

Typewriters donated in the memory of:

Anna Chapman	1903-2002
Clark Chapman	1896-1981
Don Chapman	1931-2001
Little Prairie and Eagle	

My grandma, Anna Chapman, always wished she could type. When grandma was offered an old, free of charge typewriter, she saw this as an opportunity to learn the skill. Time flew by and the typewriter went up to the attic, left unused by grandma. However, her dream of learning to type was still there. Time passed and grandma purchased a “more modern” typewriter from the 1920’s – an offer she couldn’t refuse. Knowing I have always enjoyed going to rummage sales and auctions, grandma asked me to keep an eye out for interesting typewriters for her. Grandma and I both looked for typewriters and a collection began!

One of the typewriters in grandma’s collection was a Densmore Co. #1. Number One was manufactured in 1891 and a rare find. It was called an upstrike typewriter because keys, arranged in a circular basket, would swing against the paper from the bottom in an upward motion. Its detractors and competitors called the machine a “blind-writer” because the typist couldn’t see what he typed! It was among the first typewriters produced, and the 1891 price tag was around \$100.00

Grandma had two Underwood typewriters, a #3 and a #5. The Underwood #3, manufactured in 1909, was an unusual looking machine. The large carriage was over two feet long--exactly 26”! In 1910 it was marketed as a Billing Typewriter. The standard size Underwood #3 weighed 30 pounds, with an original selling price around \$125.00. The legendary #5 was introduced in 1901 and had more than 30 years of production.

Underwood typewriters have historical significance because by 1920 almost every company imitated the “quintessence Underwood.”

Soon it was time to leave the farm in Little Prairie and move to Eagle. My grandparents had a farm auction, and the typewriters (Woodstock, Royal, Remington etc.) went for sale. I’m a typing teacher – I simply couldn’t let them go! The typewriters went home with me.

Grandma never did learn to type, and I thought it was time to return a piece of history to the communities of Eagle and Little Prairie.