November 17, 2009

Subject: Mervin Duncan
Interviewer: Kim Copinga
Present: Karrie Behling (Daughter)

Karrie: Should I just start asking questions?
Kim: Yes, please. This is Kim Copinga, it is November 17th and we are interviewing Mervin Duncan. Karrie Behling is present and we will begin.
Karrie: Ok, let's put this up by Dad. You don't mind holding that do you Dad? Would you tell us a little bit about your grandpa, John C. Duncan? About the barn he built and what he looked like and what you remember about him.
Mervin: Yes. Grandpa Duncan came to Ferron in the 1870's. **Brigham Young** had sent him from Cedar City where he had 800 head of cattle and a couple hundred head of horses. Brigham Young sent him to San Juan to settle as he had too many cattle for the Cedar City area. And Grandma Duncan had two little girls, Julie… Senith and Julie, and she drove a team of horses and a covered wagon from Cedar City to Ferron.

Now they went through Salina and then up over the mountains to Quichenpaw. And, Grandpa drove the cattle and horses and the winter was so bad back in the 1870's that they lost quite a few cattle in the Salina area, where they stayed all winter cause the snow was so deep. And then Grandpa had scouted a road, a trail, over the mountains into Quichenpaw. Grandma drove the team of horses and a covered wagon over those mountain trails, not roads, no roads at all, and they came down Quichenpaw and it looked so ideal that they dug a dugout into the side of the Quichenpaw creek bottom and laid a pole and willows and covered it with dirt and they stayed there all winter.

In the spring, they cleared an acre of ground because the Quichenpaw creek had a little water in it and they planted an acre of wheat. The ground was so fertile and deep that the wheat done real good and while that summer was going on and winter, they built a little rock house up out of the creek and over where they had the irrigating stream coming down to make room for a little garden. And one spring, early morning, Grandma told Grandpa, "We're moving today, out of this dugout! [Grandpa] Well we're not ready Grandma, it's not ready yet. [Grandma] We're moving today she said and boy she give him the word with the bark on it. [Grandpa] Alright, alright, we'll move in, even though we don't have a roof on it yet." Well they moved that day and this was spring time and that night a flood came down the Quichenpaw Creek and by the time it had got over there was no sign of the dugout, none whatsoever. They couldn't even tell where it had been and had they not moved they would surely have met up with troubles.

Well they lived in that little house and finished it so they had a roof on it and cleared another little bit of ground, maybe almost 2 acres. And they planted wheat, and it done so exceptionally good and wheat was the medium of exchange there was no money, but they could trade wheat for anything and that's where we got the slogan **"It's as good as the wheat."** If something was real good, well that's as good as the wheat. And they would use that to trade for potatoes or anything else that they needed. There was no money to work with.

And while they were in Quichenpaw, the Indians would come beggin' food and it would scare Grandma seriously. But she would give them a little food like bread, baked bread and cook them a little meal and she was good to the Indians and she had no trouble with them.

But there was a trail through Quichenpaw to Salina and once a month a Pony Express rider would bring the mail to the area of Huntington, Castle Dale, Ferron, Moore and Emery and on over to Salina. And Grandpa was a real large man, well over six feet and a young man, mighty sturdy and industrious, well in about 1870-something, 78 a traveling elder came through Emery County and Grandma and Grandpa drove the wagon and the two girls in to Emery, which was Muddy Creek them days, and the traveling elder baptized Julie and Senith in the Emery Creek. And they had to stand on the bank while a flood of water washed a pine tree down the creek and after it cleared up a little he baptized both of them and maybe one or two more that were living in Emery.

So, they lived in Quichenpaw a little over a year, maybe two years and then they were headed to San Juan and they wanted to go through Green River because it would be such a hard and troublesome road to cross the creek, the Colorado, down towards Arizona. They'd have to float them across on a barge and that many was a big job. So Brigham Young told them, they better go through **Ferron and down the Green River. But by the time they got to Ferron area, Brigham** Young wrote them another letter and told them they better settle on the Ferron Creek as the **Indian uprising** had caused too much trouble and would be dangerous in San Juan. So they settled on the Ferron Creek which is now what we know as the Molen road from Ferron to Molen. And Isaac, no, "Molen", I can't remember his name…but he was a….

Karrie: Mike Molen
Mervin: Mike Molen, he was a surveyor and that's where Molen got it's name and that's where the first settlers settled, down in those meadows in Molen. And Grandpa settled, oh, like a mile from Ferron down the Molen road and like about a mile down the Molen road they built a home where early people knew it as Clive…

Karrie: Killpack?
Mervin: Killpack, no…
Karrie: Wareham?
Mervin: No. He was in the bishopric.
Karrie: Worthin?
Mervin: Clive, Emma B. Swallen, well anyway Clive… I'll think of his name, but Dad and Grandpa built a house there where Clive lived. Across the road was Ken Wareham and they took in an "Old Timer", a one-legged, old… Julius Young and they boarded him cause he was somewhat of a rich man and owned property. Well, they owned from a mile down the road a mile to what is now the Bench Road and they owned the South facing of those hills where now many homes are built along that road. And Dad and Grandpa farmed that country with a team of horses, a plow and a shovel and it was a mighty rough time.

Well, the family of John C. Duncan thought they could build a great big, brick building, which was early the Ferron Town Hall where they would hold shows, silent movies. And entertainers that would come through the county would put on a program there and they had a little meat market in the store, in the front and then the big auditorium where they held the entertainment. And Grandpa and his family borrowed money from the bank to build it and a year later the expense was so high, and no money comin' in, they foreclosed on him and Dad lost his farm on the Molen Road, and rented ground to support his family.

He was a good farmer and he had a big heard of cattle that they said they got into Ferron with four hundred of the eight hundred. Said that **Chief Walkara**, in the winter, would steal cattle and the **"Robbers Roost Gang"** when Grandpa was not out tending them, they would take what they wanted of the horsed and the cattle.

But, Grandpa Duncan was a very industrious and hard worker, and he built the first barn in Emery County and it was built with no nails. They put the stringers and the lumber together with pegs, they'd drill holes and drive wooden pegs in and that barn was still there in the thirties...up until the fifties and it was the first barn in Emery County. And he bought net wire to fence his farm, and that was the first net wire, they knew of in those early days. Let's call that good for a little while.

Kim: Ok.

Mervin: Now, John C. Duncan was my Grandpa but his father was Homer Duncan who was converted to the church way back in Iowa. And Homer Duncan went on a mission to Canada and then one to Texas and while he was in Texas on his mission he bought thirteen hundred head of cattle for three dollars a head and drove them with other ladies' thousand head of cattle to Ferron. And she said, "If you get those cattle to Ferron, I'll join the church". And he got them to Ferron and she joined the church. And Homer Duncan owned ground, his allotment was on 2nd South and Main Street in Salt Lake City. And he drove those thirteen hundred head of cattle and he sold five hundred head for twenty three dollars a head. That gave him a sizeable income or money to live on and he raised wheat the first year in forty eight, 1848, he raised wheat that the crickets gave a heck of a trouble, and **he was there when the seagulls came and devoured the crickets.**

And he planted a crop of wheat and it matured and he harvested so many bushel of wheat, and what do you know, that wheat grew up again and he harvested another crop of wheat that same fall, which has never been known to happen before or since but he got two crops of wheat off of that ground that he tilled. And his home was on 2nd South and Main Street and then he gave eight hundred head of cattle to his boy, John C... and John C. was working in a Salt Mine of some kind down in Salina country and there he met Theresa Ann Ferrell and he married her and they had two girls, Senith and Julie. Senith and Julie drove a team of horses and a covered wagon to Salina up over the hills down into Quichenpaw in the 1800's and there is where Julie and Senith were baptized. And then they moved to Ferron because Grandma was tired of living all alone, out in Emery, out in Quichenpaw where the Indians gave her a little worry. And that Quichenpaw trail was the trail the **Pony Express** men used to pack mail from Price across Emery County and into Salina.

Mervin: .....he died when Rollin was born and we were having a Thanksgiving dinner and Rollin said, "Grandma, do you remember when you changed my diaddy right here?" She said, oh ya, "you wouldn't know the old place now." {Laughing]

Mervin: Now, where were we?
Kim: Maybe we should have you tell when you were born and where and a little about your house?
Mervin: Let's see, where Darl Stevens wife lives. Well, George Duncan was John C. Duncan's boy, the only boy, they had five, they had three girls and my dad was a twin and five of the children died with **Diphtheria** within about ten days of each other. And they said a week, but they died of Diphtheria.

