

*Munn*



**MUNN FAMILY MEMORIES**

*Stories that are priceless, funny, sad, and memorable*





# MEMORIES OF MUNN FAMILY

*Hannah*



I remember quilting bees. All the gossip that would go on and I would be crawling around under the quilt and hear stuff I was never meant to hear. And that is the reason why I know some of this I'm sharing now.

The quilting bee was an extremely popular social event in the mid nineteenth century. The quilting bee provided a social space for women to gather and gossip while they simultaneously expressed their artistic capabilities. The quilting bee was often times held in a grange hall or a church vestry room which allowed for a maximum number of 12 women to attend. Often times, the number of guests was limited to seven, who, with the hostess, made up two quilting frames, the equivalent of two tables of bridge. Good quilting in earlier times was a social requisite, and it behooved the ambitious woman to be an expert with her needle.

I remember when the aunts would string green beans and vegetables while sitting in a circle with their skirts pulled out over their knees with a basket in between and work away, gossiping all the time. Later they would can the vegetables together too.

Aunt Lela, married to Morris Lowe, (Hannah line) letter carrier (hand delivered all the mail in Prescott) worked out of Prescott post office. Morris and his son were really into science magazine Popular Mechanics and that is how they got into phones. The center of activity was at Aunt Lela's home. You went to them if you needed to know how to get things to work like building a telephone system. The furthest I knew they listened in on the phone was about 3-5 miles down highway and it was iffy to hear.

The Hildebrand Store was the center of activity where all the men would hangout—men gossip. My grandfather Hannah would take me on his shoulder to the store and I'd hear the men. The phone system was started there. The women would gossip at Aunt Lela's.

The phones worked like this. You'd have to crank it on the side of the phone to make it ring. They would use the top of the barbed wire fence that would go four or five miles for the phone line. Everyone had a ring: Aunt Lela had 2 short rings, her neighbor had one long ring and so on. The funny part is that no matter who called, everyone would listen in. Everyone lived out in the country and knew everyone. Kind of like the internet, early version of Worl Wide Web.

There had to be a 1.5 inch volt battery to carry the electricity along the fence. The 1 volt battery was the size of a quart bottle. Two of them didn't have much power but it lasted a long time. Just needed a little power to talk for a few minutes. There was a coil in the mouthpiece to send the voice.

This was the early 1940s and it was all new to us. There was a device inside the phone box. There was an oak box with an earpiece to put up to your ear and talking into the horn on the phone box; there was a mouth piece and a hearing piece. People in those days couldn't afford to spend much money on anything.

The kids were all fascinated with the phone when it first came out. All the kids were threatened with what would happen to them if they ever fooled with the phone. Parents couldn't afford to let anything happen to it.

I remember in WW II Grandpa Munn had a radio, a 90 volt battery to operate, and it was 4x12x24 inches long. During WW II who couldn't even get a battery. We'd listen to Fibber Magee and Molly, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Batman and Robin when no one was watching because adults thought it was frivolous.

It looked like a handheld suitcase sitting on its side with monstrous speakers. The speakers took all the power. We only kept it on an hour because of the power it took from the battery. They cost so much to replace.

Once, I had a bad accident that meant I could only use one arm for a couple of years. "Fell off the porch, threw my arms out, went across the sheet metal trough, very sharp and it cut my bicep all the way to the bone. It just felt like a sting but when I looked, the bicep was sliced clear through."

I recall Arkansas Brank Water which was moonshine whiskey. It was only half strength. I was about five or six years old at the time.

Dad was driving a tractor for Don Cox. Don's '39 Ford tractor had all iron wheels. Dad was the only

one who could drive it. He knew how to keep it from having too much pressure on the crank case.

Then he got a job driving a passenger bus for the Japanese concentration camps called The Valley in Poston, Arizona. He would drive them into Phoenix so they could shop for goods they needed. Then he would drive them back to the camp. During that time I remember that I liked looking at lizards and cactus.

That's when I had major lung problems while Dad was working at the camp. It's what the doctor called Pneu Chemo Thorax. It was a hemorrhage of the lung. My lungs blew up and started bleeding. I was probably going to die. My dad yanked me out of the house trailer and took me to the infirmary. The Jap doctor and and nurses saved my life.

About that time my dad got his draft notice. He had to go into the USA Calvary, Army. Basic training was at Ft. Riley, Kansas. During that time Mom and I had to live with Grandpa and Grandma Munn. Soon Mom got a house next door we moved into.

Grandma had a big feather bed. She liked to sleep on it outside underneath the tamarack trees or salt cedar trees. No air conditioning. I'd sleep outside with her. The stars were so bright, I could see the comic books from the light of the stars, it was that bright.

