



**LIFE STORY OF OUR
BELOVED PARENTS**

MELVIN HAROLD MUNN, JR.

May 15, 1923 - April 19, 1982

FERN BERTHA WHITMER

July 7, 1925 - August 6, 2008

CHILDREN

Melvin Harold Munn III

Cheryl Jane Munn

Ethelyn Marie Munn

Gary Wayne Munn



Compiled by Cheryl Jane Munn
Daughter
December 14, 2009



HIGHLIGHTS



Grandpa Munn



- Delivered a calf when only ten years old
- How he loved Grandpa Andrews and his great sense of humor
- Religion when he was growing up: one week they went to a Baptist Church and the next week they went to a Nazarene Church
- Camp Meetings were his favorite
- His family's move from Arkansas to Parker, Arizona during the Great Depression
- Lost his little finger on his right hand while serving in the Marines due to a fire
- How he proposed to Grandma walking her out on a 12" cement gate above a fast moving dam at 10:30 at night to make sure he got a 'yes' (true story)
- Took three sets of missionaries to teach him before he decided to be baptized
- Very patriotic, loved his country
- His conversion to the Church and years of leadership callings in the Church
- Fishing and camping at Camp Nelson in the "High" Sierras in California

Grandma Munn Jones



- Life on the farm: lots of canning, her job to bake and cook, her mother singing and whistling, taking the cattle to graze on the Blue with her dad
- Grew up a tomboy and sang lead in operetta "Tom Boy Jo" in high school
- Never got the cowboy hat she wanted when she was ten years old
- Hobbies growing up: horseback riding, dancing, singing and crafts
- Her sister, Ethel, became her second mother, and she made her feel special in such a large family, where it was easy to get lost
- Had to quit school in eleventh grade to tend school teacher's children
- Christmas on the farm complete with candles on the tree
- On a dare she got her first date with Grandpa, the handsome Marine in town
- Happy times: the years when the children were home in Bakersfield and Lompoc, Melvin and Fern's 18 months served in St. Louis Missouri Mission
- Dedicated Church service, including many happy years serving in the temple
- Loved a good water fight as did her father
- Always took good care of herself, expecting the same from Cheryl and Ethie
- Spent hours gardening, took great pride in her beautiful flower beds
- Favorite saying: Things that you do, do with your might. Things done by halves are never done right, and other famous sayings the family heard over and over

INTRODUCTION



Mom and Dad were married 65 years ago today. I have been blessed with such wonderful parents that I wanted to honor them by writing their life stories. Mom grew up in Alpine, Arizona to Angus Van Meter Whitmer and Sarah Jane Judd. Dad grew up in Prescott, Arizona to Melvin Harris Munn and Edna Marie Andrews. Both families were farmers. Mom's family had 17 children, mother being the 15th child of a set of twins. There were 17 children all together four died, two girls and two boys. Dad was the fourth child of six children. They were unable to raise crops successfully due to the dust bowl so they left Arkansas and moved to Parker, Arizona where Mom and Dad met. Dad had been in WWII. He was recuperating from a burn where he had lost his right little finger. Mom was working in a five and dime store. They met and fell in love. They met on a dare, so typical of them!

This is their joyous life story of how they met, married, how Dad took the missionary lessons and joined the church. Grandma Whitmer wasn't taken to the Marine known for his smoking and drinking. Later, all that changed. Mom said their life became much happier after Dad joined the church.

We learn about their life in Bakersfield and Lompoc. Harold the oldest had Valley Fever, Cheryl had encephalitis and Ethie had polio. All recovered. After we moved to Lompoc Gary was a popular football player. For two years I was editor of a weekly teen page in the city newspaper while in high school. I made \$20, more money than any of my friends made. At the same time I was Senior Class President. Dad was in the Bishopric, Mom was Junior Sunday School President and Stake Primary President. Life was good.

The most fun in summers camping and fishing at Camp Nelson, California in the Porterville area. In the summers we also loved seeing Grandma Whitmer in Safford, Arizona. We loved seeing Aunt Mary's farm and farm animals in Safford.

Mom and Dad did all they could to provide us with a good life. Bakersfield was okay but Lompoc was where we grew up. We loved to bring our friends to our home. They always felt welcome in our home. Those were the days!!









MELVIN HAROLD MUNN, JR.

May 15, 1923 - April 19, 1982





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Handwritten Autobiography

I was born May 15, 1923, in Prescott, Nevada county, Arkansas of parents, Edna Marie Andrews and Melvin Harris Munn. I was the only one of six children born in the city of Prescott. I had five brothers and sisters: Vernon, Catherine, Hazel, Marjorie and Jim.

We lived in Redland Township. We spent most of my early life in the country about four to six miles southeast of Prescott, about three miles from the Little Missouri River.

The first thing I remember was in 1926. This Negro fellow worked for my Dad. He was digging post holes near our house out behind the barn. (I was three years old and I kept throwing dirt back in the holes). He told me that if I didn't quit filling the holes up as fast as he dug them he was going to put me in one of the holes. That scared me half to death. I ran to the house, and hid behind the old kitchen range where mother was cooking dinner. She wanted to know why I was hiding there so I told her all about it. That was the end of the post holes for me.

