

Emma Dustin Dickson Huntington Oral History
San Rafael Swell Project, April 22, 2007
Emery County Archives
Interviewed by Karon Williams and Bernice Payne

Emma Dustin Dickson Huntington was born on September 27, 1910 in Castle Dale, Utah to A. D. (Alfred Dustin) Dickson and Emma Elizabeth Jeffs. Her father was a lawyer.

Karon: Tell us about your grandparents and parents.

Emma: My grandfather was Jim Jeffs. My grandma was kind of a little heavy.

Karon: Was she a little sprincy lady like you are? I mean you are always wearing pearls and earrings.

Emma: Well, now I can't remember that.

Karon: Your mom...was she...?

Emma: Yes, she liked to dress up with her jewelry and rings and such.

Karon: Were you the oldest and that is why you got Emma's name?

Emma: No, I was the baby. A spoiled baby. (laughs)

Karon: Describe your father.

Emma: My father was from Oakville, Iowa. And he came here to teach school. And he lived down to my mother's and then he went to the army. He came to teach school with the Indians. And then he wandered up to Castle Dale and he stayed at Grandma Jeffs place and of course Mom was there, and they got acquainted. He went back east to get to be a lawyer. Well to get his degree. Then he came back to Grandma's place and married Momma. They had 3 children--all girls.

Karon: What were your sister's names?

Emma: Ona, Ina, and Emma.

Karon: Are they still living?

Emma: No. Ona died about 2 years ago and she was 99. Momma was 89 when she died and Dad was young. He got killed. He bought the first car in Emery County and he got killed in it. He had to go through a detour and they found him the next morning. He had been up to Mohrland doing business. They found him in a ravine at the detour.

Karon: How old were you at that time?

Emma: I was four when my dad died - got killed.

Karon: So your mom had to raise you 3 girls.

Emma: She raised us 3 girls. She never remarried.

Karon: Was she a teacher or what did she do?

Emma: No, she took in boarders all the time. The school girls and ladies that used to come there all the time. She took boarders for years. She educated us all. Us three girls. Ona was a school teacher. Ina was a beauty operator and I went to Henniger's Business College. I was the Salutatorian. And she worked hard for what little she could get. We all worked hard.

Karon: What are your hobbies? What did you do as a little child for fun?

Emma: Mickelson was my best friend. We went on a school trip. The boys got these horses for us to ride and I had never ridden a horse in my life and I'll tell you I had a sore butt when I got home. We went up on the hills and rode. The boys just treated us royal. Stan was my boyfriend. I played the clarinet all through high school.

Karon: Was he your own true love?

Emma: He was my only boyfriend. Yes, my true love. And he is still my true love.

Karon: What do you remember about holidays?

Emma: Oh we always had good holidays. We were party people. You know, we done all things together. Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween.

Karon: Did your mom sew your clothes?

Emma: Oh yes, mom was a good seamstress. She sewed for people too. She was a hard worker.

Bernice: Is there a particular Christmas that you remember?

Emma: No, not that I recall. Oh I remember when I got a bicycle and they hid it in the back room. But you know what-- I found it. But it was my downfall. Because I rode a bicycle all the time. But I fell off and I hurt my back. It has hurt ever since.

Karon: Did you play sports?

Emma: Oh yes, we played ball--softball when we went to the parties and danced. We loved to dance. Stan was the best dancer and I was the best partner.

Karon: Do you have any heirlooms that were passed down to you from your mom?

Emma: Yes, I've got dishes. And I have a doll. My uncle gave me this doll. I was a little girl and he gave me this great big doll.

Peggy: (Emma's daughter that dropped in while taping) Mom, you have that table that was your mom's. Oh yes, in my house. And chairs and crystal and all that. I've got a lot of things that my mother gave me.

Karon: Now lets talk about your children.

Emma: Alright, I have Peggy, she is the oldest. Then 5 years later I had Dixon and then 5 more years I had Ross. My children have done very well. I have doctors, lawyers, candlestick makers. (laughs) I worked for Mr. Huntington at the Huntington Brothers Store. He said that they owed me so much money that he had to have his boy marry me.

Karon: Did you have any special pets?

Emma: Not really. We don't like dogs and cats in the house. Well we did have a dog when the boys were little. But I ran over it. And almost killed it. But we had to get rid of it. After I ran over it, I said we will never get another one. Now the boys have their dogs for the farm.

Bernice: What do you remember about the Depression?

Emma: I remember that that is when we got married. And you know how extreme the gifts are now days. Well, we got a ladle to turn your pancakes. That was one gift and another was something similar. Very small.

Karon: Did you go to the temple at first?

Emma: No we didn't. E.A. Nielson a school teacher, married us and we got married at mothers. And then Stan got a business, and we had to go to Salt Lake. So we went to the temple there. But a funny thing. We didn't know you had to go around. And so we went up the big steps and knocked on the door. But we didn't have nobody with us--only a friend that was going to work with Stan in this business. We knocked and nobody let us in. Nobody answered.

Karon: Did you come back to Castle Dale and had your family?

Emma: We lived with my mother. She went to the temple to work for 3 months. And so we lived in her house. Then we bought this old house that we lived in. The little house that is by our big house. We remodeled it and lived in it and then built our new house in 1960. We bought that old house for all those years. Raised our kids there.

Peggy: You lived in Emery where dad taught school.

Emma: Oh yes, Stan taught school then. Then we had the baby. Peggy got

born in Castle Dale then we moved to Emery. He taught the 6th, 7th and 8th grades for 3 or 4 years. I think it was 4 years. Morris Johnson and his wife lived in our house while we lived in Emery.