And Dad, Grandpa had bought half a block where Steven Behling now lives, is where Grandpa built him a home and lived there during the eighteen and nineteen hundreds up until the thirties. Grandpa, John C. Duncan died at the age of eighty two and Grandma lived a little longer but I don't know just how old she was but Grandpa died at eighty two years old. He was the oldest man in the world in those days and I remember him. I talked with him and I visited with him way back in those early days and he was voted in a County **Commissioner and Justice of the Peace** and he was quite a prominent, industrial man.

And Grandma Duncan was known as the **midwife** of the Ferron valley and Irene Swallen was a school teacher way back in the eighteen and nineteen hundreds and she said Grandma Duncan {Theresa Ann} was the angel of our county. And she was also the doctor and I can remember her well of telling my Dad what he was going to get for a real bad cold, mustard plaster on his chest and a little, oh like two tablespoons full of whiskey with lemon juice and an aspirin was all the medicine she had. With this mustard plaster on his chest and a hot bath they had a big tub they used for bathing and I was also of those early years. And that's how we bathed was heating the water on the stove and filling a tub, then us boys and my little sister would all...Mother and little sister got the first bath and then us boys would bath, a couple of us, in that same water, but we was mighty thankful for it. And she scrubbed her clothes on the board and ironed them with an iron off of the stove and dried them out on the line, a clothes line. And quite often a horse with a saddle would run under the clothes line and down went the clothes and that cowboy got a "scotch blessing" for stringin' out all those clean clothes. [Laughs]

Where Steven Behling lives is where Grandpa built a little home, a bedroom a front room and a kitchen and naturally the plumbing was outside, which there was none. And we filled a barrel full of water out of the irrigating ditch until **finally they piped water, a wooden pipe**, and they dug the trench by hand with a shovel and a pick and it cost fifty cents and month for water out of the **Ferron City Water System**. Along in the early thirties, real early, we could hook on to **electricity** that came through the valley. And they wanted a dollar a month to hook on to the **Utah Power**. How was we gonna pay that when we was already paying fifty cents for water. Well, we done it any way cause my Dad had been buying a washing machine from Morris Singelton who was a very good friend of the family. And he bought a Maytag washing machine for my wonderful mother to wash her clothes and she would wash and iron white shirts for us boys and she

had five, six boys and I was the youngest. One little sister, four years old and I can remember reading in Grandma's diary; she thanked the Lord that he left her two children, Bertha and George Duncan.

Karrie: Maybe you should tell what your little sister died of; it was common for children to get that.

Mervin: Now, way back in those early days Bertha Duncan married Howard Petty and she had five or six children that lived right here in Ferron but Grandma lost five boys with Diphtheria because they drank the water out of the irrigating ditch. They would fill a barrel and then they'd pack that water in the house and use if for house water and I can hear my mother saying, "You've got to refill the barrel cause the cows have been in the irrigating ditch and the water is sure too strong to use for drinkin'." [Laughs] Boy Grandpa, or my Dad, sure got on the job, I'll tell you. And I'll tell you some stories about those early days too.

Now, I was born in Ferron, in 1922 down where Darl Steven's wife now resides in a little house that Dad built for Mother and the family. Well then, we lost the farm and ranch but had a team of horses and a plow and a shovel and a few chickens and a milk cow and we rented from that Julius Young. We rented a farm in Clawson and there we lived for two or three years and my Dad and the older boys was going hunting deer in the fall and they loaded their supplies in a wagon and rode out the road and up the blue ridge to go up on the mountain. And Mother and I, and my little sister who was born in 1924 and we rode with them a block down the road, then they went up the blue hills to the mountain and we stood there and waved good bye to them. As we started back towards the house, a darn bull was in the pasture with the cows and he was a bellerin' and came towards us cause mother had a dress that probably attracted his attention and mother said, "we cannot out run him to the house, we better climb a tree." So she put a little two by four in the crotch of a cottonwood tree, she climbed up and stood on the board and set me on the little two by four, up about five feet off the ground and this old bull just kept right on comin' and scared the tar out of us. And mother held my little sister in her arm and held to a little limb up in the tree so she could steady herself and she told me not to say a word, don't even breathe out loud. And that bull came right up to the tree where we were hybernatin' and was a bellerin' and I can still feel the hot air from his bellowing on the seat of my pants and mother said, "Don't you even whisper." And we didn't, and we sat there in that tree a long while until the boys came from school which would bring the cows out of the pasture and down by the tree and get the bull and take them to the corral then mother and my little sister got out of that tree and we went to the house, mighty thankful to get rid of that bull.

And, oh times were mighty tough, there was no money, but as time went along there was a school house in Clawson and we were a mile away from the school house and the boys could easy walk to school or ride a horse and they did. I wasn't old enough yet and we lived there and raised a garden and was very thankful to have a home, a bed, and what do you know, along come a **Model T Ford**, and Dad somehow made trades or anyway, we got us a Model T Ford. And he built a garage for it out of willows and a pole or two and willows over the top.

One time we were coming home with mother and the baby girl and my older brother Everett and we got into the garage and..."Wo, wo, wo, you son of a gun", but that car wouldn't stop and out through the garage we went around the house. And mother said, "Dad, you've gotta push that pedal in", [laughing] and he said, "I won't drive this darn thing again, it's too confounded crazy!" So he pulled it into the garage and stopped and after that the older boys could drive it and I can hear him say, "You better take the buggy cause it might rain and that car will never make it home in the mud." [Laughs]

Kim: Grandpa, what was your little sister's name?

Mervin: Jean, my little sister's name was Jean and oh how we loved her. [Chokes up] six boys loving that little bitty sweetheart and she died from **pneumonia** and we called the doctor and he couldn't come that night, he came on a horse the next day and I can remember Grandma MacDonald, which was my mother's, mother, up and they steamed her and did everything they could for her but she died of pneumonia and several children died that same fall. Now she'd be born in 1924, two years younger than I am and oh how we loved her and how we missed her and I'm still crying from it. [Crying]

Now from the farm, we moved into Ferron right where the **City Hall**, there's a house Dad built, right to the side of that City Hall, and Aaron Williams bought that property from us and built his café there and the house still stands that Dad and Mother built. And we lived in it until 1940 when I graduated from high school and then the war broke out in '41 and Dad got a job in the **coal mines out in Columbia** and I went to school at **Carbon College** in '40 and '41 and I learned the automobile business in college and I loved that school. But the war broke out in '41 the next fall and I had already got a job in Salt Lake in the garage and was makin' great big money, I think fifty cents an hour, and that was a lot better than a dollar a day on the farm. I loved the car business and was quite thrifty or lucky to be able to have a job that paid a monthly wages instead of pay if we can... and I stayed in Salt Lake working in the garage business until 1944 where I joined the **Merchant Marines** and they sent me to Los Angeles to boot camp and in seventeen days they had called for Merchant Marines in Alaska and so we were shipped to Alaska but when we hit Canada, Vancouver...no, it was Seattle, they drafted the Merchant Marines into the **Army Transport Service** and that's where I was inducted into the army service. ATS they called it...Army Transport Service and that's where I stayed during the rest of the **war**.

And that's where I met my beautiful wife Ruth Harris and we went dancing, oh how we danced at the **Coconut Grove, The Rainbow Rendezvous and Guy Lombardo, Wayne King** and many famous orchestras came to the Coconut Grove which would hold eight thousand people on 4th South and Main Street. Oh what a wonderful time it was! Every Saturday night we'd go dancing. The ticket was a dollar and you had to be dressed up and at the entrance you could buy a rose for your sweetheart for a quarter and I always bought my pardoner a rose for her hair. Oh how I loved that Coconut Grove, and my wife, which then was my sweetheart, boy was she a dancer and one night, Guy Lombardo was the orchestra and we were dancing and having a wonderful time and I was home on a furlough and we were dancing at the Coconut Grove and Guy Lombardo, we stopped dancing right in front of the band stand and he waved the crowd back and beckoned for me and Ruth to come forward and put on a little dance for them. And he started the tune,

I can't remember now…I think it was…Singing]"Drinking rum and cola, cola… and we put on a little dance for them. I'm sure it was because of the pretty girl and her pretty dress that attracted their attention, but oh how we had a wonderful time.

Karrie: So, tell about the building across from Pat's Sew 'N Stuff. Who owned it and what they did there.