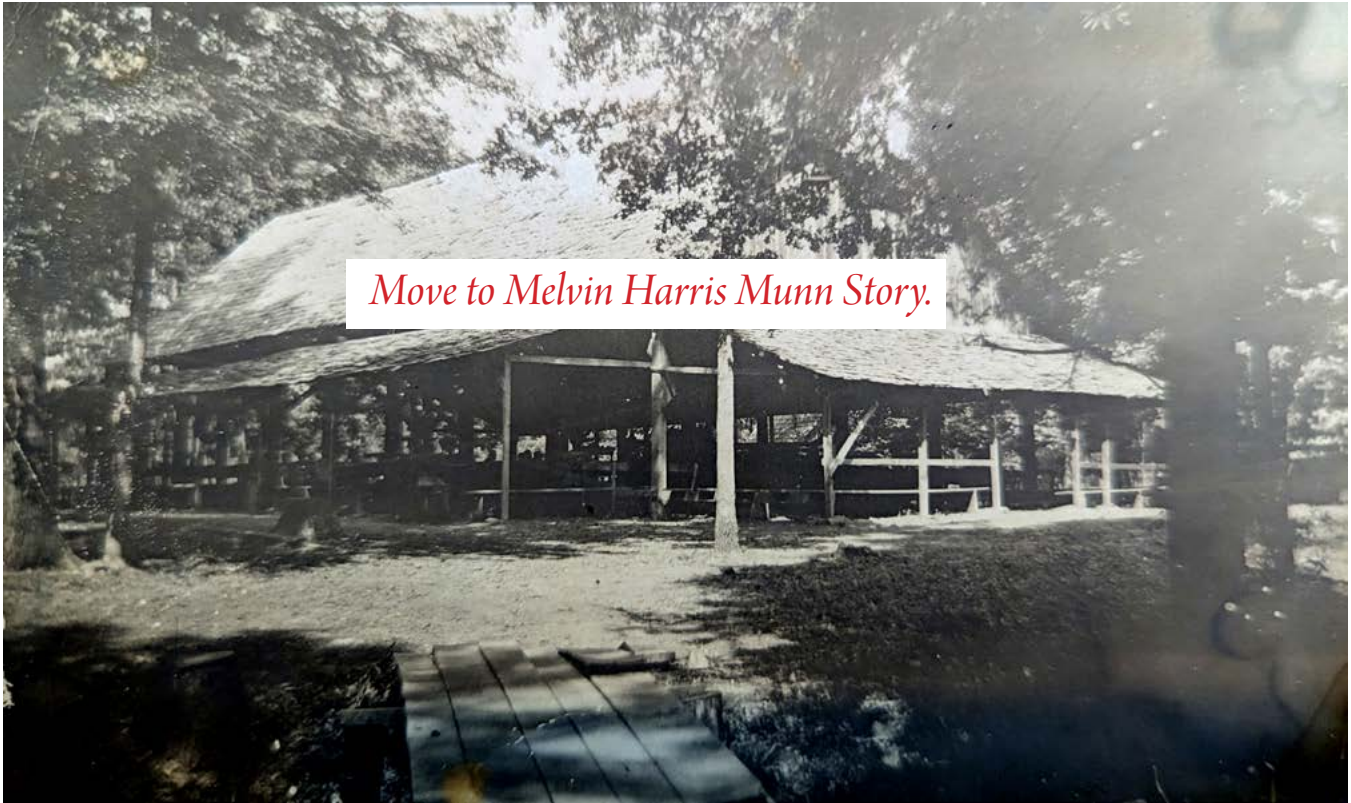
In 1928 we moved four miles toward town on our Grandmother Barham's place. I remember there was a hornet's nest in the ground near the gate we had to pass

through every day. We tried every way we could think of to get rid of that nest, plug the hole, they drilled another hole. Never succeeded. We would always pour water in it or build a fire in it trying to kill the hornets, but we never could do it. Finally we ended up leaving them alone. There was a big fish pond where we kids had a lot of fun.

In 1931 we moved four miles back down the road the way we came to Grandfather Andrew's place, in a house just below where we lived. Grandpa was about 75 years old and retired. So we farmed his place and other places of his, about three miles south of the home place. We would hook up our teams of mules to the wagons and ride down to the lower place.

All of the boys and girls would ride in the wagons or on the extra mules or horses. Mother always fixed us a big lunch. We all looked forward to our dinner. We would put our milk in the cool spring to keep it cool for dinner. The spring was down in the woods from where our campsite and tool shed was. Grandpa had told us kids about wild hogs or Razorbacks. Upper-most in our minds was that there might still be some hogs there. We knew there were snakes, all kinds, poison snakes. These times I remember with much joy.





Move to Melvin Harris Munn Story.

The Mainspring Campground

We also farmed a place about one and a half miles west of where we lived. We kids had to drive our milk cows to pasture at his place. We boys would hang onto the cow's tails to see how fast they could go. We had lots of fun riding the calves and steers.

One morning it was raining very hard. Mother and the girls had finished milking the cows. (In the Munn family the girls always milked the cows.) The girls had gone to the house. Mother called me to the cow barn where one of the cows was trying to have a calf; the cow was having a lot of trouble. Mother told me what to do. Results a few minutes later. Mother cow and calf doing fine. I was ten.

I must backtrack a little to cover a few years I missed. Late 1926 we moved to Grandpa Andrew's place about six miles southeast of Prescott. One of the few things I remember most was how I loved my Grandpa and Grandma Andrews very much. Especially Grandpa, so much. I would jump out of my clothes and run up the hill to Grandpa's house for him to

dress me. I would cry and tell him that Mom or Dad would not put my clothes on for me. I was four years old at that time.