Karon: When did you buy your farm?

Emma: He always had it. It seemed like he always had it.

Karon: Then you moved back and started in the store?

Emma: Yes, Grandpa wanted him to come to the store to work instead of teaching school.

Karon: It was a good store.

Emma: Yes, you could get anything that you wanted. They always said, "If they didn't have it they would get it" and they did.

Bernice: Do you remember the 1918 flu epidemic? How old were you?

Emma: I was 8. We had every disease that we could have. We had mumps. Dixon gave me the mumps. Peggy and I had the whooping cough. We had all kinds of diseases.

Bernice: Is there anything that you remember about your baptism or patriarchal blessing that you want to share with us.

Emma: Oh yes, it comforts me. I can read it and re-read it. I lost it for awhile. But I found it.

Karon: What church positions have you had?

Emma: Relief Society. I was in Relief Society and Young Womens for a long time. I was compassionate service for a long time. And Primary. They put me in Primary because I had little boys. I worked for a long time in the Primary too. I went R.S. teaching for years and years.

Karon: What talents do you have?

Emma: I like to paint. But not very well. I like to talk. That is my talent. I crochet. But I am having a hard time with my hand. I like to garden.

Karon: What about your friends?

Emma: Well, Helen Wilberg. We have been friends forever. They built a house by ours. See there is a picture of Helen and me. (A cartoon characture plaque hung on the wall. It said Helen and Emma.)

Peggy: You also worked in the Lyon's Club.

Emma: Yes, we had the Lyon's Club. We worked in the club for years and years. Stan was a prominent man. He was the mayor and he was in the bishopric and he helped build our church.

Karon: Did he ever play Santa Claus?

Emma: Yes, I tried to be Mrs. Claus too?

Bernice: Describe your home when you were a child.

Emma: We had a nice home. Momma kept it up real well. She worked hard. It was on the corner as you go up the hill to the high school. A little back behind a new house. It looks terrible now. But it was one of the best in Castle Dale. A lovely home. There were 3 bedroom. We girls had one, momma had one and the other back bedroom was the one we took in boarders.

Peggy: You need to tell how you managed the store.

Emma: Oh yes, that is so important. I worked for Dr. Turman. I kept his books for 10 years.

Karon: How would you describe yourself to your grandchildren:

Emma: I was a jolly person. I loved life. I love it. I could be the talker of town. My hair was dark brown.

Peggy: She always was ticky. Always concerned about how she looked.

Karon: I can remember when I first met you. You had on your pink suit and gloves.

Emma: I still have gloves. Gloves and gloves. Hats--a whole bunch of hats. I liked hats. And always pink. I loved pink clothes.

Peggy: You need to tell about your work.

Emma: I worked for Huntington Brothers Store in Castle Dale. Then I went to Huntington to work for Dr. Turman keeping his books. For years. Then I worked at the Progressive Market in Huntington. Dale Ungerman helped me then in the store.

Karon: How many years were you married?

Emma: Well, we had our 50th golden wedding. He died in '88. We educated our kids and I guess we were married about 60 years. Not long enough though. He has been dead about 20 years.

We had peaches on our trees and Stan said, "I am going to ride up to the boys take them some peaches." No...I was making pie and he rode out to the farm to see what the boys were doing. He loved raisin pie. I made him a pie and just got it in the oven and it wasn't very long 'til Dusty came, he was hauling the hay and he come in and said, "We had trouble." And anyway, he took me out to the field and then they bought

Stan in and he had laid down and taken his glasses off and his hat off and laid down and it was like he went to sleep.

Peggy: It was only about a half hour since he left the house.

Karon: I remember them telling it in church. That he had gone up and doing what he loved to do. He was on his farm. But it was like he had laid under the tree to have a little rest and gone to sleep.

Emma: They came and got me and we took him to the doctors and they said it was a heart attack. It was really tough.

Peggy: But she continued going to her club.

Karon: What is your club?

Emma: We used to sew in the club. And we had oh so many members.

Peggy: It started when I was born. So it's been 70 years ago.

Emma: They are still having this club. but I am the only old member. But I haven't gone now for a while. But we had the best time.

Karon: You little ladies were the elite of the town. You did everything together and were always dressed gorgeously. I remember, there was?

Emma: Yes, me, Lindora, Helen, Ruth and Una. We went everywhere together. Weddings, funerals, concerts and things at the high school. We never missed anything.

Karon: I miss seeing you all.

Peggy: Yes, they had their Monday Family Home Evening together. They'd go eat lunch together. She has missed that being here.

Karon: A lot of them aren't here anymore.

Emma: Yes, Una passed away. Dorthella and Jane.

Karon: Jane is the one that usually would drive you around.

Emma: Ya, after her accident she didn't drive anymore.

Karon: Do you want to tell your posterity about your faith?

Emma: Well, I am still a Mormon. I still go to church. I couldn't get along without it. I pray a lot. When I'd go to bed at night is when I really bear my testimony to the Lord. I think I am strong.

Your husband died quite sudden of cancer didn't he?

Karon: He had it for about a year.

Emma: I remember seeing a sign at the clinic. Free cancer exams. So I thought I'd better do it. So I did and she took me right in and checked me and she said you've got a little lump in your breast. I thought, "we've never had cancer or anything." But in a few weeks I had it out. I was 95 years old. But other than that, I have had good health. But I had a stroke a while back.

Peggy: She has only been in the hospital a few times. Once when she was 45 and once at 60. And the next time was when she was 95.

Emma: See how strong I am.

Karon: I think you have the light shining in your eyes and you have a beautiful countenance. And you always look so up-town.

Emma: Well, that's sweet of you.