book with some of my dad's papers and I asked him what it was. He told me it was the journal of my great, great, great grandfather, Fredrik Young Jensen. I didn't know I even had a Grandpa Jensen. My dad told me that Grandpa Jensen was born in 1857, in the little town of Hjorring in the northern part of Denmark. His parents joined the Mormon church in 1852, and Fredrik later served as a missionary for the church at the young age of 16 years old. He served a mission for 3 years, laboring in his home country of Denmark. After his mission he moved with his family to Ephraim, Utah, where he lived, got married, worked, had children, and later, died. My dad served his mission in Denmark, and was given this journal by Gayle Bertelson McDevitt, his grandmother and my great grandmother. I held that old journal in my hands and looked at the pages that he had written his thoughts on so long ago. I wished I could read it, but it was written in Danish. I wished that I had known him, and I wish that he had known me. My dad had a neat connection with him. He served his mission in Denmark, just like Grandpa Jensen. But how could I get to know him when he was born over a hundred and fifty years ago? What connection could I have with him?

On July 21, 2007, my dad decided that we should take a trip. It was the day after my birthday, July 20th, and I had a lot of fun with cake and presents. My sisters and I were home with my dad, while my mom was on a trip. We decided to drive to Ephraim, Utah, to visit where Frederik Young Jensen and other relatives were buried. We love to walk in old cemeteries and look at the old headstones. So I knew this was going to be especially fun, because we hoped to find the headstones of our relatives, and especially Frederik Young Jensen.

We got to Ephraim later in the day, not realizing what a long drive it was. We went to the Old Ephraim City cemetery and started to walk around. We found where my Grandma Gayle's family was buried, including my great-great grandfather and grandmother, Sophus Gilbert Bertelson and Mae LaBelle Jensen. We also found Gilbert Bertelson's father and mother, Christina Bertelson and Anna Else Christensen. It was so neat to look at their headstones, and see how long ago they lived. We took white paper and black crayon and made etchings of the headstones. We walked the whole cemetery, up and down each of the rows, looking for Frederik Young Jensen's headstone. We asked the cemetery caretaker if he knew where Grandpa Jensen was buried. He didn't know.

It was starting to get dark, and it even started to rain, and we were getting tired of walking all over the cemetery. But we really wanted to find Frederik Young Jensen's headstone. We decided to say a little prayer, to see if we could get a little help in finding him. We immediately walked to the back of the cemetery, and looked in the very last row. There we found an old black grave marker. We got close enough to read the top. It said in big letters, JENSEN. I looked at the name and saw that it was Frederik Young Jensen's headstone. I was so happy that we finally found it. We got the white paper and black crayon and started to make the etching of his headstone. When we got to his birth date, I looked at the date as we rubbed it on to the paper. The date? My birthday - July 20, 1857! He and I had shared the same birthday the day before. I turned eight and he turned...150! I had my connection. We shared a birthday. I will always be glad that we decided to go to Ephraim, Utah, on that day, a very special day, a day I made a connection to my heritage.