In 1929 we moved five miles southeast of Prescott. That year I was six and started school. That was where we lived when brother Jim fell into an old well, full of water. It had no curb around it. We were filling it up with dirt when Jim, two years old, fell into it. I remember it scared us to death, but Dad pulled him out soon enough.

In 1930 we moved about a half mile west into the Liberty Church Parsonage, one quarter mile from Redland School, 200 feet from the church. We would go there one time. Next time to the Baptist Church up the road one week and the next week the Nazarene church. By that time I had two or three girl friends but Hazel Griffen, a little blonde, was my favorite. That was the year I took a nickel box of Garrett Snuff all at one time, got so sick it took me four hours to get home. Mom asked me why I was so pale. I told her I did not know. Dad had a Ford truck that year. He made a living hauling.

In 1931 we moved back down to Grandpa Andrew's place next to his house. We had a dog named Ruler, and he had a puppy named Nipper. There was a fence in back of us. It was a haywire fence. The rabbits had a certain place they would go under the fence. I would set traps at the hole under the fence, then take Ruler upon the hill, he would chase the rabbits toward the fence. I would always catch one or two. Sometimes we would chase them up a hollow tree or log. We would take along sticks and twist them out.

We had a horse named Shorty. We sure loved to ride him. He liked to run in races. He would cry if he happened to lose one. He liked parades too. We had on our farm 15-20 cows and calves, five mules, one horse. We grew corn, cotton, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and watermelons. A garden with just about everything in it.

In 1933 we bought Uncle Lewis Andrew's place about a mile from Grandpa's place. There was an old house on his place, a Negro family lived in it. One night someone shot and killed the husband through a window. There was a board nailed over the window. We kids would stop and look in the window. There was a bullet hole in one of the boards and a big spot of blood on the floor. We were kind of scared. Then of all things, Daddy converted the old house into a barn. We boys would try to get the chores done before it became dark.

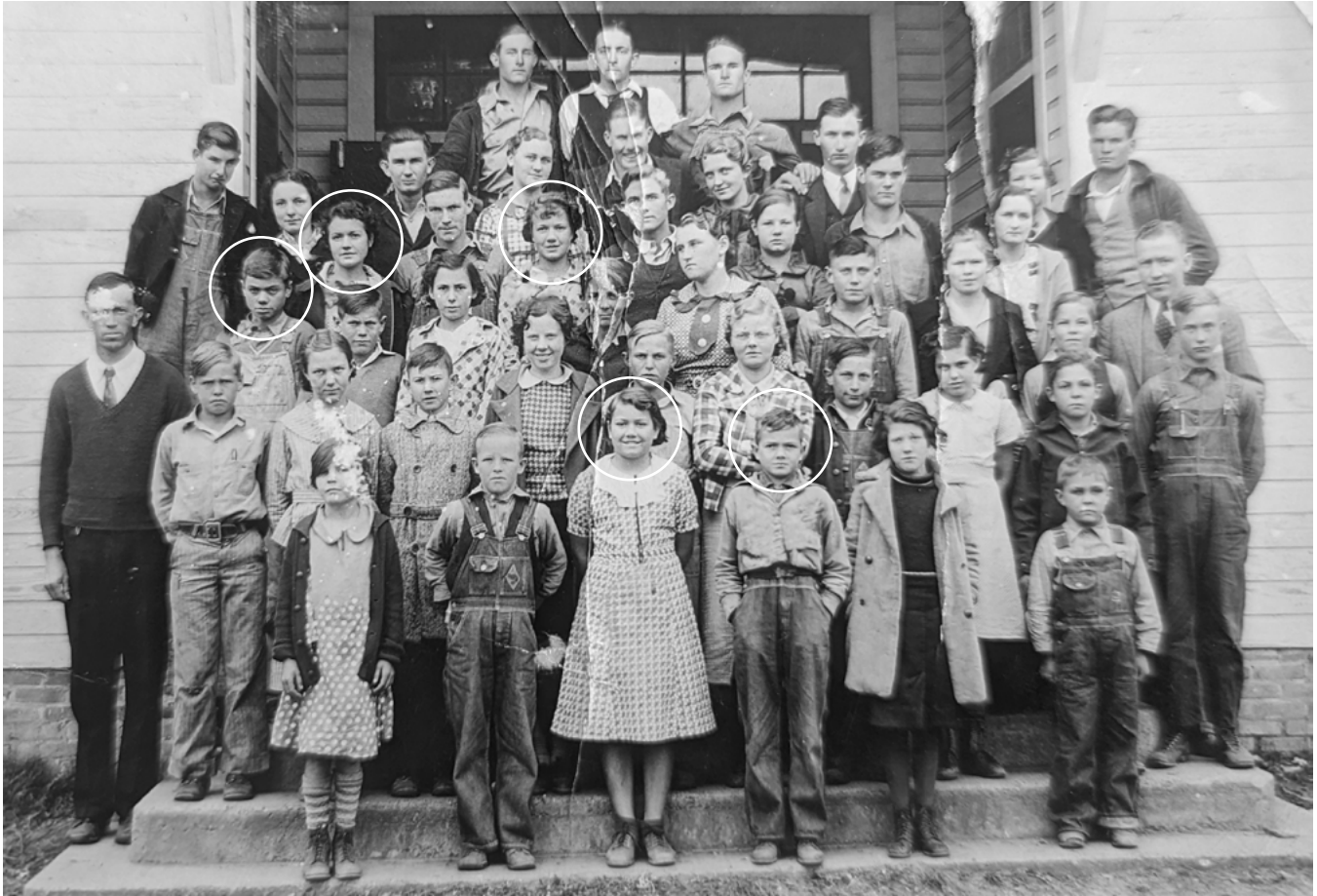
One time Vernon, my brother, and I were putting the cows to pasture for several days. They had been jumping the fence into the pea patch. Vernon and I followed them to the fence where they would jump. One of the young heifers made a run for the fence. Just as she jumped, Vernon threw a fencing tool. It hit her just below the ear and stuck in her head. She ran all the way back to the barn where we caught her. We pulled out the tool which went all the way to the bone. We thought she would die. Vernon and I gave her first aid. We were afraid to tell Daddy or anybody at first. Thank God she did not die.