Mervin: Ok, now back in the twenties, George Petty had a woodwork garage or barn where he made doors and windows and did carpenter work for everybody and he had a big garage like that he put ice, bought ice from Luellan Killpack's pond, about a foot square. And they would bring that ice in and put it in that shed and then cover it with sawdust completely. Then, when we wanted ice in the summer, early summer, we could go there and buy a block of ice for a dime and bring it home and make lemonade and our drinks that was real fancy with that ice in it. And George Petty owned that little area there and later on a cheese factory. Cecil Beerenson built where that old ice house and his work store, he built a cheese factory and put a great big tank, a thousand or two; several thousand gallons that he would put milk in and make cheese. And buy the milk from the farmers around the valley and they would take it there and he would make cheese and sell it to the stores, up to Price, Helper and all over the county and it was very wholesome and wonderful.

Well, then Roy Andrews built a little service station where the Baptists, now it was Gil Bowden's store, he built a little store where you could pump gas, where he could sell gas and I remember **coal oil was ten cents a gallon** and **gasoline would be twelve to fifteen cents a gallon.** And there weren't too many customers for it and them cars that did come, Morris Singleton had a Packard that was quite fancy back in the twenties and quite a novelty, and my Dad said, "all the good they are is to scare the buggy horses". [Laughs}

Well, then we got this Model T Ford and we were still living in Clawson and we could come to town, and my cousin, would be Homer and Fawn Duncan's, that would be my mother's sister, Fawn, and mother would ride in the buggy and put our milk and butter in the little box in the back of the buggy and bring it in to town and trade it for sugar, salt and pepper and cloth, needle and thread…never for groceries, we never shopped for groceries. Well, there was no money for groceries, if we got a nickel for an ice cream cone we was mighty lucky and once in a while we did. And then peanuts were quite a common treat for Aunt Fawn's boy Dean and Verna. We would ride in the buggy and Aunt Fawn and Mother would hand us back a few peanuts and we could make it from Clawson to Ferron, oh in an hour or two hours, we really could go along. Then when we got the Model T Ford, gosh, we'd go up to ten miles an hour and Dean and I would sit straddle of the front fender on each side and there was a light there that we could put our legs around it, straddle that headlight and we was pretty safe with Aunt Fawn driving the Model T Ford at about ten, never more than fifteen miles an hour. They was warning us, "Now you hold on, don't be a showin' off." Course, Dean and I wasn't in school yet but we was sure big boys ridin' that front fender.

Mervin: Now then in those earlier days, across from the Co-op, South…there was a little bitty house, and there were several different people that lived in it but at first it was used

for a telephone exchange office and Cloe Lesslie, was a little handicapped with her legs and she was the phone operator for many years and we sure thought the world of her.

Well then, when Dad became Marshall of Ferron they made it into a little…it had been used for a little rental for a man and his boy and then they made it into a little jail house, which was seldom if ever used. We had a fruit orchard between that little house and our little house was a fruit orchard of cherries and apricots and corn that we raised that was most wonderful for our summer meals and Mother would put up corn, peaches and apricots. And we'd go up the canyon a little ways and buy peaches from Frieda and Richard Behling. And those peaches would run anywhere from a dollar to two dollars a bushel and you could always depend on Frieda…heaping the basket extra full and they raised the most beautiful fruit in the whole world. Our **Peach Days** got started from the wonderful peaches that grew up that canyon and it was quite often, I was Peach Days manager for fifteen years and we could buy peaches for about three dollars a bushel, two and half to three dollars a bushel. I don't think we ever paid more than three dollars for a bushel of peaches. And Peach Days was a county event that everybody in the county came to Ferron for Peach Days, then it kind of died out during the war but when I moved back from Idaho to Ferron.

Now the early Peach Days was quite an event and they would run **horse races** from the city center, up the street two blocks and that would be the race track but up about half way there was a little stream that run across the road, waste water from the gardens and so on…and every fall for Peach Day, we had to clean the rocks and haul in a little dry dirt so the horses could run up that sreet. And I rode race horses up that street many a time, and it brought the whole county, came to Ferron for Peach Days and it was the horse races that attracted attention. Although, **Ira Dern** and many of the early celebrities would bring **professional wrestlers and boxers** from Salt Lake down and they would put a show on out in front of the grand stand. Across the race track from the grand stand there would be a stage where we could have dancing, singing and wrestling, boxing, fighting of all kinds and it was a wonderful attraction in those early days. And my brother's would wrestle and box and all those entertainments and they would always have bucking horses in the arena out behind the stand. I can remember Moroni Oveson was the announcing chairman of the ceremonies and I can hear him say, "We got a bull that's been all over the state, he come out of Sinbad and he's never been ridden and he's the most notorious buckin' bull in the State of Utah, but hold your seats, Leland Duncan's gonna show you how it's done." And sure enough, Leland got on that bull and he rode him the full eight, ten, twenty seconds buckin' and it was quite a notorious fun.

I rode race horses as soon as I was seven years old, I rode race horses in Peach Days. And of course then it was up Ferron Main Street, then a little later on like in the '29's even '31, we bought twelve acres of ground from Nels Christensen, where the park is today and we gave fifteen hundred dollars. My Dad was Chairman of Peach Day, and that's how I know that whole forty acres was bought for fifteen hundred dollars. And they paid for it in two years and give the City the deeds to that park and oh, what a wonderful addition to Peach Days it was. And when I came back from Idaho and the war in 1956, I'd been in Idaho from the war time until '56, I took over Peach Days and Jerel Stanton was the mayor, and he said, "You just as well forget it, we had Peach Days last year and nobody came". But I told him, "We're not gonna give up, I'm gonna put it on

anyway, cause I know how". And after I got it organized pretty good, he gave me twenty five dollars from the city to put on Peach Days. And I invited all of my old friends that had race horses, Iver Truman was one who had "Old Kelton" and "Naoka" were the race horses that he brought to Ferron. And there were others from Cleveland, Elmo, Lawrence and Emery…everywhere they would come. Horse racing was the main sport of Peach Days or any other good event, although they had baseball games and there was a baseball team in every town and they would trade around for entertainment. And my Dad happened to be a baseball fan and a good player and we had lots of fun! [Chuckles]

Mervin: The school house, and had Brad Jensen in his band play and we filled that building clear full and Kent McKell and his wife had just got married and moved to Ferron and they came to that dance. And I put on a dance show for a prize for the best couple and Kent McKell and his wife put on a very good exhibition…but Montell Sealey and his sister won first place because they had been taking dancing lessons at B.Y.U. And I think they got ten dollars and a bouquet of flowers. [Laughing]

Kim: That sounds like a good party.

Mervin: And, I was the big manager and I got John Behling to come and stand with me in front of the orchestra, on the floor, it was up on the stage, and we stood there and watched the dancers and eliminated so many…and Montell Sealey, no, Kent McKell and his wife were right up to the end and then Montell Sealey and his sister won the dance contest. That might even be worth putting in.

Kim: I have it down. Do you know Montell's sister's name?

Mervin: No, I never did.

Kim: Ok, I'll find that out.

Mervin: Old …? He just come off his mission and he said, "unsight and unseen if Karrie Lee Duncan would marry me, I would take her without one second thought. I would just love her".

Kim: Oh, my Mom!

Mervin: He loved your Mama. He was your mother's boyfriend during school. He was a year older, and he warned all the boys, "You leave Karrie Lee alone or I'll beat the hell outa ya!" [Laughing] Kent Killpack's boy, Gary…Craig, wanted to date her but he didn't dare cause Teddy Farmer would beat the hell out of him. [More laughing] He was older and bigger.

Kim: Let's see, tell me a little bit more about when you were in the Merchant Marines.

Mervin: During the war there were no missionaries called because of needing them in the service and because I had a bad foot I couldn't get in the army or the navy so later in '44 I got in the Merchant Marines and they shipped me to Los Angeles. And in Los Angeles I was restricted to the cooking department, that wasn't what it was called, but the

cooking department and they had an obstacle course to the top of **Wrigley Spearmint Gum**, built a mansion on top of a big hill on the island and we had to run to the top of the island and back down through treturous territory. And there were three hundred of us and this was before the announcement that they needed three hundred sailors in **Alaska**. I was third place going to the top of **Wrigley Mountain** cause I was in my youth, twenty two and I was in good shape. Well on the way down we had to go through some treaturous trenches and tires and swings and ropes and I caught up to the second place but the guy on first place went out around the treacherous area so he got on lead of me. But I almost caught him, then at the end of the obstacle course, the captain of the crew said, "You can have any department you want with your athletical ability, there are no restrictions on your assignments".

