

## The Christmas Watch

Today is what some people call Black Friday. That term is not too familiar or endearing to me. No, I will not be rushing out to buy all sorts of things I do not need or want just because someone tells us all that they are bargains. The morning is not black for me. A covering of new white snow lies on the Stone Arabia fields. Brilliant yellow sunshine streams through my east window. What a great day this is to conjure up pleasant memories which include those of friends and relatives who have brightened our yesterdays. I'll pull out that small drawer in the old cherry chest of drawers. Ah! Yes, there is the object of my search. In the palm of my hand rests a ladies watch. Ladies watches were much the same as those pocket watches carried by gentlemen. One difference was that they were smaller and not usually carried in a pocket. They might be pinned to the ladies blouse or suspended on a long chain around her neck. This particular time piece comes from a day and age when the year 1900 was the beginning of a new century. The watch cannot tell its own story so this writer will have to do it as it was told to him years ago.



The proper way to start is to introduce the Edward and Sarah Brown family who lived in the Happy Hollow section of the town of Canajoharie, NY long ago. They were married in 1882 even before the new century. Anna was born in 1882 and Nellie in 1887. Nellie became this writer's great aunt when

she married George H Shineman, my grandmother Barshied's brother. I knew aunt Nell from when I was a small boy.



You say, "what in the world has that got to do with a watch?". The story as it was told to me was that Annie being older was given a watch for Christmas when she was growing up. It was one of her favorite possessions. Nellie was promised one also when she got a little older. A few years went by and no doubt it was time to receive that watch. It seems when the two girls awoke on that long ago Christmas morning the watch became a major topic. Nellie told Annie to go downstairs and see if her watch was under the tree. If it wasn't, Nellie did not intend to get up. Annie called back upstairs and said: "It's here you can get up now". That is how Nellie got the watch she prized for the rest of her 90 years. Annie passed away in 1981 at 99 years. Both sisters were special to me. In their final years I did my best to make life a little better for them. Now I and the Christmas watch and memories are all that remain of a special relationship.



As I close this story about the Christmas watch my mind drifts back over my own long life. There was a time when great amounts of presents were not received. Life was simpler and slower. I remember when about all I got was a teddy bear. Aunt Nell's watch was special because it was not accompanied by many other presents except consideration and love. Let the reader decide which way is best.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, November 28, 2014