I don't know if I mentioned our little black horse, Shorty. He could really run fast. I used to take a little

sugar and go into the pasture and catch him. Then I would bridle him, so we could round up the other four horses and mules. Vernon would ride him in parades and rodeos. Shorty just loved to show off. If another horse would outrun him, he would almost cry, it would hurt him so much.

It was a beautiful day on the 13th of October 1938. We arrived home about 5 p.m. as usual. We were rushed over to Grandpa's house. He'd had a heart attack. All of the sons and daughters were called home. If I can remember I believe he died in the night. At first I did not think Grandpa could be very sick. I was 15. He had always been so strong, never sick much. He did have skin cancer on the left side of his face, right at the temple, about two inches square. I didn't realize he was really dead until the funeral. Being able to see him in the casket he looked so peaceful there. I had always been his favorite grandson, I guess because we lived so close to them most of the time. When he or grandma would get sick, Mom and Dad were always there to help. Grandpa and I did everything together. He would take me with him in the buggy, shoot the sparrows out of the big chinaberry tree, water the horses, dig sprouts out of the field together or he would help me put on clothes when I was a little boy. He was a big man, 230 pounds. He





Munn Siblings at School, Left to Right: Melvin, Catherine, Hazel, Marjorie, and Jim

always had a sense of humor, joking. I shall never forget some of the jokes he told me. He was so much fun to be around, giving me nickels and dimes for candy.

So you can see why at the funeral it finally dawned on me that I would not ever see him again. They had to pull me away from the casket. I missed him so much for so long.



His Own Words (December 1972)

Well, this is Melvin H. Munn, Jr., 429 North First Street, Lompoc, California, attempting to give some kind of background of my life in as much as I am almost 50 years old. I hope that somebody will have something to at least remember me by and some memories of my life, and maybe some of my mother and dad.

I was born in Prescott, Arkansas, May 15, 1923. My mother and dad had resided in that area since they had met each other, probably around 1912. In that time they went together and finally married August 19, 1917. They moved around the area of Prescott, Arkansas in the county of Nevada. In the area of Prescott we were able to enjoy ourselves growing up-- the six kids, brothers and sisters of the family. The first born of the family was Vernon Wilson on September 25, 1918, Catherine on July 27, 1920, Hazel on March 24, 1922, myself on May 15, 1923, Marjorie on February 22, 1925, and Jim was born on January 17, 1927.

We grew up in the area of what is known as the Redland township, about six miles east of Prescott in the general area of the Liberty Nazarene Church and the Shady Grove Baptist Church. I would like to go back and try to

put the family through the years as best I can recall which may be a little before my memory, but from hearsay.

They lived six miles east of Prescott in what we used to call Grandpa Andrew's place which was James W. Andrews and Florence Andrews, Grandma and Grandpa Andrews. We lived in that area with them in different houses. We lived in the place called the Nelson(Erve) place as far back as I can remember.

We used to have the old cook stove in the kitchen. Mom used to be singing and preparing dinner and things like that and I used to get in the wood box and throw the wood around and, in general, tear the place up and play behind the stove because it was nice and warm back there. We used to have an old dog, though I can't remember his name. This same year I remember very distinctly I was only three. I remember that he had rabies or hydrophobia as we used to call it. Dad had to take him down in the back of the barn out in the woods because he had been bitten by this rabid dog and kill him. As I recall these things, it brings a great deal of memories and thoughts back into my heart to reminisce on and to pass on to my children.

As I recall, after this we lived on Grandpa Andrews place for the year 1927. That was when Jim was born. We lived there for about a year. Then we moved to the John Barham home; Grandma Barham or Grandma Munn's place, as she was my grandmother. We lived on their place for about a year. I guess I was five years old then.

I remember some things about that place. I know we had a mule there that died from what was known as sleeping sickness back in those days or encephalitis as it's technically known as. I remember we kids used to be real scared because he went blind and would stagger around. Finally after a few days they took him out and killed him and put him out of his misery. That was probably the best way to do it. The kids worked on the farm together and I remember we used to enjoy our dinners so much together. We used to call them dinner and then we'd have supper at night.

In 1929 we moved down below the Liberty Church on the Jim Burley place, about a mile or so below the parsonage at Liberty. We moved in there and farmed the land there for one year. I remember very distinctly, I think Jim was more than two years old. We had an old well in back of the house which was caved in, but it was always full of water especially in the early spring. We were working around that well and I remember Jim fell in it. The kids got all excited and Dad just got a broom handle and Jim grabbed it and pulled himself ashore real quick.