So I took the navigation area and we were shipped to, we were only in Los Angeles area for two weeks and we were shipped to Seattle and we were given some more training and a hundred shots and then we were shipped to Alaska and in Canada, Vancouver, they drafted a bunch of us, about a hundred of us, in to the Army Transport Service, a branch of the armed service and I was one of them because I had passed the first aid with a high rating and the athletical ability so I was one that went with the Army Transport and they shipped us right to **Prince Rupert, which is right next to Canada.** And on the sign on the shore of Alaska it says, "Thirteen feet of rain a year", and it always came in side ways. Then after a couple of months or so, I don't recall, it was Thanksgiving time, we were hauling barges, I was on a tug ship, we were hauling barges back to Alaska and the Captain said, "Dunc, can you get us into Seattle? Well that's a piece of cake." So I was the navigator and the others were eating turkey and drinkin' beer and whiskey down in the galley. And, I was in the wheel house and it was storming, and we were out, oh, a day and it was raining hard...I mean buckets full and pretty soon it got night, or late and I couldn't see the lighthouses and that's how I knew where to go in between the lighthouses because there was an inland water route from Alaska to Seattle. And all I had to do was stay in the channel, big ships couldn't sail there cause the water wasn't deep enough all the way and come evening it got raining so hard that I couldn't see the lighthouses, my golly, and my compass was going switch swatch, back and forth, it wasn't the compass, it was the ship and I turned on the spotlight, which was like a train spotlight...shine a mile away, and I turned it on and I was about ten feet from the rocky shore on the east side, no the west side. The west side was rocks, volcanic rocks that had made an island and we were about ten, fifteen feet away from them and I was scared to death. And I called for the Captain, and I don't know where he was but he made it in the wheel house in a minute and between us, we got the ship headed back to the east coast and oh those waves were thirty feet high and I called for extra power, "Give me extra power from the engine room, he said, you got all the power we got, your propeller is out of the water, you can't guide it anyway, but stay with it "Dunc". And I did, and the Captain and I got it to the east shore and we tied up to some shoring that was planted by great big power poles into the earth twenty feet deep. We could tie up to that in case of a storm, and we did. Come the next morning, the Captain said, "Look up there "Dunc", and it was Duncan's inlet out of Canada. Well when we got back to Seattle, finally, she said, "We heard your S.O.S. but you were a thousand miles away and you needed help right now not a day later and all we could do was pray for you", and they did and they sure was glad to see us and we were mighty glad to see them too. And I got a furlough, a thirty day furlough at the time and I was engaged to Ruth Harris and we hurried back to

Salt Lake on a greyhound bus and I had a thirty day furlough and at the end of the thirty days, Ruth and I got married, against all family advice, but we got married cause we didn't know how long it would last and I had got an extension of furlough and we got married and the army sent me another letter and said, "If you're not aboard ship in ten days, we'll put you in the army". [Chuckles] Well, I was already in the army and they didn't even know it, [Laughs] but I got married to Ruth Harris the 29th of January, 1944.

Karrie: Do you mean December Dad? The 29th of December.

Mervin: December, ya, the 29th of December. Now this was quite unusual that the army didn't have communication but you know during the war there were so many, so many different camps and working facilities, I can remember they wanted **live prisoners** but they couldn't get no live ones cause the **"Jap's"** had just wiped out an **Eskimo village** and we were so mad at them that there were no live "Jap" prisoners, come in. We had a good reason why they didn't make it in. Well then, when I got home on that furlough, Ruth and I decided to get married and take our chances and I knew I wasn't in no trouble about going in the army because I already had all my papers but they didn't have them all coordinated, well, Ruth and I got married and I had had my schooling a Carbon College and I had already had two years or so of mechanics and I got a job in the garage. Oh, we went to Logan where I got a job with the **Chrysler Garage** people and we lived there for a couple of months, Ruth and I. And then we moved back to Salt Lake when the war was over so we was free and I worked in the garage in Salt Lake for a year, I'd also worked in it before I went in the service, I'd worked for **Checkered Cab, which was Utah Transportation** and I had a good job with them anytime I wanted it.

Well then, we went to Carbon County before the war was over and got a job in the mine to make money to live on and worked out at Columbia as a welder in the mine. We'd go in about eight miles and I was a mechanic for them but I didn't like the coal mine business at all so I went back to work in the garage until the war was over. And then we went to Idaho, my parents bought a little farm in Idaho where my brothers, I had five brothers and Leland and Orson and Morirs and Luellan all lived in Idaho, Blackfoot country and I moved there and went to work in Aberdine, Idaho and had a good working relation with the Ford dealership there. And I worked with them until about 1950 then I got my own business, I bought my Dad's, my Dad went up in April of '46 and died in January. So I built Mother a home on a house I had in Blackfoot and she gave me the farm and I run the farm and worked in the garage in Blackfoot until 1956. Of course, I was back and forth with my own business, I was buying and selling cars and making a good living. I bought us a brand new home, oh; I traded the farm to a fellow for a home in town then sold that home and bought a brand new home that the Elder's of the Church had built for a work project. We lived in that until 1956 when we went down to Ferron to a funeral and found a farm for sale, which was Chal Conover's farm, which was South of Ferron and the home was Lon Petty's original home where Paul Conover now lives. I bought that home and yard and Ruth and I lived there until we bought the home where...across the road from George Conover to the North, right straight across the road and that was the end of the race track in the early day Peach Days and the good Lord was very good to us. I worked in Price for six years for Pontiac and Cadillac to make grocery money in the mean time I bought a ranch. Dee Christensen and Boyd Christensen's farm down in Molen and I bought that ranch way back in '57 or '8...about '58. And the good

Lord has always been good to us and we have always prospered in the valley and Utah Power offered me a million dollars for the ranch, let's see, about in 2000, they wanted water and they would take the land to get the water. And I sold them a strip along the North side of my ranch and I was thinking I'd get one hundred and twenty five thousand for it, that would clear up all of my bills, and when the manager of the buying came he said would you consider a quarter of a million for it, when I finally got my breath, I said "You bet ya!" and that put a pretty good financial standing for the Duncan Ranch on Duncan hill in Molen.

Mervin: Now this bad storm that we hit half way down from Alaska to Seattle, it was a tornado that hit us and we had already experienced, they had sent us eleven tug ships from New Orleans to Alaska and seven of the eleven had been capsized and lost the crew and the ships. They had great big smoke stacks that made the ship top heavy and I was thinking of that when that tornado hit us, "Wow!"

Kim: Ok, so tell me about when you had your first baby and where you were at and then go on with your other kids.

Mervin: Now, I worked in the Columbia Coal Mine until I realized I didn't like under the ground work and I got me my own garage in Price and that's where we had Karrie Lee our first baby. And we moved and bought a little house from Lealand Duncan that was a couple of acres South of Price, right next to that creek. We moved to town and rented a home when Karrie Lee was born and we lived there until, oh about the end of '46 and we moved to Idaho cause my Dad and Mother had bought a little farm just outside of Blackfoot a ways, and we wanted to be with them. And I could get work anywhere in those days, and I worked in the garage in Blackfoot, in Aberdeen, Idaho and we done very well compared to working on the farm for a dollar a day. Working in the garage we were making fifty cents an hour and I recall in about '46 my brother and I were working in the garage in Salt Lake and he said, "by spring, we'll be making a dollar an hour, and I thought, "Oh my goodness, that couldn't be, but sure enough, come spring, they built the small arms plant there in Salt Lake and Hill Field and all that activity, and we were making a dollar an hour, which I thought I was a royal king with all that good money. And my golly, a brand new Ford was nine hundred dollars and some of the earlier ones were as low as six hundred. A new Ford and a new Chevy, I remember our family bought a Chevy in '36 for seven hundred dollars. A two door Chevrolet, they called it a standard model. Oh how times have changed and gasoline was twenty cents a gallon, wowy! And I was buying board and room, before I got married; I was giving thirty dollars a month for board, room and laundry. And that was on 4th South and 4th West in Salt Lake City.

