

Merlene Anderson

July 11, 2013

Castle Dale, Utah

Interview with Merlene Anderson at her home in Castle Dale, Utah. Interviewer's
are Shirley Begay, Director of the Emery County Archives and Dixie Thompson, a
neighbor and Visiting Teacher to Merlene.

M: (Merlene speaking of her Mother) A few memories I have of her, their
different memories...

D: First off, what is her name?

M: Laura Jensina Grunvig Pilling

D: OK

M: My Dad was mad at her when they got married. You can see by their wedding
picture. She wanted this dress to get married in. So... she could sit on her hair....
so, she had her hair cut to pay for her wedding dress. And, he wouldn't talk to
her all day because she cut her hair.

D: Awww.... She wanted that wedding dress. Oh! She was a determined lady!

M: As well as I can remember, I can remember little incidences with her growing
up. And I remembered different things with my Dad, but they were ... they
weren't together for so long... for a shorter time.

D: Will why did she go away?

M: Well she didn't. She was 90 years old, but they were divorced when I was six.

D: Oh... so that's why you don't have many memories then?

D: You're Dad?

M: No, Dr. Finnison.

D: Oh my....

M: And, based on his recommendation they put her in the hospital.

D: Oh my...

M: this is hearsay, because I don't remember it. I remember at school, I was in the second grade, when I was taken to the bus, and this car drove up and there was a whole bunch of people in it, and my mother got out and ran over and hugged me. And, she told me she had to leave and was crying. I went home and told Dad. He went and took me to the doctor, for thinking I was losing my mind. Because, he said there was no way they would ever let my Mother go. But, I swear to this day, my other came and hugged me that day.

D: Wow! It was something both of needed then, huh?

M: I think what had happened was they were on the road and she saw me and they let her say goodbye.

S: did you ever see your Mother again in the hospital?

M: Oh yeah. I always thought she had died until I was 12 years old, and Dad come in and he says, "We're going a visiting". So, we packed a lunch. We had a lunch packed and went in to Provo to see her. And, we saw her in a ... like ... ah a pavilion where they would let us visit. They wouldn't let us see her in her room. And when we saw her and she was so nervous. She had broken teeth and she had a handkerchief over her mouth all the while we were trying to visit. I remember it because I had just got a new pair of shoes. They were moccasins and my brother's boots hurt his feet, so, he was taken a chance and trade me boots for the shoes. And I remember it because he got more use out of my moccasins than I did.

D: Your parents' family, where did they settle?

M: Well, my ... The Modern Dairy was in Carbonville, by Dad and his brothers owned the Modern Dairy. And, they started out as Desert Lake and then they moved to Carbonville, and they had a milk route for years and years. Till the Cloverleaf Dairy sold and putting them in paper cartons, and started the glass jars.

M: He would swell so big. And they ... hated.... over at the hospital... putting him in the hospital, I guess. Well he did. They put him in the hospital and he didn't come home.

S: Hmm...

M: I think a lot of that was he just gave up.

S: So, how old was he when he passed away?

M: I'm not sure. I think he was in his late 60's. I'm not sure.

D: Now what was his name?

M: Sivereine Grunvig. His mother was the one stole by the Indians.

S: and what was her name?

M: I think that was Catherine Offina.

S: Oh okay.

M: I got the book on it, but, my memory is not too good.

S: Laugh.... So, you grew up in Wellington?

M: Till Momma was taken and then I moved to Carbonville, because that's where my Dad lived.

S: Uh huh.

D: Did your Dad ever remarry?

M: No

D: Never did?

M: No

S: How old were you when you got married?

M: Twenty tree the first time.

Malfunxion with the tape recording. Merlene talking about the death of her first husband.

didn't realize he was still up there and here he come down around this curve, it
..... from behind him and the gate locked, he says the only thing he can do is hit it
square on, he hit the gate and went through. He couldn't hit it by the side,
because they would have tore him off. So, he hit it right on, the guy who had
dropped the gate said, "Oh my God, I just killed Ken!"

D: Awww.....

M: But the only thing Ken said He was so mad that he didn't dare go into the
work shop until he cooled down. So he unloaded his load and put the truck up
and pressed it out like he always did before he ever went in the office... And when
he walked in, that guy was just as, just as shaking. He just figured that he had
killed Ken.

S: Sounds like he didn't get hurt? Did he get hurt?

M: No, it shook him up pretty bad. Tore his front of his truck up. Those closed
gates, you know, where they close, and the poles that hold them? It just blew
them out of the ground.

D: There's a lot of power behind that.

M: Well, the tipple was full of coal.

S: A lot of weight from behind.

M: Yeah.

D: What was your first husband's name?

M: John Senechal.

D: Say that again.

M: Senechal.

D: Shanishaw?

M: John Senechal

D: Oh, okay. What nationality is that?

M: French

they were hit broadside by a car coming down the canyon. He died a couple of days later.

D: And that was your Dad?

M: No, that was my Father-in-law.

D: Oh, you're Father-in-law.