But anyway, these things are exciting for us to remember. In the year 1930, which was the very next year, we moved up to the parsonage of the Liberty Church which was where the minister usually lived. We were just next door to the church and we used to go there quite a bit. They used to have what was known as "all day dinner and singing on the ground," or actually it was a festival of singing all day and people would come in from all over the country and they would contribute their talents in one way or another with group singing or congregational-type singing, and we'd have dinner on the ground. Everyone would take the church pews and line them up outside and put the food on all of them on tablecloths and we'd go up and down the tables from one end to the other eating everybody's food, any you wanted and all you wanted. 'Course we used to have chicken a lot in those times. We really enjoyed these things. These are memories I'm real fond of.

I remember too that the church cemetery used to be right across the street and we used to be kind of frightened because we were that close to the cemetery. We didn't go near it at night at all, we were scared, but in the daytime it didn't bother us a bit. We were afraid of ghosts. This was the time too that the soda water truck would come around the corner of the cemetery and would have to slow down to make around the turn to go towards Tom Burns' store. I'd jump on the back and the girls and the boys would run along behind the truck and I would pass soda pop to them until we got enough for at least one bottle for each one of us. Finally the soda pop man caught us one day and put a stop to that real fast.

We used to go out in the woods in the back of the church and in front of it. There were big woods in the back of our house. The girls would build those little houses out of leaves and straw and pine needles, and we'd call them our houses. They'd go out there and fix us a little food and we'd eat out there. When we wanted to be mean to the girls we'd go tear up their "leaf" beds. 'Course then they'd get mad and run us off.

I had a cousin named Jewell Beirne and she lived up above the church on the other side and she liked to steal stuff out of her dad's store. So one day she said, "I'll steal a dime box of Garrett Snuff if you'll take half of it with me," to me. So she did. We got it out of the store and then we went underneath and we'd crawl back under the blocks under the house. She took half and I took the other half. We got so sick that we stayed under there for about two hours before we were able to come out. When we did come out we were green we were so sick. We went home about 1 o'clock and I was late for dinner and Mom said, "How come you're so late? Why are you late for dinner?" I said, "I'm sick." She said, "Don't you want to eat anything?" I said, "No, I'm too sick." She didn't know why I was sick.

In 1931 we moved to Grandpa's old place in the same house that Jim was born in. We lived on the farm and we had our cows. Grandpa had cows and let them run in the same bunch. We drove the cows to pasture every day, at least in the summertime when we had green pastures. We'd drive them about a mile to the pastures onto another place. We farmed two different areas in different directions from the house. We'd farm south and we'd go kind of east and north and farm this place about one mile and something one direction from the house and then the other was about three or four miles in the other direction.

We'd climb in the wagon, hook up the horses and we'd ride down and work all day. In the evening we'd eat our lunches in the little place where they kept the tools and drink water out of a cold spring down the hill a little way. We'd water the horses out of the little stream and the mules too. We cut hay and baled it, and cut sugar cane and

picked cotton. All these things we used to do. We used to get scared because we thought there were wild hogs in the bushes. Grandpa told us that there were wild hogs around and we were scared to death of them. We never did really see any. But our imaginations were really big. The girls went with us to chop cotton and dig weeds or whatever it was that needed doing. The boys would plow if we didn't have to hoe or chop cotton.

Vernon used to be really mean to me. Every time I had a birthday he'd beat up on me two or three times. He used to get a delight out of giving me not just one whipping for my birthday but several. Once or twice during the week he'd give me a whipping. One day we were riding down to the field just me and Vernon in the wagon. We were sitting on a board on the wagon. He was sitting on one end and I was on the other. He did something to me that I didn't like so I thought I'd get even. I jumped off the board and he fell off the wagon and fell between the wheels on the other side. He got run over and bruised his back and leg up real bad and skinned him all around. I felt really bad about it but I felt like I got even for a few things.

Then we moved to what was known as Grandpa James Wesley Andrew's brother's (Louis) place and we lived there until 1938. We pretty well grew up there. We went to school at the Redland school. We always had to walk through the rain and the snow, it didn't matter the weather, we always walked the three to three and a half miles to school. When we'd come home at night we'd do our chores and feed the horses and mules. The girls milked the cows back in those days. We had milk maids not milk men. Out in this country they've never heard of any such thing as milk maids, they're all milk men, so we thought we were distinctive in this way. The girls had to do all the milking. The boys fed the horses and cattle. They'd take the milk and separate it and make cream and then we'd have what they called "blue-john" milk. Then we had some whole milk that we'd keep over and drink. We fed the rest to hogs and the pigs. We really enjoyed the animals because we had lots of animals on the farm. We had horses and mules, etc.

Every year we had a rodeo. This one little horse that we had was such a good horse, but boy, everytime the rodeo time would come around he would get really excited. We'd always put new shoes on him and he seemed to know that the rodeo was coming up. There was a big parade for the rodeo. Vernon used to ride him. He used to think he was real hot stuff-- even the horse thought so.

In 1937 Grandpa Andrews died of a heart attack at age 83. Some of the memories I have of him are very wonderful. We'd go and dig in the fields together (I was his favorite grandson, he said.) He used to tell me all kinds of stories about his life and the lives of his friends around him. We used to do this sometimes for hours. We'd go dig for 15 minutes and then we'd tell stories for an hour or so. He was a great storyteller. When he died, I really didn't think he ever would, I thought that he was immortal. I found out naturally that he wasn't. But I was 15 years old.