Kim: When you were little, do you remember how much things cost like milk…

Mervin: Yes, now in the early days…back in the '20's and '30's, '21 and '22, I raised a garden with my parents. We had a big garden and we raised tomatoes and I got a penny a pound, sixty cents for a bushel of tomatoes. There was a "CC" Camp where our park is, they moved the **"CCC's" in there, Civilian Conservation Corps** and I bought me a suit of clothes going to high school for five dollars and I was getting a penny a pound for my tomatoes washed and sized and sold them to Lou Peterson's store, which was right on the

corner of where it's open now, where the little commercial store is now. That little corner was where Lou Peterson and the drug store and the post office and a shoe shop were on that corner back in the early '30's. And stamps were two cents a piece and they finally went to three cents a piece, and it was hard to get one cause I didn't have no money. And I went to Idaho in 1938 and got a job for a dollar a day, that was thirty dollars a month and at the end of three months I came from the Teton Basin, that's Driggs, Idaho back to Ferron to school. And the fellow that I was working for was E. D. Seymour, and he was going to mail me a check, I thought, but he went out in the barn and hung himself, so I worked all summer for nothing.

And then '38, '39 and '40 we finished high school in Ferron and I went back to Idaho and worked on the farm in the summers and then went to school in the winter. Everett, Orson and I all went to Carbon College in 1940 and Everett had been going two years before and we run a service station and a motel for Ida Miller and we worked all winter and ran the service station and café's and furnace, and she said in the spring that was our wages, was the rent on the house where we lived and that wasn't all that bad.

Kim: Can you tell me a little bit about schools when you were growing up?

Mervin: Well the schools, there was a house, a brick building, right on the corner of 2nd West in Ferron on Main Street. And we could look out the window on the second floor and we could see Leone Ralphs' house being built and Charlie Rasmussen was building a wood house up on the same block and Leone Ralph was the secretary during my bishopric time and he said it cost him seventeen hundred dollars to build that brick home. And he hired Fred Wayman for fifty cents a day to do the brick work and the cement work and the labor and he said the entire bill was seventeen hundred dollars.

Kim: That's amazing!

Mervin: And he worked in Lou Peterson's store as a clerk and a butcher. They sold meat and they had an ice house for storage and finally they got electricity and they could have a cooler to hold meat, which was quite an improvement. And we got electricity for a dollar a month hook up and water was fifty cents a month also, and quite often that water in winter, would freeze up on its way down from the city cisterns to the distribution points. All the trenches were dug single handed with a shovel and pick that spread the water all over town.

Kim: Did you walk to school with your brother's each day?

Mervin: Yes, we walked. That was only two blocks up past the Peterson's and Singleton's store and the pool hall, then the next block was the school grounds where we would go to school, and high school. I went twelve years to school in Ferron and so did my brothers.

Kim: What was the school called then? Was it South Emery?

Mervin: South Emery High School.

Kim: And do you remember when they split.

Mervin: Yes, I'd moved back in the '50's and they decided to send our students, high school students to Castle Dale and make it an Emery County High School, and Karrie Lee was the first one to go and Delaina went to school in Castle Dale and rode the bus over and so did Merrill. And they graduated from high school here in Ferron. And then Karrie Lee went to Salt Lake to Henneger's Business School and graduated, bless her heart, and so did Delaina. Delaina won a scholarship up to Logan but she went there a quarter and then came back and drove to Price with Maribelle Wareham and Paul Stevens, they drove from Ferron to Price every day to school. And that was better than being away from home for our little girl, Delaina.

Kim: Where were you living when you had Delaina?

Mervin: We were living in Idaho. I had bought a brand new home in Idaho and we had a beautiful new home in Idaho and I was Scout Master and I hated to leave my boys that I was Scout Master for a long time. I loved them boys, and they did me. I'd take them camping, take them down to Bear Lake to Camp Nebechure, and they would have a week vacation every summer. And I'd take the boy scouts down and then the bishopric would spell me off so I didn't have to stay a whole week, I had to work for wages too.

Kim: And then, where were you when Merrill was born?

Mervin: We were working in Idaho and Ruth went to Salt Lake because I went hunting deer and she took Karrie Lee to Salt Lake and was heavy with child and she got a bad case of, they thought Polio, but it wasn't. And I left Idaho and came to Salt Lake in '49 and Merrill was born in '49 in Salt Lake City and then we went back to Idaho and stayed until 1956.

Kim: And then you came back to Ferron?

Mervin: And then in '56 we came to Ferron to a funeral for Grant MacDonald, who had picked up a virus in India in the army, and it finally killed him. And we came to Ferron to his funeral and Preston Thompson showed me the Chal Conover farm, which was for sale and we offered them a price, I can't remember now just how much but it wasn't...I would guess like two thousand...no twenty thousand in that neighborhood. And we bought it through F.H.A. and Ruth had saved ten thousand dollars and we came to Ferron and put that down on the ranch. And the good Lord has really prospered us, all of our life because we paid our tithing and done our church assignments, as best we could.

Kim: And was Laurie born...?

Mervin: Laurie was born down next to the...just on the first block up, on Canyon Road on that same corner. That's where Laurie was born and she was an inspiration from Heaven. Nine years after Delaina was born and how thrilled, how happy she has made our family all her life.

Kim: Do you have any stories about when you were younger and driving cows up the mountain?

Mervin: In the early days we would, I bought forty head of cows from Chal Conover and traded and got permits on the mountain for all of them, he had twenty five head permit. I bought enough to get fifty and we would drive those cows up main street, well they'd be out on the farm and we would drive them up about 5th South and up across the creek and go on the mountain and sometimes there would be two bunches go together so you had more riders and we would drive them up the main road to go on the mountain and some would go up **"Dry Wash Trail"**, and we would go up the main road and go up **"Dairy Trail"** on to **"Dairy Point"** where Grandpa Duncan run his cattle and South of there, up above Quichenpaw, they call the mountains, Duncan Mountains because grandpa was the first settler there. And we have had a wonderful life, a country life and we have tried to serve the Lord, the very best we knew how. And Ruth Harris Duncan was a tithe payer and she promoted it and was the promoter of honest and square, tithing and fast offerings and it was a blessing to our whole family and always has been.

Kim: I remember you telling me that you had quite a few people come and live with you. Steven and …

Mervin: Ya, we adopted two little boys, five and six years old and we had them for two or three years but the child services put them in a boys ranch and that was alright for us. They didn't fit in very good, they had never had no schooling, no family training, their mother was a "go-go dancer", and didn't even know who their dad was. And they went back to the boy's ranch to finish out. We have had a wonderful life here and every one of my children were married in the temple, which was a blessing where in Idaho, there were thirteen different religions in Blackfoot when we left there. So we were sure glad to move to Ferron and enjoy a family of LDS domination.

Kim: Clear back from the beginning from John C. Duncan?

Mervin: Ya, John C. Duncan was faithful, went wherever the patriarch told him, the President of the Church, wherever Brigham Young said go, he went…didn't ask no questions and when he got to Ferron, coming from Cedar City coming down through Green River, Brigham Young sent him a letter and told him he better settle on the Ferron Creek cause San Juan was having bad trouble with the Indians. So he did, and I'm glad he stayed in Ferron.

Kim: Me too.

Kim: Ok, tell us more about your horse racing.

Mervin: Well, I was riding a horse when my Dad would irrigate on the farm. I would be two years old, and I could ride the horse. It just came natural and Dad would lead it and then get on with me when we had to go any distance. And I rode that horse…learned to love them…they just became part of my life and wherever we went it was horse and buggy or a bareback horse and we didn't have saddles. One saddle for the whole family and I could ride bareback and I was… [Tape ran out]

Mervin: Now what?

Kim: Go back just a little bit and tell me more about the race horse when you were young.

Mervin: Before I started school, my oldest brother and I would exercise race horses out in Moore and one ran away with me and made a turn into its own home ranch and I went the other way and really got skinned up. And my Mother said I was too darn young to be ridin' race horses. Well, we moved to Ferron in '29 and I started school in I guess '28 and '29 and graduated in '40. Well, I rode race horses even after I got married. Peach Days horse racing was the entertainment of Ferron and my Dad was a western horseman and had wonderful race horses and naturally the whole family loved horses cause it was our automobile, our truck and our tractor and everything. Wherever we went, it was a horse, and I had a horse all my life to go to grade school and high school. Wherever we went, even when we went on trips with the school, I could ride a horse. I enjoyed school immensely, I loved football, basketball and track and I lettered four years in basketball. Brad Jensen was our coach and he was so good to me. I thought the world of him and he said I was the fastest point guard he had ever trained and I thought that was quite an honor and an enjoyment. Even in junior high, I would go with the high school ball players to other town's cause I was athletic manager…their uniforms and the basketballs and all. School was a mighty enjoyment time for me.

Kim: Do you remember going with your brothers as a boy?

Mervin: Yes, my brothers all played football and basketball and Dad and I would go to every ball game that we could get to. Naturally, we walked wherever we went but that was alright. And I had the most wonderful school days, but I was too small for college basketball but I loved it just the same.

