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I Remember

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i re- mem- ber

*in memory of
my devoted
grandfather-my pepa.*

that beautiful picture. what a day it must have been, the day it was taken. happy faces, handsome faces. a history is seen in that picture; not one ever mentioned in text books, but i won't let it be forgotten. just a simple picture, and i remember.

it happened as the world was once again experiencing war, the "big one." only months before departure to that far away place, japan, in the spring of 1945 he married the woman he had loved ever since their first encounter. they were married in his car, a 1935 ford, the justice of the peace standing just outside the driver's-side door as he and she said their "i do's" and vowed they'd be together always. before his departure, they posed for this memorable picture—i remember.

though done in black and white, the radiance of delight in their faces brings life to that picture, just as the sun brings life to the morning sky. he in his uniform, hat and all; she in her sunday best, hair pulled back with a ribbon: these two grand people, smiles on their lips, gladness in their eyes. she is leaning on his shoulder, sitting so very close at his side, with her hands clasped in her lap. and he has one arm around her, while the hand of the other gently holds her left arm. there they are, the left hand of each sporting their newly placed bands of gold. did they know then the blessed life together that would follow? of the life and love that they would pass to their children and all the generations to come? knowing it would never end, their love for each other

is clearly seen in that picture. in the spring of 1947, he returned home from the war. he went straight to sears, where she worked. the joy of seeing him after such a long separation is the fondest remembrance she has. soon after his return, they moved into their first home together. it was a two-room house close to the railroad tracks in the city; he worked for the railroad company. it was in this home that their first child was born—a daughter.

having grown up on a farm, he longed to once again be in the country. leaving the city and the railroad company behind, he and she moved to a small community—to a large farm house with acres and acres of land to cultivate. and enrich that land they certainly did. to his delight, he rode the tractor and tended the crops day after day. in the meantime, she gave birth to two other children—another daughter, and then a son. forty-four years later, he and she still live in that farm house, and he still plows and sows the land. and the enchanting faces in that picture still radiate love for each other.

their children grew and married, and each had a family of his own. and then their children grew and married, and brought great-grandchildren into the marvelous family. and the unyielding love he and she share with each other is the same unyielding love that together they share with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. losing their given names along the way, the beautiful couple became



pepa and mema, names given to them by their first grandchild. and on the land that they purchased so long ago, where in the beginning only they and their daughter lived, is a row of homes belonging to their children and grandchildren.

i was that first grandchild, the one who renamed the couple in that unforgettable picture. sharing their home, i awake each morning to find them already at the breakfast table—coffee in hand, reading scriptures from the bible. they are my grandparents—the same two beautiful people who were married fifty years ago; the same two beautiful people who began a heritage of love for all generations to come. in time, some may not remember how it all began, but i have that picture—and i will always remember.