



From covered wagon to space age

# Bertha Davis has seen it all

by Donna Heath

One-hundred-year-old Bertha Hady Davis sat regally in the high backed chair beneath the striped canopy at the lake home of her daughter and son-in-law, Harold and Catherine (Casey) Anderson.

Before hundreds of well-wishers began arriving to help her celebrate her 100th birthday, she gathered her great grandchildren, Jody and Andy Verville and Lindsey and Michael Anderson, around her and told them the story of her trip from North Dakota to Pine City in a covered wagon.

"It was 1895 and I can remember the day we left as plain as if it was yesterday," she said.

The children listened intently as she told them how her dad woke the family in the middle of the night to begin their journey at 3 a.m.

"I had a little rocking chair and I remember he told me to sit in it and be a good girl while he harnessed up the horses."

She recalled that it was a pleasant trip. The family took two wagons, and she and her sister rode in the one driven by her mother and the boys and her dad drove the other. Family furniture was shipped by rail to Pine City.

"The trip took about 14 days

and we camped along the trail at night. Dad would drive forked sticks on either side of a bonfire and hang a kettle from the spit to cook our supper."

The children's eyes widened as she told them how during the night they could hear wolves howling around the wagon.

"But we weren't afraid."

Upon arriving in Pine City the family began farming on 80 acres bordering Mission Creek which Bertha's father bought for \$300. She recalls that the creek flowed like a river when she was a child, and that they would sit on their porch at night and listen to the Indians playing their drums on the west side of Pokegama Lake.

"I went to the Pokegama Mission School, and we had 43 kids in school and sat three to a seat. There were only a couple of windows in the building, and it was dark.

"On Sunday we went to mass at the Catholic church and had to leave by 8 a.m. in order for the horses to make it on time."

Recalling the 30s and the Great Depression, she said that although it was tough, people who could raise their own food didn't suffer as much as those who had to buy everything.

"We ate a lot of vegetables and could live on about \$1 a week."

It's hard for children to visualize a time when people didn't have electricity or telephones. Bertha told them that telephones came to the country around 1914 but that they didn't have electricity until 1940.

Since the death of her husband, Jack, Bertha has been a vital part of her only child Catherine's family. She attributes her healthy longevity to being surrounded by young people and being able to be useful and needed and loved. Her sunny disposition is also a prime factor.

To be 100 years old and still baking and cooking favorite dishes for the family, to have a memory so keen that as guests began arriving, some whom she hasn't seen for years, she greets them all by their first names, and a mind so sharp that she's in tune to current events and life styles of the 90s, to stand erect, free from the crippling disabilities that plague so many elderly people and to rejoice that since cataract surgery several months ago she is able to read without wearing glasses, Bertha Hady Davis is indeed unusual and special.

She brings a gift of strength to her family that will be carried on in their genes for generations to come.



**100 YEAR OLD** Bertha Davis has many stories to tell at a special birthday party held Sunday. She is pictured here with her great grandchildren, Jodie Verville, Lindsey Anderson, Michael Anderson and Andy Verville.

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