

Oral History From: Andrew John Konakis the 2nd

Collected By: Tyra Konakis

Golden Days:

A Beginner's Guide to Collecting Family History and Community Traditions

Personal and Family History

Tyra: K what is your full name?

A J: Andrew John Konakis

Tyra: Are you also called by any nick names?

A J: Yes

Tyra: Which Ones?

A J: A J

Tyra: How did you get your nickname?

A J: My parents gave it to me because my ugh, me and my father have the same name. And so they ugh gave me the name Andrew, A J, it stands for ugh, my dads first name, Andrew and John is for my Grandfather, John Escandon

Tyra: ok, who calls you by your nick name now?

A J: Everyone.

Tyra: Where do You live?

A j: In Helper, Utah

Tyra: Have you ever lived anywhere else?

A J: Yes, Hiawatha, Utah

Tyra: When

A j: ugh from 1960 to ugh 1982

Tyra: Have you ever traveled anywhere?

A j: Yes

Tyra: Where and When?

A j: Lake Tahoe, about 4 years ago

Tyra: The Place and the year?

A j: ugh, Lake Tahoe, and it was in 2003 I believe.

Tyra: Where were you born?

A j: In Hiawatha, Utah

Tyra: Ok , when were you born?

A J: ugh, December 14, 1960.

Tyra: Are you married?

A J: No

Tyra: Do you have any children?

A j: Yes

Tyra: Their names...

A j: Tyra Jo Konakis

Tyra: Birth-dates

A j: February 18, 1988

Tyra: and there residences...

A j: Orangeville, Utah, and Helper Utah

Tyra: What kind of work do you do?
A j: I am an underground coal miner..
Tyra: When did you begin doing this kind of work?
A j: in 1979
Tyra: What is the first kind of work you ever did?
A j: I was a janitor.
Tyra: And your first job...
A j: igh Janitor
Tyra: How old were you, when you first began working?
A j: 14
Tyra: How much schooling have you had?
A j: I finished high school and some college.
Tyra: Are you a member of any clubs, organizations, or churches?
A j: no
Tyra: Do you have any brothers or sisters?
A j: Yes
Tyra: What are their names?
A J: Angelo Konakis
Tyra: and what is his Birth date?
A j: March fourth 1962
Tyra: and there residence?
A j: Price, Utah
Tyra: Ok and any other brothers?
A j: Yes
Tyra: Names...and birth dates, and residences...
A j: Tom Konakis, his birthday was... igh.. March 25th 1964, Wellington Utah.
Tyra: Alright.
A j: and Nick Konakis, his birthday is April 18, 1966, residence, Price, Utah.
Tyra: What is your fathers full name?
A j: Andrew Konakis
Tyra: And his Birth Place?
A J: Columbia, Utah
Tyra: k his Birth date
A J: August 31st, 1927
Tyra: His current and last Residence?
A J: igh park dale care center igh price Utah
Tyra: and his last residence?
A J: He lived in Indian Hills trailer park, price, Utah
Tyra: What kind of work did he do?
A J: He was an underground coal miner.
Tyra: k what is your mothers full name?
A J: Marine Villiene Escandon Konakis
Tyra: and her Birth place?
A j: Sunny side, Utah
Tyra: and the birth date...

A j: March 21st 1931

Tyra: And her current or her last residence...

A j: Price, Utah

Tyra: What kind of work did she do?

A J: She was a home maker.

Tyra: where did your ancestors come from?

A j: Mexico and Greece

Tyra: What languages did they speak?

A J: Greek and Spanish.

Tyra: Do you recall any stories about the history of your family? If so, please tell one...

A j: On my fathers side there is ugh, we had my Grandfather had ugh 31 brothers, or 31 children between 2 wives and back in 1952, 7 of em' drowned at one time at Scofield Reservoir,

Tyra: How did it happen?

A J: they were fishing on an aluminum boat and the wind come up and tipped over the boat and that was in 1952

Tyra: Ok, What do remember about the house you grew up in?

A j: Well it was owned by the company, ugh rent was really cheap, it was something like 25 dollars a, a month to live there. Ugh it was coal, it was heated by coal, and it was a pretty nice home, it was a 3 bedroom, and ugh it was fully carpeted it was ugh like I say, it was heat, it was from the coal and it was purchased through the company, we purchased our coal the company and it was really cheap back then it was something like 7 dollars and 50 cents a ton for coal.

Tyra: Alright, what do you remember about the town or community where you grew up?

A J: Well it was a small town, wasn't very many families there at the time, ugh it was quite peaceful, and enjoyable, we grew up with a lot of discipline though, and ugh it was quite enjoyable town, the population was something like ugh less than 200 people at the time I lived there. But it was a really nice town, peaceful.

Tyra: What are some of your favorite family stories that include your parents or your siblings?

A J: God, I can't remember, there's so many of them, I really cant think, one cant come to mind right now.

Tyra: K, What were some of the special occasions in your family and community like holidays, family reunions, and picnics?

A J: Most of all the family reunions now have all disappeared now.

Tyra: which of the special occasions are still celebrated today?

