



As a kid in the 1970s, I had three great-grandmas. By the mid- 80s, two had passed away, but one remained in good health for what would be another decade. At a family event in 1984, my dad gave me the idea to capture a conversation with her, using my mini cassette recorder. Then at age 86, she told us about a defining experience she'd had as a young professional in the workplace.

From a small town in North Dakota, she had come to Fargo as a teen to study at what was then Aaker's Business College. By 1918, she was a stenographer at the Northern Pacific train station in neighboring Dilworth, Minnesota. During the Spanish Flu epidemic, when all other workers had contracted the illness, she was the sole remaining staff member who could go to work.

For nearly two weeks, she kept the station open by herself. Dozens of arriving train conductors, all of them men, were not expecting a young woman, barely five feet tall in heels, to receive their cargo and passengers. One asked her, "But, where's the station manager? And who the hell are *you*?" Even in 1984, she winced and said, "Uff. I didn't care for *that*."

Despite similar interactions, she continued her work and kept countless trains moving. Not long after, a Northern Pacific department head made a special trip from Minneapolis to meet her, to recognize her effort and to thank her for her dedication.

My little-bitty great-grandma Mabel turned 20 that year.

Do you know a remarkable history of someone in your life?
Do you have a remarkable history of your own because of that someone?
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