Karrie: You know Dad, didn't you say you went with your Dad shearing sheep all around. Maybe you ought to tell about that.

Mervin: Yes, at high school times, back in the '39 and '40 I went shearing sheep into Colorado with my Dad and brothers…into Wyoming, Montana and Idaho and I sheared sheep cause **it was the depression time,** back in the early '30's and that was the only place…and I would like to tell you that they sheared sheep for seven cents a head, but when I got big enough to go we were getting eleven cents a head to shear sheep. And now it is like three and four dollars a head to shear them.

Kim: Did you have a favorite horse?

Mervin: I had a horse that my Grandpa MacDonald gave me, a pretty sorrel mare and her name was "Two Step". And everyone in the town knew old "Two Step" and I rode her with my Dad to irrigate and then I rode her until way into the '30's. Yes I'd say '35 and '36 starting out in the '20's. And ooh, she was a favorite, gentle, stout and very good. I hope I see her on the other side.

Kim: When did "Sunday Kisses" come around? [Sunday Kisses is another favorite horse.]

Mervin: Up in Idaho in the early '50's Keith Winn had a...I was in the garage and had a paint shop and I painted an automobile for Keith Winn and he was raising quarter horses and he had a pony out of "Old Sunday", out of Colorado that was a world champion cutting horse and he had a colt from this famous horse, stallion, and he gave it to me for painting his car, which was like about a thousand dollars. And I had that pony in Idaho, we called her Sunday Kisses, and we brought her to Ferron with us. And she was a two year old when we came to Ferron, and I kept her and raised "Miss Sunday", "Tom Girl", "Dan Patch" and "Condy", out of "Sunday Kisses". What a wonderful, most wonderful cutting horse, you couldn't help but love them, and I still do. And I hope I get to see all of them on the other side. I won many trophies, first place trophies, and I have a book case full of trophies, I won some and lost many, but I had a very favorite brand of horses out of "Man of War". And we had lots of fun! I won my share and lost my share too! [Laughing]

Mervin: The main entertainment in Emery County in those days was Wilberg's Open Air Dance Hall up a few miles North of Castle Dale at the Wilberg Ranch. Oh, the fun! And they came from all over the State almost from Price, Emery, Ferron, Orangeville, Castle Dale, now we had great fun there. They had good orchestras and the dancing wasn't all that expensive cause there was very little money, but oh that was our entertainment. Finally, Ross Petty had and open air dance hall in Ferron just down on the Molen Road, half a mile and I took my girlfriend dancing there one night, way back in like '37. [Laughs] Rose Young, niece of Johnny and Minnie Thomas. Minnie's niece came to visit in the summer time down here for two or three months every summer and she was such a pretty girl, I took her dancing and had lots of fun there. Then in later years, like sixty years, our Christmas cards brought us back together again. And after Ruth Harris died in 2003, in March, then in February, Rose McNeal or Rosie Young, we got together and decided we would finish our last years together so we got married in about 2004 and we've had a wonderful time. Four years of wonderful companionship, there now. Dancing has always been a favorite entertainment of mine with all acquaintances that I ever had, dancing was my favorite and it was fun during the war years cause the U.S.O.'s would entertain the troops and I sure had fun with those old favorite songs. Even into Alaska we celebrated whenever we could get together in a dance hall and even sometimes aboard ship, we'd do a little dancing to pass the time away. It rained every day in Alaska, I don't recall a day, never a day, that it didn't rain a little to a lot. With thirteen feet of rain a year it had to rain pretty regular.

Kim: Do you remember some other things that you did for fun growing up?

Mervin: Yes, Preston Thompson and the Ranger's boys, Neal Jorgenson and Preston and Billy Young, we would get together with...Billy's sister was a year younger, we would get together with Fawn Christensen and Myrna Ray Christensen and Verna Lou Christensen and we would have corn roasts and weenie roasts and just fun times together. Bicycle riding cause we never had no money for sure, and corn roasts and apple roasts and those evening activities were memorable. And after sixty years I've finally

companioned up with one of those old friends, Rosie McNeal Young. We got married to have companionship these last dry and lonely years.

Kim: Do you remember some specific friends you had growing up, a best friend?

Mervin: Preston Thompson, Ray Killpack and Lee Jensen, Basil Nelson and we did have a lot of good friends. And about all we could do was have corn roasts and go swimming in the creek, that was a favorite fun time. Bert Funk, we didn't have money, it was quite a treat to go to the Ferron Mountain with the Boy Scout troops and with oh, just friends. Go up and stay over night and go fishing and those were memorable, young days. It was no fun when school started until we got into athletics and then school brightened up. And we had a wonderful time.

Kim: Did you go to Ferron Merc a lot and go get a treat?

Mervin: Ferron Drug Store was hooked on to the Ferron Merc. Darl Peterson was Lou Peterson's son and he had a degree in pharmacy, so we had a pharmacy here in Ferron that was very helpful to everyone around, although we didn't have much for medication, sulphur drugs and aspirin was about the limit of it and we could go there and for a nickel get an ice cream cone or for a nickel, banana dipped in chocolate and frozen a little and a frozen banana was a mighty wonderful treat. And I can remember the school teacher Ray Williams, I'd stayed over after school with him, I'd done quite a lot of story telling and writing and he said, "I want to take you down to the drug store and buy you a treat, and he said I could earn a living at writing poetry and little stories." We got to the drug store and he said, "Well now, you can have anything you want in here as long as it don't cost more than a nickel". [Laughing] Those were the days I tell ya, and I believe I had a root beer and I believe he did too.

Kim: What kind of candy did they have?

Mervin: Oh, Uno Bars, Baby Ruth's and Butterfinger's and there was a penny candy bar, a Snicker, a Baby Ruth was a nice little bar for a penny, my golly. Most all candy bars were a nickel.

Kim: After you were married to Grandma and you had your kids, what did you do for fun? Did you go camping?

Mervin: We liked to go camping, we would go to Quartzite, Arizona and stay a week and it would be a camp out so we bought a camper truck and that was a hi light, but of course I was Stake Patriarch so I couldn't stay very long in the summer, but we could stay a week and keep in touch.

Karrie: I was thinking, you ought to tell about those silent movies and the people that played the piano and stuff.

Kim: Oh, ya…

Mervin: Now in those early days this town hall that my Dad and family had built, the **silent movies** would be on and some of them were "Rin Tin Tin", that was a wonderful dog and then "Tom Miggs" and "Hoot Gibson", westerns and they were all silent and written underneath what they were saying. And we learned to read by going to them shows, we had to read the messages they were saying and they would play the piano. And there would be entertainment groups come through town like musicians and they would put on entertainment in that. And we could get a ticket, it would usually cost a dime or a nickel or fifteen cents you know, not very much money. And there was a little store in front, Greenalches was the name of the family that kind of ran that store. It was a center of entertainment and we had lots of fun going to those silent movies. Of course they couldn't sing or talk, you had to just read it but there was a lady that played the piano during the entire show, you know for entertainment.

Kim: How old were you?

Mervin: Oh, seven, eight, nine…ten. [Laughs] I can't remember when the silent moved to sound shows but it was mighty good to have a sound picture show.

Kim: Do you remember when you got your first TV?

Mervin: Oh, it was in Idaho, way back in the '50's. Ya it was then, and **Lawrence Welk** was one of our favorites, and we had our TV. and a furnace which was quite a modern convenience instead of a heater rolla or a pot bellied stove to warm the house.

Kim: Do you remember when you got your first refrigerator growing up?

Mervin: Oh, it was, well it would be in the late '30's that they got them. And that was quite a blessing cause it would make ice of which you couldn't get ice all summer, so when they got the refrigerator, that was a modern and wonderful improvement and it was back in the middle '30's that we got a refrigerator.

Kim: And how about electricity?

Mervin: Well, that was the same time. Soon after the electricity came in, and that would be about, let's see…1934 or '35.

Kim: Let me pause this for one second…

Karrie: ?

Mervin: Ya, on the thrashing machine. The thrasher machine would go from farm to farm, they'd have their grain stacked in bundles and then the thrasher would come to each farm and thrash and blow the straw into a pile for them.

Kim: And what was his name?

Mervin: It would be Luellan Killpack's thrasher…Royal Swaysey would be the manager. Royal Swaysey, his mother was a sister to Grandpa MacDonald. That's just

for your own information. And Luellan Killpack had a saw mill as well as a thrasher. We got the thrasher standing down home.