One afternoon we came home from school (we were going to Bluff City, Arkansas to school then.) We'd go on the bus for about 20 miles and when we got back that afternoon we went over to Grandpa's house and he was dead. He'd died of a heart attack that day. I thought it was just impossible for it to happen to him. I thought that he would live forever. At the funeral it just seemed like a part of my life was being taken from me. I just didn't want to part with him. It seemed like something that I could never let happen to me. I thought that he would be with me forever.

A year or so later, I believe in 1939, we all decided we wanted to move to Arizona. Dad had already gone and looked the country over and he decided it would be best for us to pack our little belongings and move. So we sold everything and moved to Arizona. Don Cox, who used to live in Arkansas, was there. We got reacquainted with him. Dad leased some land from the Indian Reservation and farmed it in cotton, hat, and some vegetables, but mostly cotton and hay. That was in 1939 that we left and traveled to Arizona.

The trip was really interesting. We went through Texas. We went on Saturday night and went into Texas and spent a night in Fort Worth with Willie Andrews and his family which is a brother to my mother. He would be James Wesley Andrew's boy. The next night we went to Kidland and spent the night with Aunt Pearl Hines, a sister to my mother. At one time she was Pearl Montgomery while married to Roy Montgomery.

We traveled the next day into New Mexico-- Fine Lawn, New Mexico. This was February, it would be around the 20th of February. There was snow all over the ground in Silver City and Fine Lawn. We stopped there and it was already late and we didn't have a place to stay. We wanted to get a motel but the motel at Fine Lawn was closed up. So we went over and asked the caretaker if he would open it so we could have a place that night. He said, "Well it's closed for the winter, but I'll open it up for



17 year old Melvin



17 year old Melvin

you.” Us kids heard a lot of noise outside in the night and the next morning we found out that some animals, bears or wolves or something had had a big fight out in the street in front of the cabin. We thought that was really something to see blood on the snow.

The next day we went into Arizona. We went through Alpine. Several years later I found out that my wife was born and raised in Alpine. She wasn't there at the time we went through. I think she was in Silver City at that time. I didn't know she was in Silver City when we went down that way and went through there either. We traveled all around Alpine and went down to McNary and went through Sholow and over to Snowflake. I think we spent the next night in either Snowflake or Taylor. The next day we went through St. Johns, Springerville into Wenslow and Flagstaff. We turned off and went down through Oak Creek Canyon down by Sedona, Clarksville and Prescott. We thought we'd never seen anything as beautiful in our lives as that Oak Creek Canyon. We went down and spent

the night in Prescott and we thought that the country was so beautiful up in there, and we hadn't seen any part of the desert at that time, so we thought it was all pretty. We got down around Phoenix the next day and began to realize that there was something besides mountains and beautiful timber land. It was desert but it also had its enjoyable features.

We went on to Coolidge where Don Cox's father lived, John Cox. We stayed several days there. We went to a motel and stayed there long enough for Dad to go to Parker, Arizona, in the Colorado River Valley. He and John Cox went down and leased some land for us. We went through this financial company and were able to arrange for equipment and things to farm with, tractors and plows and seed. We were able to make all these arrangements. Dad came back and we all loaded everything into the truck and went down to Parker, Arizona, on the Colorado River near the Parker Dam above Blythe and below Needles on the Indian Reservation there. We set up our farming there. I guess it was a couple hundred acres of leased land and leased water.

This little town of Parker only has a population of about 1000 people. Not too many there and the Indians down on the Reservation there are close. It was the Mojave Reservation right alongside the Colorado River. It reached all the way down to Blythe so it was a real long valley. It had lakes down in there and we used to be able to go fishing on the river. We used to catch a lot of catfish. We used to watch the Indians chase and catch some wild horses even on that day, and that was only 1939. Even some of the white men used to do it too.

One time when we lived down in Parker, Don Cox, who I used to work for once in a while, had these big four-row cultivators and tractors. He and Dad came up the road one day when I was plowing with a big four-row tractor and Don said, "You know, you could plow a lot more cotton if you'd take a big chew of this day's work." So I said, "Well, I don't think so, but I'll give her a try anyway." So I took a big bite of that day's work and took off down the field with that tractor. I made it around the end about a

quarter of a mile away. Dad and Don were standing and talking and Don said, "How did you make out?" I said, "I did pretty good. I carried four rows down and brought eight rows back." He nearly died because he knew what I meant about that. I'd plowed up about four rows.

I went to Boulder Dam after that and worked up there for a few days on what was the Arizona Stillway. It washed out and had a big hole in it about 22 feet deep and 100 feet long. We were making repairs down in the bottom of the tunnel with reinforced steel and jack hammers. I worked there just a few days.

Then I went on down to Henderson Nevada, where Sterling White was working. My old buddy was down there and he helped me get a job there. He was an instrument man on a survey crew, and I was going to work for him as a rod and chain man. I was working and ran into the old boss that was with me up at Boulder Dam. Boy, he blew his stack when he saw me and said, "Where have you been? You walked off the job and never said a thing to anybody!" I said, "Yeh, that's right, I'm sorry about that." Sterling and I used to work down at the magnesium plant there at Henderson. We'd go out at night. Sterling was really bad about gambling his money away. We'd get paid on a Friday night and by Saturday morning he wouldn't have anything left. I used to have to loan him a little money to get him through the week. It was too much of a gamble. I always figured it was a losing proposition. We worked there about three months. A little while after that war was declared, December 7th. Sterling wanted to enlist in the service, so he went back home and enlisted in the service. I worked a little while longer and then went back to Parker.

