

July 20,2006 Interview on "The Muddy Creek" by Janet J. Petersen

Merlin Christiansen  
62 West 200 South  
Emery, Utah

Born in Emery 1924 to Shaun & Mary Christiansen

Married: Jean Crook on Sept. 6,1945

Children: Nine, 3 boys and 6 girls....Nancy, Renee, Scott, Glennis, Ken, Carla, Marie, Becky & John.

First people in family to settle in Emery County were my parents (whose parents came over from Mayfield. They were Jorgensen's (Wilford, Nephi, Alma, Chall, )

My Father lived in Mayfield and was a Sheep Man.

Jean's Father came over also and Jean and her sisters came over to cook for the family.

Jean and I lived on the North side of town before moved here...We had a dairy farm for many years and that is when I learned to go 100 miles to irrigate. I had a big farm to take care of plus take care of the milking. We sent the milk to Hi-Land Dairy. It was a lot of work!

I went to school in Emery and then to High School in Ferron.

KID GAMES: One game was "Pomp" and lots of marbles, the kids wore all the knees out on there pants and we used to play hop-scotch, even with the girls. We used to play hop-scotch up and down the stairs of the old high school. My teachers were: Nelphi Williams, Mark Williams, Eve Jensen and Mr. Brinkerhoff (Cameron's Dad) and a Ms. Larsen from Ferron was my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher & Mrs. HESSIE Bunderson was my first grade teacher

Duzett's was the main store in Emery. Their first building was burned down during the war and then they built a brick one. Vera Duzett was the one who ran the store.

I have always loved Emery and all the people, all except Carlisle Larsen, he was younger than me, but he was also bigger and he was the town "Bully". But I had friends that would help stand up to Carlisle.

I do remember being "Quarantined for Mumps and Measles. Thee Sheriff posted the house to make sure no one came in the house and became exposed to the disease.

As a Teen, we had a lot of freedom, but we sure had to work before we could play. I played in the hills up by the Cemetery and lots of days we would build roads. We spend many hours on the horses and roaming the hills. On Sunday afternoon and evening we would all get together and have fun. Teased the girls and made pulled Honey Candy with them.

FIRST: Car was a 1929 Chev. when I was seven years old. Our first refrigerator was when our kids were small (with 9 kids we had to have better cooling than the burlap cooler. The cooler

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would keep a gallon of milk for several days.) We sold butter and eggs and we had sheep and pigs to take care of our food supply.

**ELECTRICITY:** I remember when they set the first poles in Emery. I got in the big hole and couldn't get out...I wasn't very big, but the hole was...

I do remember the first radio we had and the "big" antenna we had to have with wire strung up in the trees to get a signal.

There were several large orchards in town. We did a lot of canning, a lot of sewing and we had to have a cellar to keep things over the winter. We had two cellars, one for vegetables and one for the milk products. It was a good way to keep things. We used the apples that would fall on the ground to feed the pigs.

I remembering going out in the fields and raising potatoes and pigs, we had many apples in the orchard and every day I would go to the orchard and I would gather up the apples to feed the pigs.

**MUDDY:**

I remember going up there fishing. Getting on our horses and going up the creek to fish. We didn't swim in the creek because it wasn't deep enough.

The first bridge was like the old one over the Castle Dale Creek, like the suspended one. I don't know if that replaced an old wooden one or not. I do remember the cement abutment has been there for a long time. I remember when they put the water system in and they hauled in cast iron pipe to put the water in. Dale Pettey, who used to drive the school bus, before I went to school. Mr. Pettey would bring a load of pipe and would go across that old bridge. As soon as you got across the bridge there was a very steep curve. That was how he was killed. He tried to make the curve, but because of the pipe shifting and so much weight, he went right into that hill and was killed. That is the hill that the bridge is close to now.

**TUNNELS:**

The tunnel was build before they settled Emery due to the fact that there was no water here before the tunnel was built. The water came out of the creek where it is now. The tunnel served the purpose of the ditch and was built to raise the water up to a level that it could be sent on to Emery. It was buried into the hillside and was 1200 feet long. They dug from both ends and ended up in the middle. They made a shaft straight down and then they worked from both directions from that point and when they met they were right on. I do remember the tunnel very well. It kept caving in due to the fact that it would get wider and then would cave in. It just got too dangerous to get in there and clean it out in order to get the water through. They then decided to take pipe through the tunnel. They put about a 16 inch pipe through the hill. There is still some of the tunnel there. The cut was just to the left side of where the tunnel was. They didn't open up the tunnel, but made a big cut to the side of it. By this time they had better equipment to work with and they left some of the pipe in because they couldn't get all of it out.

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I heard a number of the guys say that when they were in there working, they had to rest a minute and then they would get up and go again. One time a big boulder came down right where they had been sitting to rest.

The tunnel was about 40 feet deep and it got very wide and even though they kept trying to repair it with timbers, it just got too dangerous so it was decided to make the cut through the hillside. The cut was made quite close to the time the war ended (approximately).

I do know that the canal was a long way and we used to skate on the ice in the winter. I could skate before I was old enough to go to school. Dad bought me some galoshes and tied the skates to the boots. Because we lived right on the canal, that was what we did to have fun in the winter time.

We had a lot of flash flood that would make it necessary to build an out-let works a couple of times to be able to maintain it. We finally got a good cement head gate up there. When the flood would come, you could expect just about everything. We don't have very much water-shed. If we had a reservoir we would be in much better shape. Along with that, a sprinkler system would make life much better.

I didn't know much about L. C. Moore. He had a good reputation for helping people, but that is about all I know of him.

I loved living in Emery. That is all I know, so I have to love it. We had a great time. We would herd 1,000 to 1200 head of sheep up on the mountain. We also trailed some of the sheep up to Nine Mile Canyon. I remember when I was in about the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, my brother Vernon and I went out there and spent the whole summer. Homer Edward brother would truck some of the sheep from here to Wellington. I went with him then. The older boys stayed home to help farm and me and Vernon spent the time with the sheep up Nine Mile. We had one old mare out there that was just plain mean. I would try to saddle her and she would come at me with her mouth wide open. We had bells on the horses, so each morning when we got up we just listened for the bell and went and got the horses. We had to always put hobbles on them to keep them close. My best memory of Emery was just to be here and be with my family.

I met Jean when her dad came here to teach school. Her Dad was Renold Crook and when Jean came I was working for the Forest Service. Emir Burr and I were up on the mountain fixing the old telephone lines that went from the Rangers house down here to the house on the mountain and over to Mt. Baldy. We went along and repaired what needed fixing.

When I came home that week end, the kids said, "do you want to meet this cute new girl?" I said "sure" and I don't think we were apart from that time on. We married Sept. 6, 1945.

Jean suffered because she never felt appreciated by the people of Emery. She played the piano

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and organ and she was always available but they never made her feel cared about. She was so talented. She wasn't very aggressive, but she was the very best person ever. She also played the flute and taught all of our girls to play the piano and flute. She raised a beautiful family and what more could anyone ask than that.