Kim: Oh really? Did you work with anyone, or did anyone you know work at the saw mills?

Mervin: My brother did, Orson. He worked at the saw mill packing off what they called off bearing and they'd take the boards off of the saw mill and pile them in a pile, stack them up.

Kim: And did you know some people that worked at the coal mines?

Mervin: Yes, the MacDonald family…oh there were fifteen in the family and four or five of them worked in the coal mines. And then my Dad worked in the coal mine too.

Kim: And you worked in it for a while.

Mervin: Yes, during the war.

Kim: Were there other kinds of mines?

Mervin: No, just coal mines is all I know of and they found fifty foot veins of coal over in Emery, the other side of Emery. Fifty foot thick!

Kim: Do you remember anything about the San Rafael, down that way? Maybe some adventures down there.

Mervin: That's where the "Robbers Roost Gang" would rob banks and whatever in Price and they'd hide out down in Sinbad which is below Ferron, fifty, sixty miles and they were pretty well safe cause they could hide away where nobody would find them. And they could shoot anybody before they could…and that's where the Robbers Roost Gang hung out for years and they robbed my Grandpa's cow herd and horse herd and they'd take them from here over to Salina and sell them. Which was very little money but a good horse sold to the army for a hundred dollars to a hundred and twenty five dollars where as a cow was only twenty.

Kim: And that was your grandpa?

Mervin: Ya, when he came into the valley in 1875 or '78.

Kim: Did you go down there exploring ever, to that area? The San Rafael area.

Mervin: Yes, we run our cattle down there when I first come in '56. We would have our cattle down there in the winter time, until I found out it was a lot better to keep them home.

Karrie: Hey Dad, how about Uncle Leland, when he'd get the wild horses?

Mervin: They would go to the desert and camp on the water holes so the horses couldn't drink, then they'd move back away so the horses could come in and drink…and when they were full of water, the horses couldn't run so good and they could pick out what they wanted. They would rope them and put knee straps on them, saddle them up and ride them, break them…even ride them home. And then they could sell that horse, around here in town, to the cowboys for twenty five or thirty dollars. And there was just no money, so any amount was just darn good, but the coal mine would pay two or three dollars an hour and people went from here. The MacDonald family, Will and George and Frank and Vern would go to the coal mines over in Carbon County and make big money cause **they used horses to pull the coal out of the hill**. They had little train cars or wagons and the horse would pull them out of the mine, out to the front and dump it. And that was a wonderful job but my Dad worked in the mine up in Sunnyside, no Kenilworth, no Clear creek and they called it, I believe, Sunnyside, they **had a cave in and it killed a hundred men and the horses**, and my Dad didn't go to work that day, he wasn't in it.

Kim: Do you remember some other disasters that happened, floods and…

Mervin: Ya, I remember that the Wayman's lived out on bench road and the one man was Hugh Wayman, had been in the army and had his army rifle and had a dispute over the water, the irrigating water, so his brother-in-law come to town and got the sheriff or marshal, oh sheriff and the sheriff come to get my Dad cause he was marshal…but my Dad was out on another job so they went to see this Hugh Wayman, and when they pulled in his yard, **he shot the sheriff** who was Willie Black and the Wayman…shot them both through the windshield and he went to jail. And my Dad would have been with them, had he been home at the time, but we were sure glad he wasn't. They had a **history of hoodlums**, no good honery, "sons of guns", **fightin' all the time**…even the girls going to school, my Mother said we tried to steer clear of them cause they'd take our lunch bucket and beat us over the head with it.

Kim: Oh my goodness.

Karrie: How about when the Ferron Creek would flood Dad…do you remember that?

Mervin: There was a family, that lived up the canyon quite a ways, up to the Indian writing, they were named Biddlecom, and they had a little farm on the North side of the creek and they crossed…the old man and the daughter crossed it in a flood and **the flood took them both down and they were both drowned**. The horses pulled the wagon on out but they were washed off of their wagon and drowned, Biddlecom was there names. And we crossed the creek seven times, going on the mountain, going up the canyon; you'd go back and forth…the road would cross the creek seven times.

Kim: Do you remember some flash floods?

Mervin: Yes, yes, I drove cows out across it and people…I would drive cows for my neighbor out to his pasture and I could put my cow in with his, if I would drive them. I could put my cow in cheap pasture…he'd pasture my cow. Well, the creek would be quite high, but I was a daring, "hear them, scare them boy", and I would drive my cows

across that creek instead of going down to the bridge and bring them in to town. And I can remember neighbors out, Cliff Snow and Cliff Jensen would come out in the road to see if I made it across the creek, cause the water was so high…it would almost swim a horse, but I had a great, big good horse that my Dad wasn't worried about me but he'd a been mad if he knew I crossed the creek instead of going down to the bridge.

Kim: What bridge?

Mervin: It would be down where the bridge is now, crossing the creek…by Clyde Conover's. Right there by the creek. You don't even know it's a creek, do ya? But in the summer or the spring when it was flooding, now it was a hell of a flood, no reservoirs up there to catch it.

Kim: When did they **put Millsite in**?

Mervin: Oh, I was down here in the '50's…I'd say '60's; it's written right on the board up there, when.

Kim: Did you work on it at all?

Mervin: No. No, they hired a contractor that come in…Bill…who's his name? Karrie?

Karrie: I can't think of it.

Mervin: Oh ya, he works over there in the temple. Bill…

Kim: Bill Pace?

Karrie: William Pace?

Mervin: Ya, William Pace worked on it and they built it there, the **CC's** were here early, way back in the '30's and they wanted to build it…it wouldn't have cost us nothing but the big share holders like Cliff Snow, Cliff Jensen, Arth Lemon, they didn't want it, they thought somebody else would make money instead of them, and they didn't want it. And the CC's would have built it, wanted to build it, and my Dad wanted them to…but there was a bunch that didn't want it so they didn't build it. And then later the government built it.

Karrie: How about the twenty fourth and the fourth of July?

Mervin: Well, that would usually be horse races up Main Street in Ferron. Ya, and they'd come from Price, Huntington, Castle Dale, Emery…and run races up that street. And I rode race horses up it, just as a boy, like ten and twelve and eleven cause by twelve we had bought twelve acres from Nels Christensen and built the park and built a race track and put up a grand stand. They drug the grand stand from the ball park, which is the Ranger's horse pasture now…that used to be the city ball park.

Kim: Oh really? Did you play baseball?

Mervin: No, my Dad did, I was just a boy.

Kim: But you played basketball and football?

Mervin: After, after ya I played basketball.

Kim: And track.

Mervin: Ya, I lettered in basketball four years, freshman, junior, sophomore and senior.

Kim: And after you were married and your kids were a little older, you and Grandma went on a quite a few trips.

Mervin: We sure did. We went to Acapulco in Mexico; oh that was a beautiful, wonderful trip. We went to Alaska and that was a most wonderful one cause I wanted to show Ruth where I was in the service. And then we went to South America, oh I can't remember what they called that trip down to South America...we didn't go clear to Brazil but there was a name for that trip on a big English tour ship and that was fun, dancing on three dance halls and Ruth and I would dance on all of them. You know different levels and good food, the best food they could possibly find. And then we went to Europe and went to seven countries and danced every place that we went, that they'd let us. [Laughs] We went to the school, as a school project, take schools...we were chaperone's for school kids and they got credit, those that were a little backward got credit for going on a trip to Europe and then write what they had seen and learned. And Ruth and I and Beth [Grandma's sister] went with us, Keith didn't go but we really enjoyed that trip. It was favorite fun and happiness when we talk about receive blessings...so many we can't contain them all it reminds me of my grandkids when I get twenty, thirty, forty, fifty so many I can't hold them on my lap...that's the answer to that scripture that says we'll have more..."If you keep my commandments, you'll have blessings, how many? So many you can't contain them all." And that was my grandkids, and each one of my children were married in the temple and live under the law of the gospel with happiness stored up just like Jesus said. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And if you keep my commandments and love one another as I have loved you, I'll take you by the left hand and the right hand...I'll walk in front of you and give you answer to your prayers. And we have lived by that and enjoyed it with all our hearts. We have enjoyed the blessings of tithing and fast offerings as Ruth was a promoter, advocate of being an honest and faithful tithe payer. She was a sincere, honest and faithful and because we done it, the second year we was here, the F.H.A., Rose told me we couldn't pay our tithing, there was no money left, we'd give it all to F.H.A., she said, "next year when you sell anything, you give me the money and I'll pay tithing first, and we'll have money for Christmas". Well, I said, "F.H.A. won't like that", well she says, "you're gonna quit anyway, lets do it". So we did. Every time I sold anything, I gave her the money and she paid tithing. The next four or five years I got a phone call from Salt Lake, F.H.A. and said we want to meet with you at 5:00 at your home...will you be there? Yes sir, yes sir...I told Ruth, "I guess our goose is cooked", now they're coming down. Well, so be it, and they came down that night at 5:00 and they said we want to know if it's alright with you if we send your name into Washington, as the best F.H.A. borrower in the State of Utah?

