

## Excerpt from Chapter 22

### The Cousins' Lunch

As I excitedly shared the news with Frances, she told me that she had a Bible given to her by her mother that was purchased by her grandmother, our great grandmother Amelia in 1876. “No way!” I exclaimed. “Yes and it has their handwritten notes listing dates of birth, marriage and death. I bet you’d like to see that wouldn’t you?” “Of course! Yes, please!” I stuttered. “We senior cousins have luncheons once or twice a year. Sometimes more often if we can. I was speaking with Claudia about our next one. Would you like to attend?” “I can’t tell you what an honor that would be and how that makes me feel. I am overwhelmed,” I managed as tears welled. I mean, this was nothing like anything I had ever read in any Foundling Finders or DNA Detectives posts. Sure people had connected and been welcomed, but my family was going totally open-kimono on me! They were not only revealing what they knew to be true, they were sharing the most valuable things imaginable—their time, their history, and their Bible. “I’ll bring the bible, too. It will be at Claudia’s home and Michael, Douglas and Pam will be there along with Katherine and a few others.” “I’m so excited! Thank you so much. What can I bring?” “Nothing at all—just yourself.”

As I arrived at Aunt Claudia and Uncle Robert’s home, some of our cousins were already there. I was greeted with such genuine warmth that I felt I had known them for many years if not my entire life. If I felt at all unusual, it had nothing to do with their reaction to me. For a moment I thought, “I can’t believe I am here sitting with all of these close biological relatives, and they’re so wonderful! Is this really happening?” Seated around the dining room table, we chatted about our adventure and our first meeting in the library. We asked about one another’s families, and I

must have looked so silly smiling as wide as the Cheshire cat the entire time. Soon Frances announced that the moment had arrived. She reached into a bag and carefully lifted out a wrapped package. I knew this was the Bible, but I was completely unprepared for my reaction. As she delicately unwrapped the paper revealing a book with a well-worn, though still intact cover, wave after pummeling wave of sorrow, gratitude, and joy overtook me. Not wanting to stain the pages, I suppressed the tears that welled in my eyes as I realized this book had been seen and touched by my grandmother Gertrude and all of her siblings.