Oh, I wanted to tell you about an experience I had with a friend I used to know down in Parker too. We were out in front of this railroad-pass casino one night. We started out with about 25 silver dollars in our hand and we started flipping dollars waiting on the bus out there. He started winning on me and got me down to about six dollars. I was getting pretty scared I was going to go broke on that

deal. We started flipping again and I got back up to within one dollar of all his money. Then he gave up and said, "No, that's all." He wanted to stop before he went broke. So that's the way it stood.

I went to work at Postum, Arizona, that's where the Japanese concentration camp was during World War II. They were building this camp up down there and I went to work for this guy for a while in a little construction. After this place was finished, I went to work as a motor-pool dispatcher. I used to dispatch the cars out to the Japanese drivers. First, I was working on the evening shift, four until twelve. Then I had a little run-in with one of the Japanese policemen there. He was about 6'3" and weighed 250 pounds. He was pretty good size for a Japanese. He wanted an extra car because they didn't have enough for patrols that night. I said, "I'm sorry, but the boss man says you can't get any cars." He grabbed me up by the collar and lifted me up til my toes barely touched the ground, and he said, "Listen buddy, I'll be back in about five minutes and



Melvin as a young Marine

I'll have enough policemen to take this place." I said, "You go right ahead." He came back a few minutes later, but in the meantime, I ran over to the boss' and got a 38 pistol from him. He told me to fire one under their feet and one over their heads and then see what happened after that. So they came back, about 15 of them, over this dusty road. There was about six inches of dust on this road. I told them to halt and they wouldn't. They said they were going to come over and take a car for themselves. So I fired one under their feet and one over their heads and all I could see was a cloud of dust and the Japanese running. After that we put a soldier on the gate with a rifle and I didn't have to worry about it after that.

We went ahead and enjoyed Christmas with the family there in Parker. That was in 1942. January 11, 1943, I decided I'd go down and enlist in the service somewhere. That was just after the war was declared. So I went on down to Phoenix, rode the train down. Got in there and walked into the Navy recruiting place and said, "I want to join the Navy." He said, "I'm sorry about that, but we're full up right



Melvin in jail for eating hard tack

now. We don't need anymore for the Navy. We're full and that's the quota for the Navy." So I said, "Holy mackerel." He said, "Why don't you step across the hall. I think the Marines can use a few good men." I said, "Forget it." But when I stepped out in the hall, I thought-- well, I'll give her a try anyway. So I went over there and, I'm telling you in two hours I was on my way. They signed me up so fast it would make your head swim. And would you believe, I was put in charge of the troops going to San Diego? That was before I ever was a leader, they made me one. I took the troops over there that night, and got there about two o'clock the next morning and they put us to bed. We then went ahead and finished boot camp. Later on, it must have been about May before I got squared around, I was up at Camp Pendleton. There we took our advanced training in artillery, 75's, 105's and 155's.

On July 1st we boarded a ship overseas. I never will forget that ship we were on. It was a garbage scowl called Blume Fontane. It was a garbage ship, no doubt about it. It stunk from one end to the other.

We went on to this place, New Caledonia in the Pacific. We were there for a few days in separation from camp. They asked me if I wanted to join Carlson's Raiders and I told them to drop dead. I went to Tonga. It's a quiet little island in the Pacific. They even have a queen there and she came aboard ship while we were in the harbor. The girls put on a little hula hula dance and music for us.

Now I understand that Tonga Island is quite prominent in the Mormon Church. It has quite a few members on that island. In fact, about half of them, I think, are members of the Church. We went on to New Zealand. It was a very enjoyable adventure down there in the war. Lots of nice looking girls, plenty of food, lots of mutton to eat, lots of that diet ice cream that they serve down there, lots of good old hot beer and wine and boiler makers and things like that. We enjoyed our stay there.

I will never forget while I was down there, we were loading the ship down there and the warrant officer came and asked



Melvin as a young Marine

me and four or five of my buddies, "Hey, I need someone in the rear echelon. While these guys are down in the war zone, we're going to bring up the rear. We're going to load everything up in the camp and put aboard the ship and take it to the forward base. I need about five good men and I'm giving you first choice to volunteer." He didn't have to give me a second choice. I took him up on the first one. We went down and were loading the ship one day and the first thing I knew, Why we didn't have very much to eat for dinner one day. Some truck driver in a warehouse had run over a bunch of this hard tack and there were cans rolling all over the floor and boxes were smashed.

Me and my buddy, Paul Cook, a Mormon from Utah, went over there to get us a couple cans of hard tack candy to eat during lunch hour. We picked up three cans apiece and started to walk back to where the rest of the guys were, to the sergeant who had given us permission to do it. This Lt. Marine walked up between us both and said, "Don't say

anything that might be used against you." I said, "What's the charge?" He said, "Pilfering government property." Would you believe I did about three months on that little deal? Cost me a stripe and \$33--\$11 a can for that hard tack I never did eat. That was quite a little experience. I didn't spend too much time in jail. Spent about ten or eleven days in jail out of thirty, then got out of it.