Kim: Oh, wow.

Mervin: And I said, "Yes, I guess that would be just fine". [Chuckles] And we did that until our ranch was paid for. When you're in the service of the Lord, that's when you're the happiest. And I was Patriarch for more than twenty years, Stake Patriarch and you're so busy, you're looking for the good in everybody that comes to give them a blessing and in doing that I found the most wonderful people in our stake. The best people in the whole world, cause I was looking for the good and I sure found them. And I'm still Patriarch of our family and those that need to come. There now, take that and smoke it in your every day pipe. [Laughs] I want to; I think Laurie's still got a copy that we made for Cameron and Angie.

Kim: I did get it; they had it at the County Archives.

Mervin: Oh, do they?

Kim: Yes, and I read it.

Mervin: I'll be darned! At the County Archives, well I'll be darned, I will be darned!

Kim: So, I'll add this to it and we'll send a copy into the State Archives.

Mervin: I'll be darned, what you know about that! Did you see that great big kiss right there that's gonna fall off and break! [Laughs]

Kim: I love you Grandpa!

Mervin: They tell me that those motorcycles will do fifty miles an hour, now what on earth would anybody want to go fifty miles an hour. [Laughing] That was way back in the '30's.

Kim: That was what your Dad told you?

Mervin: Ya, and he said, "The sheriff says he got a new, '28 Model Ford and it will out run a horse...Oh, I told him, he was up in the night, so we made a bet and we're going up to the schoolhouse and run around the track. Well I didn't get to go but when Dad got back, "Well who one Dad!" "Well, I out run him but you know, I believe that car can out run a horse if it had a good road". [Laughs]

Now in the early days, in the '30's, before cars were so popular, my Dad would go to Price with a team of horses and they could make it all the way to Price in one day, a big long day. Then on the way home, they could make it to Huntington and stay over night on the Huntington Creek and the next day come to Ferron with a load of supplies for the store, groceries and whatever.

Kim: What store was it?

Mervin: Well, it would be both of them. Whichever one had the orders.

Kim: Do you remember the names?

Mervin: Yes, it was Morris Singleton and Mrs. Sealey owned…Morris Singleton and Lou Peterson owned the Ferron Merc and they were both darn good friends of ours. I thought the world of both of them and they were…,and it was Elva Sealey and they did about even competition. And across the road from the stores there was a pole along the post fence or not a fence but just a tie rack for the wagons and horses to be tied up while the family went in to the store. And then we'd go back out and get in the buggy and it would take us two or three hours to get back out to Clawson.

Kim: You've had a very interesting life.

Mervin: A little different.

Kim: A good one!

Mervin: Different, yes, a good one.

Kim: I'm sure you've had your hard times too.

Mervin: Yes, the good Lord has really blessed us and I know that the Lord had me by the hand when we were in Alaska…the trials like the tornado and other things that were just as bad. But the Lord had me by the hand cause he had a job for me to do and though I wasn't worthy, he made up for the difference and I was Stake Patriarch for more than twenty years and still am. There now. Sweetheart!

Kim: I love you Grandpa. Thank you!

Mervin: And you, you've made my life much happier, because of you, Sweetheart!

Kim: Thank you!

Mervin: There was a bridge that was held up by a steel cable, two of them across the creek and tied into a cottonwood tree, and that's how you crossed the creek a foot, or without a team and wagon or a car…but there were not many cars. And I can remember Jed's [Jed Behling] grandma walking down with a dozen or so eggs and butter across that swinging bridge, and go to town, a little German lady, and she'd trade them for salt and pepper and butter well I don't think butter, she made her own.

Kim: Sugar?

Mervin: Sugar, salt and pepper, cloth and things they couldn't…we never shopped for groceries, we never shopped for groceries! We raised them or we didn't have them. And Mother would put up about fifteen hundred quarts of fruit a year and then we'd have a great big twenty gallon jar of porcelain and we would cook beef, fry it, and then put it in this crock and then cover it with shortening. Put it down in the cellar and it would last a month. But no refrigerator see, so we couldn't keep beef very good. A lamb, we could butcher it and hang it out at night, wrap it. Before you get to that road that goes over to

the subdivision and there names were King and they had a fridge, and we were trying to find ice. And somebody told us, if we would go there, I'll bet she would let us have enough ice for our lemonade. And she did. And me and my cousin went up and got a sack of ice from her, great big sack with twenty or thirty pieces in it. [Laughing] And they used it for a quilting party, for lemonade. Those were the days my love. I thought they'd never end. Sweetheart, sweetheart. And we would have a five gallon bucket, hang it in a tree and cover it with a gunny sack, you know, keep it cool and punch a hole in the bottom that dripped out a drip and under it there was an orange crate, setting under it, and it had gunny sack around it and that's how we would keep our milk and butter all summer long. All day long! [Laughs]

Mervin: …who is ninety seven now, I told her and her daughter about ten years ago, that I had some stories and some of them was true and I told her the same thing the next year when they come down to visit her niece. And she said, "I remember you said that last year"! [Laughing] Her name was Helen White and I still get Christmas cards from her, she was a beautiful girl, ooh I loved her but she was ten years older than me and I didn't dare tell her, but I'd tell her now.

Kim: How old are you now?

Mervin: Eighty seven, I'll be eighty eight in February. I'm closer to eighty eight than eighty seven.

Kim: You've got a great memory.

Mervin: Oh heck, I forget so much! I can't think of names.

Kim: You've given me really good information…names and dates, places.

Mervin: Well, it's the places that come with the times and we had lots of good friends and we knew everybody and everybody knew us. And if anybody had trouble, we all pitched in to help them.

Kim: That's how it should be.

Mervin: Ya, and this Mark Christiansen, instead of riding the bus from Emery, he would run, and he said, "I'd get there before the bus got unloaded, cause he had to stop and pick up somebody in Moore, you know. Didn't drive fast any way cause the roads were so washboardy, you know! Yep!

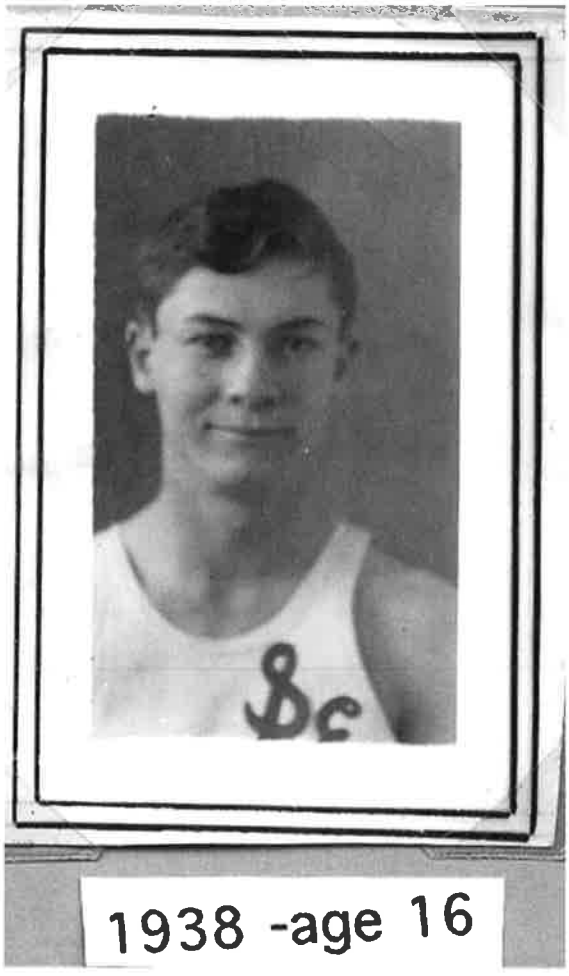
The Richard and Edna Harris family. Ruth was 10, Beth age 12, and Dick 6. They were celebrating Beth's Birthday.

Grandpa & Makayla Noell

Seattle in 1944

Heine Roger Asc 1944

Heine on 2 steps



1938 -age 16

1934 -age 12