A J: ugh my Grandfather's birthday, as a matter of fact, my grandfathers birthday ugh, he is a hundred years old and we will be celebrating it April 15th of 2006.

Tyra: and which Grandfather is that?

A J: John Escandon.

Tyra: Name some of the special home made foods you ate as a child...

A J : Home made enchilada's, ugh a lot of Mexican food.

Tyra: What were some of the foods you regularly ate?

A J: ugh beef stews, home made beef stews, and home made bread

Tyra: What were some of the foods you only ate on special occasions?

A J: home made cookies

Tyra: Which of these foods do you still eat today?

A J: I don't eat any of them.

Tyra: Do you have any special recipes that have been handed down in your family?

A J: Yes

Tyra: What is it?

A J: Home made Bread

Tyra: k, name and describe some of the games you played as a child...

A J: ugh I played foot ball, we played soccer, we played baseball ugh mainly it was just foot ball and base ball.

Tyra: K which of these games are still played by children today?

A J: Baseball, foot ball, soccer.

Tyra: So basically all of them?

A J: All of them, yes.

Tyra: Ok which of these games do you think have changed or disappeared?

A J: None of them.

Tyra: What your favorite game and how was it played?

A J: ugh foot ball, it was tackle foot ball, it was a lot of fun.

Tyra: Did your parents have any special hobbies or crafts such as knitting, carving, quilting, basket making, etc

A j: My mother done a lot of sewing, my father was too busy to do any hobbies . He like hunting though. He ugh worked a lot, 7 days a week.

Tyra: Do you have any favorite hobbies?

A J: Yes I like motorcycling a lot

Tyra: Where did you learn this hobby?

A J: ugh it just come natural.

Tyra: so nobody taught you?

A J: ugh no, I taught myself.

Tyra: K, do remember any stories that were told to you as a child?

A J: Yes

Tyra: ok, if so please tell your favorite story...

A J: Yes, it was my parents, they told me about this white lady up here in spring canyon, up here where I live now. It was quite hilarious how they told it.. But that how it. They say when the wind blew, u could here a lady screaming up there like an old white lady or something like that. I thought it was quite comical.

Tyra: Is the story still around today?

A J: Sure it is.

Tyra: Do u remember any jokes and riddles from your child hood?

A j: Gosh I cant think of any right now.

Tyra: do you know any one who sang?

A J: Yes

Tyra: Who were they?

A J: ugh my ex- sister in law.

Tyra: what types of songs did she sing?

A J: country songs

Tyra: where and when would she sing?

A J: I don't understand the question.

Tyra: When and where did she sing?

A j: ugh she sang at the cowboy club, she sang at community days, she sang at a lot of social functions here in the carbon county area.

Tyra: Does she still sing today?

A J: I'm not sure.. I think on occasions.

Tyra: Do you know anyone who played any musical instruments?

A J: Yes

Tyra: Who were they?

A J: My cousin Gilbert Palacios', he played the electric guitar.

Tyra: what kind of music did he play?

A J: Spanish music

Tyra: When and where would he play?

A J: He would just play on special occasions.

Tyra: ok, did you know anyone who did any kind of dancing?

A J: Yes, my father, he done the Greek dance, quite frequently on special occasions.

Tyra: Did you or do you do any of the above, singing or dancing?

A J: No

Tyra: Do u remember being sick as a child?

A J: yes

Tyra: What did you, what kinds of medicine did you take when you were sick?

A J: ugh I am not sure what kind, but I was in the hospital like in a coma for 18 days, I had virus encephalitis in 1976, and they gave me all kinds of drugs, I really cant remember what kinda drugs they were, but ugh I was pretty sick.

Tyra: did your family use any home remedies?

A J: ugh I think before I went into the hospital I was dehydrated quite a bit and they gave me a 7 up.

Tyra: ugh do you use any of these remedies today, still?

A J: no I don't

Tyra: Do u remember any sayings beliefs concerning the weather, good luck bad luck. Dreams, marriage, birth, death, etc?

A J: ugh marriage, life is a bitch and then ya marry one.

Tyra: k , is that all of them

A J: Pretty much, I don't wanna go into big detail.

Tyra: Alright, what was the most valuable thing your parents or other adults ever told you about getting along in life?

A J: Get our education and get a long with our siblings.

Tyra: What are some of the things you remember about school? Like school friends, teachers, recess, after school?

A J: Well I remember, a teacher. One of my teachers at school, in my senior year.. I worked.. I studied afternoon shift, and went to school and worked at the coal mine, and go to school in the morning, and the last 3 months of school I fell asleep on my desk and the teacher came up with a big ol' paddle and slapped the desk on me, and it scared the crap out of me, and ugh recess, in elementary school, was ugh, it was alright. I played a lot of marbles, a lot of tether ball, in elementary school.. I will never forget Mr. King. He is the one that slapped the desk and scared the crap out of me. He really got me there.

Tyra: What kind of friends did you have, who did you hang out with?