Mom and I took the troop train from Arkansas to Parker, Arizona. I can still remember the sun on my face on the train. It was a military town. Unfortunately, my mother was more interested in the bars and male companions than she was in taking care of me. My mother got involved with a fellow named Elmer Clark. He was a decent person. He was good to me. He was the manager of the Parker airport. He was also a mechanic at the Ford garage. He wanted to be in the military but he couldn't because he had back problems. He wanted to be a flight instructor. He owed his own aircraft and loved to fly.

Elmer treated like me like I was his own son. I called him Dad. Mom would go to the bars and get completely ripped while I was playing out in the street. I would get bored.

Then Elmer and Catherine went to Red Bluff, California. He was a mechanic there. Several months later Dad (Wilson Hannah) got discharged and we both lived with Uncle Vernon and Aunt Lois. The divorce didn't happen until my dad was discharged. He got custody of me, and I moved to Bakersfield with him. He worked on power plants, and was a carpenter. He was a carpenter the rest of his life. For a period of time Uncle Vernon became the business agent for the local carpenter's union.

James Tommy (James Thomas, my mother's brother) also looked after me as a teenager.

In my mind Elmer stayed on until he was sure that my dad would be able to take care of me. After Mom and I stayed in Parker with my grandparents, I did have some visits with Mother like summer vacation. Dad got things legalized so he had custody and she could have challenged him but she knew she couldn't deal with that. After Dad had legal custody of me, Elmer gave up, realizing I would be cared for. He left my mother and got a job as manager of the airport.

After a couple of years Dad met Aline Clifton at a dance. My dad was adamant that we have a complete family. During this time I was still living with Uncle Vernon and Aunt Lois. I didn't move out until 6th grade.

A person had to be a union man to get involved with Uncle Vernon, United Union of Carpenters. He was a staunch democrat. Living with my cousins was like having brothers and sisters. When people would ask how many kids Aunt Lois had, she would say four boys and one girl, adding me as one of her boys. She was a decent mother for that. Uncle Vernon was out doing other things. After Dad married Aline, he bought a house in Oildale.

I lived back and forth between Uncle Vernon's family and my dad's family until I butted heads with my step-mom. She was a jealous woman. At the age of 16 I got off on my own, bought a '41 Plymouth Coupe picking potatoes. Lived with Uncle Vernon the next year until I graduated from high school.

I palled around with Vernon Jr. 'Vernie.' We'd take weekend trips up the mountains. I was like his little brother.

Ricky was a "daddy's boy." Uncle Vernon would stay up all hours of the night smoking his pipe and doing paperwork. Rick would be sitting up with him. He drank alcohol.

Not much of a relationship with William until I got out of the Army. We hit it off in a brotherly thing.

Aunt Lois was that mother you see on tv always taking care of family. She had some major medical problems. Always treated me like I was her own child.

After I got out of the military we all went our different ways. We didn't have the time for each other.

Grandpa Munn Sr., my mother's father, was the patriarch. The kids were shy around him. Grandma was sweet and would do anything for me. I was afraid of what Granddad might do if I said the wrong thing. He wasn't very friendly. Just old fashioned. He ruled the roost. I talked to him and joked with him. Pulled little jokes on him but I just didn't have the good vibes that I had with Grandma. Grandpa was busy trying to put food in the table. He was a bus driver for school districts and a janitor at a school. I don't know if he worked long enough to get a retirement out of the school system. He'd do repairs at the school, manual labor. The last time I lived with them was a short time in Arvin when we came to California. Second or third grade.

Uncle Melvin known as Uncle Junior. James was Uncle Tommy. Both Uncle Tommy and I were in the fire department at the same time.

I always liked Uncle Melvin, he had a smile in his voice. We asked him questions about the military service but he didn't say much. He was in a fire and maggots were used to eat the dead skin. That is still done today. He came to Parker while he was rehabbing. I followed James around in Parker but James didn't like it. At 18 he joined the Navy.

Aunt Hazel was sweet as she could be. She was a clerk at Safeway in Bakersfield. I think she was living with her parents in Arizona. There was gossip about a miscarriage. She wasn't married at that time. Granddad was not happy about that. I could hear them fussing over what happened. Aunt Hazel, according to her, said I was her favorite nephew. When she got married to Uncle Ralph Jackson it didn't work. She stayed married to him. Her family didn't approve of that marriage. Didn't like Ralph. He was a scrawny skinny guy. His lungs were shot up when he was in the military. They made the beachhead at Anzio.

