

Rosie Bosse - author

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

"Grandma, tell me a story!" Those words are a call for storytime. In the case of one rural Kansas woman, those words would ultimately inspire a book and the beginning of a series. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Rosie Bosse lives with her husband J.R. on the family farm near Onaga, Kansas. Rosie grew up on a farm in Jewell County. She got a degree in home economics education from K-State. One night she went out dancing and met her future husband J.R..

"We said we would wait five years to have children," Rosie said with a smile. "Well, our first one was born nine months and three days after the wedding." Within six years they had four children. Rosie chose to stay at home with the kids. She worked as a substitute teacher and got involved with Tupperware.

"I wanted a set of cereal bowls that I couldn't afford, but I could get the kit free if I held four Tupperware parties so that's what I did," Rosie said. After hosting, she found she really liked the products and people. In fact, she was eventually promoted to a director with the company. She now has 55 people on her team. Hers is one of the most successful sales teams in Kansas.

Rosie's family grew also. Her four children are now grown and she has nine grandchildren.

"The grandkids are always asking me to tell them a story, but I don't always tell the stories the same way," Rosie said. "My daughter said I should write the stories down."

Rosie always enjoyed writing. "One of the people who influenced me the most was my English composition teacher at K-State," Rosie said. "On the first day of class, she told us that a C was for average work, a B was for excellent work, and the only way to get an A was to write something that was good enough to be published. We were all so scared that we tried to drop the class, but we couldn't do it."

Rosie buckled down in the class and improved her writing in the course of the semester. "In the end, I did get an A, and it was one of the proudest grades I ever received," Rosie said. The teacher even came to her wedding. "What a wonderful lady," Rosie said.

Those writing skills would come in handy years later when Rosie's daughter suggested that she write down the stories that she told her grandchildren. Rosie's first book was written for a little friend. It was titled Beautiful Little Princess. She wrote another one based on a story for the grandkids.

On a whim, Rosie contacted a publishing company in Oklahoma City. Ultimately, the people there agreed to publish her book which was released in fall 2016. It is an illustrated children's book entitled How Clicker the Dog Earned his Name.

The story is not autobiographical, but it does begin with Mr. and Mrs. Farmer who "lived on a farm in the middle of nowhere." In the story, Mr. Farmer finds and rescues an abandoned puppy. Mrs. Farmer insists on no more animals, but her heart melts when she sees the little dog. Spoiler alert aside, be assured that the story has a happy ending.

The story was illustrated by the company's city-based artists, which was a challenge. "In the first drawings the pickup truck looked like a minivan, and the farmer's arms looked like little sticks." Rosie eventually sent in a photo of her husband's muscular arms. The revised illustrations were wonderful.

The book about Clicker is just the beginning. Upcoming books include Knarleytooth, the Mean Mountain Lion and Clicker Finds a Mate. Rosie has also published cookbooks with hundreds of delicious recipes. The most recent is titled Grandma's in the Kitchen but Not For Long, which focuses on good quality food which can be prepared quickly. "I want good food fast," Rosie said. She's sold hundreds of the books from her rural location near Onaga, population 697 people. Now, that's rural.

"Grandma, tell me a story!" Thanks to her grandchildren, Rosie Bosse is making a difference by sharing her stories with families everywhere.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.