A J: Well my senior year I didn't really hang out anybody, cuz I worked all the time, after school and on the weekends , I was just too tired to hang out with anyone. But ugh, but before I worked I had very good friends, I had Jed Davis, he ugh, he unfortunately lost his arm in an industrial accident and I was with him when he lost his arm, and ugh unfortunately ugh when he lost his arm he had a rough life after that and he is a very good friend and he moved out of state.

Tyra: What were you considered in school? Like a preppy, a bully, a rich kid, the poor kid, the A J: The bully for sure.

Tyra: Why did you bully kids?

A J: Cuz they would just get on my nerves sometimes, get in my way.

Tyra: What is the most amazing thing you have ever seen?

A J: When I worked underground, I seen a dinosaur track, and that was pretty amazing to me.

Tyra: K what historical events do you remember?

A j: The earth quake we had here in Utah

Tyra: when did it happen?

A J: ugh I think it was in 85 or 88, I am not really sure though.

Tyra: um tell me some other things about your job, working in the mine cuz around here, stuff like that interests people.

A J: working in the mine, I have been at it for 27 years, ugh this day and age there is a lot of new coal miners going under ground, just barely out of highschool., ugh sometimes its very comical to see these young kids that think they know everything about underground mining and its just really scary to see these young kids go underground, ugh especially because we have had so many fatalities, its been a bad year, with over 20 fatalities this year, and ugh its very dangerous occupation, and ugh , but however, it is a safe job, as long as you keep safety in mind when you are under ground at all times

Tyra: Have you ever been injured in the mine?

A J: Yes

Tyra: How?

A J: I was trammimg a feeder breaker

Tyra: Can you explain what a feeder breaker is?

A J: A feeder breaker is.. It sits on the belt line, it's a big piece of machinery, it weighs about between 25-50 ton, it's a conveyer, u dump ur shuttle car full of coal into it and it crushes the coal and sends it on the belt to the outside, and I was trammimg it, so we could make a belt move, and my hand slipped off the tram lever and it pinched me between rib and the machine itself and I was pinned for probably 5 minutes, until the boss came and got it off of me, and ugh I had a bruised hip, and I was pretty slow for about a month in a half. And also I was hurt on a roof bolder, ugh a truck wrench came back and hit me in the eye, I thought I lost my eye, it took 34 stitches to stitch around my over all socket, and also a lot of back injuries, lifting wrong ways and stuff like that, and in the past five years, I haven't had no lost time accidents..so I am very proud of that.

Tyra: How much do you work at the mine?

A J : I work, my rotation now, I work 7 days on 4 days off, 7 days on 3 days off.

Tyra: Do you have any other family members that work in the coal mines

A J: Yes, I have 2 younger brothers one is a shift foreman, Angelo Konakis, at Genwal resources, another brother that is a face boss up at Andalex resources..

Tyra: Do you know if any of those guys have been injured in the mine?

A J: I know Nick hasn't, Nick has over 20 years underground service, Angelo has been hurt once or twice, ugh no broken bones, just stitches in his fingers.

Tyra: K do you know of any other serious fatalities or injuries, do you know the people..

A J: yes I did. In fact my next store neighbor was just recently killed, ugh Shane Jacobson, up at the Andalex resources, working on the long wall. And they had a bounce, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, unfortunately it killed him, a really good friend that we dearly miss, also I had a really good friend, he was killed in Hiawatha in a roof fall, back in 1985 8, killed by a roof fall, and another good friend Randy, was killed on a roof boulder, he got his skull crushed, and another good friend, Jed Davis, he lost his arm.. Yea I have seen my share of fatalities and amputations.

Tyra: Do you have any other mine stories you would be willing to share? They don't have to deal with fatalities or injuries. Like mine explosions, stuff like that?

A J: Yea up at winter quarters mine, read the archives, in the coal mining, they have the willow creek mine blow up, they shut the Willow creek mine up. Up at our Mine there is a lot of gas in our mine, if it gets to strong then we would have to shut the mine down for a little bit, until it clears out. All coal mines underground are considered gassy, because of the methane gas.

Tyra: Do you like working in the mine?

A J: If I didn't, I wouldn't have spent the last 27 years there

Tyra: Do you have any worries when you go to work?

A J : Absolutely, everyday before I go underground I always say a little prayer, you never know I might not ever come back from underground.

Tyra: Ok, do you have any other stories you would like to share, it don't have to concern the mine or anything, just any other stories.

A J: I don't think so, not right now

Tyra: Alright then that completes the interview, thank you very much for you time

A J: thank you

Tyra: And have a wonderful day...

A J: Thank you

Tyra: I became acquainted with this person because he is my father, it took about an hour to complete the interview, my name is Tyra Jo Konakis, my home address in Helper is 813 Spring Canyon circle, Helper Utah, 84526.. My address in Orangeville is 700 s. main Orangeville, Utah. I don't remember the zip code, my telephone number down here in Helper is 435-472-0891, my phone number in Orangeville is 435-748-2099.

Oral History: Interview Release Form

In view of the historical value of this oral history, I,

Andra G. (of) Parks,
person being interviewed

knowingly and voluntarily permit Tyra Yonawickis,
student interviewer

and Diane Carter the full use of this information for educational purposes.

Signature Andra Parks

Date 4-9-06