The Battle of Anzio was a battle of the Italian Campaign of World War II that took place from January 22, 1944 (beginning with the Allied amphibious landing known as Operation Shingle) to June 5, 1944 (ending with the capture of Rome). The operation was opposed by German forces in the area of Anzio and Nettuno. The initial landing achieved complete surprise with no opposition and a jeep patrol even made it as far as the outskirts of Rome. Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, the German commander in the Italian theatre, moved every unit he could spare into a defensive ring around the beachhead. His artillery units had a clear view of every Allied position. The Germans also stopped the drainage pumps and flooded the reclaimed marsh with salt water, planning to entrap the Allies and destroy them by epidemic. For weeks a rain of shells fell on the beach, the marsh, the harbor, and on anything else observable from the hills, with little distinction between forward and rear positions. The Allied leader turned his forces north-

west towards Rome, which was captured on June 4, 1944. As a result, the forces of the German Tenth Army fighting at Cassino were able to withdraw and rejoin the rest of the forces in Rome to make a fighting withdrawal to their next assignment.

Still, Uncle Ralph was capable of working as an engineer on construction projects. He was standoffish because he knew that my grandparents didn't like him.

I don't know when Aunt Hazel got into alcohol. It was before she had her stroke. The stroke was in the early 60s. She was a pariah because she had gotten pregnant then had a miscarriage out of wedlock. Her family could not forgive an indiscretion like hers. My wife and I would visit her at her trailer when we could. The stroke caused her problems. She smoked like a freight train. Uncle Ralph would hide in the back of the house because of his bad lungs. The stroke put her into a wheelchair and she had a problem with her arm. She recovered some with rehab, then she stopped. She had been a nurse or LVN. Nursing was a good life for her and she had a life with Uncle Ralph. She was my favorite aunt and I was her favorite nephew.

Dad, Wilson, was in a family with seven sisters and he was really good at communicating with women. He would try to talk. Aline was really jealous of him and Hazel. Aline didn't want me around but I said to her, "Look around. Who do you see? Do you see anyone from Oklahoma (her home) here to help you. I promised my dad that I would see to it that you were cared for. So I'm going to do that come hell or high water."

Aunt Marjorie didn't get to know her very well. When she met Don Benson, he was in National Guard. They came to visit Grandpa and Grandma Munn but they didn't have any use for Don. He became a general in the National Guard. I never did live close enough to get to know her. Every time they came to Bakersfield, Donald would try to enlist me in the National

Guard. He would say, "As soon as you're done with your advanced training, you could be my driver." Even after I was out of the army, he still tried to get me in National Guard.

My grandparents (Melvin and Edna) had ideas about everything. They treated me pretty damn nice!





# MY DAD'S HISTORY AND CHILDREN

*Richard Munn*



James Thomas Munn was born January 17th 1927 in Prescott Nevada County Arkansas to Melvin Harris Munn and Edna Marie Andrews. Knickers were big city garb but that is all James had to wear for a time as a child. He was made fun of all the time he wore them so he NEVER wore shorts in public ever again, not even to go swimming.

In 1937 the family moved lock, stock and barrel to the west, settling in the Arizona area of Parker. In Parker Arizona is where Jim went to Parker Elementary, Middle School, and High School. At Northern Yuma County Union High School Jim was in a class of only 13 students, who were to graduate in 1946. He learned to play the trumpet and played for his classmates on occasion. He was active in music his entire life. He sang in choirs and in musicals after the war was over. Jim was also on the basketball "B" Team. Many of the teams they played were military units.

At the young age of 17 Jim signed up for the Navy and was shipped off to San Diego in 1944 for basic

training. At 6 foot 2 inches he was big for his age. After training he was assigned to the Taffy III task force on the small aircraft carrier, the USS FANSHAW BAY CVE- 70, as a DRW, Damage Repair- Wood 3rd Class.

In 1947, after serving for 2 years in WWII, Jim settled in Monterey California with his best friend, Bill Jackson. Together they worked for a tree company called Davies Tree Service. Mostly they pruned palm trees, some of which were 70-80 feet in the air. This work was for PG&E (Pacific Gas & Electric) to clear trees all over the bay area. Talk about bravery and courage.

While living the single life in the Bay area, Jim got into the opera and musicals. He joined the San Francisco Light Opera. He was in many musicals too, Guys and Dolls, Robinhood, HMS Pinafore . . . etc. He loved to sing and was a great bass singer.

Most of Jim's family settled in Bakersfield and on one trip home for a visit he met Patricia Ann Yeomans at a football game at Bakersfield High. The fledgling Bakersfield Junior College and the students met on the high school campus. The year was 1949.

