

What Would You Ask Great-Grandpa?

My great, great grandfather, John C. Atkinson, and his wife, Polly Peckham Atkinson, each wrote a two page autobiography for their men's and women's Church Groups. It doesn't sound like a lot but it is **100% more** than came down to us from my other great-great grandparents!

John wrote this: *"In 1859, I first came to Nebraska. Drove an ox team for my brother, William. Stayed only long enough to help build him a log house and then started back to Wisconsin, on foot, with a rifle, a grip sack, and 35¢ in cash. Walked through the beautiful but desolate prairies to Atchison. Worked and paid my passage down the Missouri and up the Mississippi. Got home with 50¢ and a very severe attack of ague."* He went on to say, *"On April 14, was married to Polly Peckham, a neighbor girl (in WI) who still boards with me."*

WOW!!! Don't I wish he had said more than 75 words about this epic journey! And I would love to ask Polly to tell more about being a young pioneer wife and mother!



Polly, my great grandfather Ed, Estelle and JC

Polly had this to say about their arrival Nebraska: *"When we came in sight of the place that was to be our home I just cried. It was all burnt over, not a house, tree, or any improvement on our side of the creek and only Germans on the other side. They proved to be good neighbors after we became acquainted with them but the gift that hides in the future is hard to discover through tears."* Three weeks later Polly gave birth at home while JC was gone to St. Joseph, 100 miles away, for supplies. The German woman across the creek came and served as midwife. A gift indeed!



Triggering Reasons to Write

Notes: The flip side of wondering about ancestors is the decision to write for your own descendants. The two are very close. Stimulate your readers memories of their own ancestors and tickle their desire to save for the future.