M: My dad died of Cancer. It was Leukemia actually. Oh...he died in sixty three (1963). And, can't remember, but my son, Val, was 6 years old. John died, buried before that, four years actually before that. He died of Leukemia in California. That's what they called it. And after the third attempt at putting him in a rehab, the cop told him if he ever come back to Utah, he would put him in prison. Well, they took him out of Utah. On the way to California, he was sitting by a broken window, it was just cracked, but, it was still enough to let the breeze in, well, he got pneumonia. He was hospitalized when he got to California.

Oral History of Merleen ^{Pilling} Anderson

Collected by Misty Elliott

Misty Elliott

U.S. Studies

May 2, 1996

Misty: What is your full name?

Merr: My maiden name is Merleen Pilling, my first married name was Seneschal, and the second is Anderson.

Misty: How did you get your name?

Merr: My mom gave me a name of a character in a book she was reading at the time.

Misty: Cool, did you like it?

Merr: No.

Misty: You don't like your name?

Merr: No, Does anybody like their name?

Misty: Do you have middle name?

Merr: No.

Did you've any nicknames when you were young?

Merr: My dad called me Scacho.

Misty: Where did that one come from?

Merr: I have no ideah.

Misty: He just came with it on his own?

Merr: I guess, my family always called me Merr, still do.

Misty: That is short for Merleen?

Merr: Yes.

Misty: What year were you born?

Merr: 1931

Misty: Your still young.

Merr: Oh boy.

Misty: Where did you go to school?

Merr: I went ot the first grade in Wellington, and all the rest in Price.

Misty: So you went to Carbon High School?

Merr: I had to work, I stayed in a boarding house. I worked there to.
Untill I moved out.

Misty: How much did you make an hour?

Merr: I made about a dollar an hour.

Misty: Where did you work when you moved out?

Merr: At that time I was working at Woolworths.

Misty: What was Woolworths?

Merr: Like a dime store, like K-mart and that.

Misty: How much did it coast you to go to school?

Merr: Fourty-three dollars a quarter plus all my books and that.

Misty: How much was minimum wage back then?

Merr: I don't quite remember, I know I made something like 33 dollars a week.

Misty: And that was working 8 hours a day?

Merr: Yes.

Misty: After you finished college did you stay living at the boarding
houe?

Merr: After a year at the dime store, I moved up to Santa Rosa.

Misty: Was that fun?

Merr: Oh yah, I liked it.

Misty: Were you staying with someone?

Merr: Oh, there were four of us girls that would, every pay day we
would go to a different kind of restaurant, we went to Chinese, Mexican,
all different kinds. We went to San Francisco and ate. We went to the
coast where the boats would come in to a little restaurant there, that was
some of the times that stick out in my mind the most. Probably because
I love seafood so much and it was always fresh abd good there.

Merr: Well, I didn't like to cook, so I would get to tromp hay, I'd wear my brothers bib overalls, and tie them down around the ankles. Then when I got a little bit bigger I got to either drive the team or the slip load.

Misty: What was a slip load?

Merr: It was on the back of the tractor. Sometimes they needed somebody to run the dairy truck. I would do that.

Misty: was that fun?

Merr: Oh, it would drive me crazy, forward and back, then forward and back they'd holler and I'd pull forward until they'd lift either the slip load or the fork way up in the air then the guys would guide it, then they would pull a rope and then the thing would open up and drop the hay, I would have to back up until they put another slip load on.

Misty: Was it cool being able to drive though?

Merr: Oh, yah, I liked to do anything outside but I hated to cook.

Misty: Did you have more than one automobile?

Merr: Yah, let's see we had at the dairy, four panel trucks, and that was our milk delivery trucks, then we had a great bug truck.

Misty: Were you a wealth family?

Merr: Not really, for our school clothes we got one new dress, then if we out grew them or if they were tore badly enough that they couldn't be repaired or at Christmas time we would get another one. All of our slips and that were made out of flower cloth.

Misty: What was your dresses like? Did you have to wear them to school?

Merr: Oh, yah we souldn't wear pants. I don't remember what all the dresses were like but I owned a dress that was a wrap around dress that I really liked. It came around and up over the shoulder and around the

Misty: After you moved out of California, did you come back here?

Merr: Yah.

Misty: Was it kind of dissapointing comming back here?

Merr: Not really, because I came home from vacation and ran into John.

Misty: How did you guys get hooked up?

Merr: I was going to the movie with uncle Dan and Aunt Jerri, and he walked by with a girl, he saw me and he stopped and talked to me. He asked where I lived and I told him.

Misty: Did it make you feel good that he kind of left her to come talk to you?

Merr: Oh, yes.

(in a previous interview she stated that she had gone to a dance with a very tall. good looking guy, and he drover her up in to the woods and told her to put out or get out, so she got out and walked home in the snow about a total of about 5 or 6 miles and recieved frost bite on her feet.)

Misty: So, how did it hapen that you guys ended up going out on your date?

Merr: I'd seen him and I though that he was good looking and cute and that, but we hadn't dated. I wasn't allowed to go out on a blind date.

