

The Heart of Who I Am

I take one last glance around my barren room, making sure I have packed everything I will need. I feel butterflies start to flurry in my stomach as I close the door to the bedroom that will no longer be mine when I return. Hesitantly, I make my way down the stairs to say goodbye to my family. I fight the urge to cry when my dad starts to get choked up as we hug. I don't want to let go, but I feel I need to be strong for him. As I walk out the door, I take one last glance at the farm where I grew up; I experience less of an excitement for my new found independence, but more of a sense of leaving a big part of myself behind.

Since the day I was born, no matter where I may go, I am Alyssa Seland, and despite all of the changes that have been made on my family's farm since I moved out, many things have remained as I grew up knowing, and those are the things that have helped shape who I am today.

Not only did my family's farm provide physical warmth and stability, it also helped fashion my career goals, my heritage, and gave me an anchor. I will begin by telling you what aided in shaping my career goals.

There were always animals on our farm. Whether it was cats, dogs, cows, horses, or chickens, I loved them all, and I made it my job to be their friend and take care of them. To this day, I have compassion for any animal I see. It is even a struggle for me to watch a movie where an animal is hurt (even if they say that no animals were hurt during the making of the film). I feel like there is something I should have done, but couldn't. Needless to say, it is now my passion to become a veterinarian. My love for the animals that I cared for on the farm greatly influenced what I will pursue as my career.

Just as my family's farm shaped my career goals, it reveals my heritage as well. The farm has been a part of our family for generations. My great-great grandma Karen bought the farm and raised her children there. When she could no longer take care of it on her own, she handed it down to her youngest son, my great-grandpa Clarence. It was then passed down to their first son, my grandpa De Vern. My dad later bought the farm when he and my mom moved there to live next door to my great-grandparents. Since then, the family has gathered together on the farm to celebrate just about any occasion. Through life and death, storms and rainbows, nothing has changed the fact that the farm has been and will always be our home, our family, and our history.

Even as the farm is a part of my heritage, it has also kept me grounded. My homestead has given me an anchor to keep me rooted in who I am.

No matter what turns my life takes, I know I can always return home. It helps me keep my head above the water, whenever I feel like I may begin to sink. My home and my family keep me from losing my ground when I think I know the right way. Like a sheep gone astray from its flock, they are my shepherd. My personal anchor lies within my home, as well as my family.

Over time, my family's farm may have changed in appearance, but the most treasured parts of it will forever live on through my career goals and my heritage, and it will be my steady anchor.

To wrap things up and put a bow on it, "Home is where my heart is." That phrase may sound cliché, but as the years pass since I've left home, it continues to hold true.

February 1, 2008