When he started dating Pat, her two brother-in-law, Edward Brummett (Marine Corps) and Harry Hiner (Navy) paid him a visit. They wanted to know his intentions in dating Pat because she was only 16 years old. I guess they were planning to give him the heave-ho but they liked him and they all became lifelong friends. Pat was always the tomboy, doing her own thing. Her mother was furious but she could do nothing about it but accept it.

Jim proposed over the phone, then they left for Las Vegas on a Saturday night, drove all night, got married at 4 am. Then hit the road to return to Bakersfield. Coming back, they ran out of gas. With only \$1.35 to their name Jim coasted several times down Hwy 58 (Edison Hwy) into Bakersfield; the road is a long downgrade. They made it to Banduchi's Restaurant and called brother-in-law Harry Hiner to bring some gas. When he arrived, he wanted to see the marriage certificate before giving money for gas.

Jim then took Pat to her mom's house, dropped her off to get some clothes and a few personal items, then they took off for Monterrey at 4am Sunday morning. (262 miles, 6-7 hours in 1949) so Jim could make it to work Monday morning.

In 1950 Robert Eugene Munn was born in Monterey, California. In July 1952 (Mikey) Michael Steven Munn was born in Bakersfield, California. In November 1953 (Rusty) Russell Kevin Munn was born. Then in December 1954, only 13 months later, (Richie) Richard Alan Munn.

I was 3 years old when Jim, Pat and all us boys joined the LDS church. I guess Jim finally got religion. He was historically a Baptist as was his dad Melvin Munn who said he was, "A dyed in the wool Baptist", whatever that means. He had to quit smoking, swearing like a sailor and drinking, which naturally was hard for him.

Jim spent his time as a carpenter, tree man and as a Kern County Fireman Engineer for 21 years. He

retired in 1986 and passed away from cancer in 1989. He enjoyed the outdoors and was a workaholic. He held many callings in the LDS church and served faithfully and humbly in whatever he was asked to do.

## CHILDREN

Robert, Michael, Russell and Richard all went to Mt. Vernon Elementary (6), Sierra Jr. High (7-8) and East Bakersfield High. (9-12). Bob was good at mechanical drawing and graduated in 1969. Michael in 1972. Russell was on the football team and graduated in 1972. Richard went out for basketball, was in student council, liked tennis and was active in choral classes. He was in the school play "Mikado" in 1972. He graduated in 1973. Bob and Richard were active in plays and musicals and enjoyed dancing.

All of the boys were active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Richard was the only one to go on a mission, to Nashville Tennessee in 1976-78.

Bob graduated from Bakersfield College in technical drawing and got a job at Arco Petroleum. Russ went into mechanics out of high school. Richard graduated from Bakersfield Adult School in Psychiatric Technology/ Nursing in 1980 and Porterville College in Social Science in 1995. He worked for the State of California State Hospital for 12 years. Russ married Jeannie Taylor 1975, Richard in 1981 to Melissa, Bob in 1982 to Pamela Baker and Mike to Beverly in 1983 (Divorced 1985). Children: Russ Brady, Josh, Shaun and Amy, Bob: Tiffany, Keri, Brian and (adopted sibling Shelby Baker) Mike: James and Andrew, Richard: Aaron, Matthew (Jerry and Elisha stepchildren).

## TODAY 2023

Bob died in 1996 in a single van accident, believed to have fallen asleep at 1am on the job. His wife Pam died in 1997 from breast cancer, leaving their kids as orphans. They were raised by half-brother Shelby.



Melvin Harris Munn and Edna Marie Andrews Munn

Mike is disabled since 2001, Russ is retired 2018 and Richard works for the IRS and is semi-retired.

Russ lives in Arizona near all his kids, Mike in Bakersfield, and Richard in Utah.

## GRANDPA AND GRANDMA MUNN MEMORIES

They lived in Rosedale in a little white house. He was a janitor and bus diver at a local school. We used to go visit after he retired to an old mobile home near there. He was a real story teller and would be really excited and animated like he was a preacher. He said he always wanted to be a preacher. Grandma Edna talked very little. She did not like when we grew beards, She said, "They are dirty". She was also scared that I would go on a mission to preach. Probably thought I was going to Africa. My dad Jim was always going over to see them and help them out. They were in a car accident in the mid 1970's by a drunk driver who switched places with the passenger and lied through their teeth that Melvin hit them; they were not hurt but Melvin lost his license over it. They both entered an old rest home on Hwy 99 and that is where Grandma died 1977 and Melvin went in 1978.