My grandmoteher had gotten her finger cot in a ringer, and it broke her middle finger.

Misty: Isn't that like a washing machine?

Merr: Yah. I had to get to a doctor, and Becky came to pick me up, she was a best friend and she came to get me, we lived in Miller Creak, I got

Misty: you guys got married in Vegas?

Merr: Yes.

Misty: Did you drive all the way there?

Merr: No, we took turns.

Misty: What day did you get married?

Merr: It would have been April the twenty-third, 1954.

Misty: After you guys got back did you both move in together?

Merr: Oh yah, we got an apartment, we moved in his parents basement.

Misty: Did your dad know that you guys got married?

Merr: Oh, yes.

Misty: So it wasn't like an eloping thing?

Merr: No, I couldn't afford a wedding, I was having to make my own living.

Misty: What was it like at first, just getting married, was it difficult?

Merr: Not really.

Misty: I heard that it is hard when you first get married.

Merr: Oh, yah you have to learn to live with each other, but it wasn't that hard with him. He was easy to live with.

Misty: Did you guys do stuff, like date or have people over?

Merr: We liked to play Canasta. Or we would go to Dale and Dorothy's, or they'd come up. John had a dog named Jumbo, he would come up and put his paws up on the table and act like he was playin. And John would talk to him like he was part of the family. And he'd whine.

They'd go out side and John would sit there with arm around him and he'd say come on Jumbo lets sing! And he'd go AARRRRROOOOO!
And the dog would join in. After John died, every day at the time John was sposed to come home from work that dog would be waiting for

came up to see if I couldn't talk to her. He ended up asking me for a date. We took his kids to the movies with us.

Misty: How many kids did he have?

Merr: Ann was the oldest one, Then there was Kathi, then Galeene then Kens daughter Debbi.

Misty: he called you up for a date where did you guys go?

Merr: With the kids, we went to see a movie.

Misty: Were you uncomfortable?

Merr: Oh, it was deffinatly an uncomfortabe situation. I don't know how he was, I didn't like it very well because he was making me feel and I didn't want to feel. I tried to pawn him off on Jackie, my friend.

Misty: So it wasn't love at first sight.

Merr: Oh, deffinatly not, he was hurting real bad.

Misty: How did he ask you to marry him?

Merr: We took the kids to the Ice Follies, adn after the kids went to bed, he asked me to marry him.

Misty: How long had you guys been dating?

Merr: for about 7 months.

Misty: Did you get married then?

Merr: We never got married till the following January.

Misty: When you guys got married where did you live?

Merr: In the house that was tore down over there untill we remodeled this one.

Misty: When you guys moved in here did you have Delana then?

Merr: I hadn't had Delana then Val was about a year old When we moved in here.

Misty: Was it hard to buiild this house?

mom went in and started using Joni K's little shovel. Joni jumped down in there and beat the tar out of Annie, but she was too shy to do anything about it she just sat there and let it happen.

Misty: Did you laugh?

Merr: Oh, yah but she didn't fight back she just sat there and took it.

One time we were down on the desert and the kids went through Buckhorn wash and the kids were running around. Your mother always said that she was a tom boy. Her and her two best friends had to be tom boys. And they went running around and all at once you heard silence the kids were up to something. Your mom had hurt herself but wasn't going to say anything because she was a tom boy and she didn't cry.

Misty: What about Ginger and them, did they do stuff?

Merr: They fought like cats and dogs, Ginger always saved her money we would give her money and she'd wait until the last minute to spend it. They bought candy and Ginger would put part of it away while all the other kids ate theirs then they would want some of her's that would cause an argument.

Misty: Did they walk to the store?

Merr: They would walk down to Short Stop only it was an entirely different thing then it was a little gas station that was built right up on the corner, with an open pump that pumped gas. They had a little candy place in the back. Gas was so much more reasonable that.

Misty: Where were Ken's kids then?

Merr: Oh. they lived with Laroo. We got them in the summer time but they lived with Laroo.

Misty: Was it like a separate family?

Misty: She was your cousin wasn't she?

Merr: By marriage, her mother married my uncle.

Misty: How many kids did you guys have together?

Merr: Two, Vall and Delana.

Misty: Tell me some things about them growing up.

Merr: We had a shetlon, and Val had to do chores outside where he would have to get coal and wood and haul it up to the house. It would have been a lot quicker for him to just haul it up but he had to train the horse to haul it for him. He would load it up behind the shetlon and make him haul it up to the house for him.

Misty: Did you and Grandpa Anderson get married in teh temple?

Merr: No.

Misty: How did you guys find out that he had cancer?

Merr: We took him to the doctor because his neck was sore. And they informed us that he had Treacheal Cancer.

Misty: After He passed on you just basically lived here by yourself?

Merr: Diana lived here for a while and Val stayed for quite a while.

Misty: After your kids started having kids, are there any stories you can remember about that?

Merr: You were my baby. You wouldn't stop crying for any one. And you were the only baby that Ken ever changed a diaper for.

I have enjoyed my life to this point.