We got aboard the ship and shoved off a few days before Christmas. We went to Hilo Harbor, Hawaii. That's where our base was to be for rest camp and recuperation for the next hit which probably would be Saipan, and eventually it was. We were stationed at this place called Camp Taraou on the big island of Hawaii in the Gilbert group. It was one of those big fast rushes they made and took the island in 72 hours and then moved out. The outfit was there on the big island. There was a division of us-- a second marine division sitting there waiting for the next rush.

In the Marines, you're supposed to do your mess duty, usually within the first few months you're in the service. I'd gotten away without having to do it for about a year but it finally caught up with me. I was put in charge of the garbage. I was what was called a GI man-- garbage inspector; for thirty days I was in charge of the detail. I had a big operation of my own. We had a big room and kept the place disinfected. We'd drop all the garbage in there for about three or four days, and this guy from the health farm would come in and pick all this garbage up and haul it off. He'd dump the cans out and we'd set them down and line them up in front of the mess hall-- it was kind of a field operation. There was a kid I was breaking in that day, the 31st of March 1944, to take my place the next day. So I went out to draw some gasoline out of a barrel. We had some pretty hot stuff, I think it was aviation gasoline. We'd pour a little in these barrels and strike a match to them. It was the only way we had to sterilize them.

I brought the gas back and the wind was blowing and blew the gas back on me while I was filling the can and it kind of saturated my arm. I poured some in one can and when I looked up this kid was about to strike a match. I said, "Don't

strike a match around here till we get all done, and then we'll light it all at one time." So I started throwing some gas in the second can and I looked up and he threw a match in the can and the whole place went up around there.

I was pretty well afire, so I started screaming and I started to run. I was running away from the mess hall. I took about three steps and I decided this was the wrong thing to do; something told me I'd better stop. So I hit the ground rolling, and when I did I took all the hide off me from one side to the other. I was peeled just about like a, I don't know what. I was still burnin and this old sergeant came out of the mess hall, grabbed a blanket somewhere in there and ran out and threw this blanket over me. He put the fire out and took me to the hospital.

It was a field-type operation with a big old tent over it. I was in there about ten days and all of a sudden one day the doctor came around and said, "Well, you're going to live." I said, "No kidding, I'm glad to hear that." He said, "Don't be funny, boy." I said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "You have been in a state of shock for ten days or so."

I'll never forget when they first pulled the bandages off me after they'd been on there for about ten days. They'd pull about three or four inches of bandage off and I'd pass out. They'd put the smelling salts under my nose, and then they'd pull a few more inches off and I'd pass out. This went on for a couple of hours till they finally got all the wraps off me. Anyway in a few days they took me over to this other hospital.

My hand was in pretty bad shape. My thumb was somewhat frozen in one position. They decided they were going to try to break this thumb down and put a little physical therapy on it. So they started breaking that right thumb down, and I thought I was going to die. I about fainted every time they took hold of it, so they finally gave up on that. I stayed there for a few days and then went over to this army hospital down around Hilo and stayed there a few days.

They started trying to do something with me for the first time. They put these saline dressings on me. They are kind of a baby-wet sheet or something underneath me; and then they'd pour this salt-water dressing all over



Melvin as a young Marine in New Zealand

me and douse me with some more. I was laying on this cotton-pickin' sheet all day long, stinging and itching and complaining and playing pinochle. This went on for several days. Then they moved me over to the Tenth Naval Hospital in Pearl Harbor.

That was the first plane trip I ever took in my life. A C-47 flew me from Hilo to Pearl Harbor. Everytime we went through a wind, that thing would drop about ten feet, and I'd put my hands up to the ceiling to push the ceiling away from my face. That went on all the way across the islands. I was glad when we landed. I was in the hospital from around the first day of May until about the first day of July. They took me out of there and put me aboard the ship and started back toward the States. A few days after we got out away from Pearl they told us we were going to land in Seattle, Washington. That was a good deal because I'd been corresponding with a gal who lived up there. My brother had sent me her picture, name, and address, and I'd been writing to her. Boy, this was going to be all right—going to have me a gal friend before I even landed.



Fern newly married to Melvin

We got there about the twenty-fifth day of July. We landed and went on down to the Seattle Navy Hospital. I was there for a couple of months and had a couple of minor operations while I was in there.

I did run into this gal while I was there. She was a big Swede. She had a girl friend that I didn't know was her girl friend, and I was going out with one of them one night and the other the next night. One said her boyfriend's name was Mel. They got together on some of their notes and that was the end of the line for me. So I had to get off there and start looking again. I said, "To heck with this, I'm going to go down to Arizona. I've got a chance to get some leave." So I told the old captain, "I want to leave this place. I want to transfer to California." He said, "Okay." So I got a 30-day convalescent leave and got out on the highway and started hitchhiking. I hitchhiked on down through

California and got down to Parker, I guess, around the 7th or 8th of October. I finally got home.

Incidentally, I did visit my brother up in Bremerton between dates. I went down to Milwaukee, Oregon, which was a little place outside of Portland and spent a couple of days there with my sister. She had a couple of girl friends that were kind of nice.

While I was there my brother was telling me all about this girl. He was only 17 years old and was kind of in between getting in the service and going to school. He was telling me about this girlfriend he had. I said, "Well, take me down and introduce me to her." He said, "I'm not going to introduce her to any Marine." I said, "What do you mean by that?" "I've heard about you guys," he said. So I talked him into it and I went down there and he showed me who she was.

She was working in this supermarket but Jim wouldn't introduce me to her. A couple of days later I was with this other girl walking down the street towards this dance hall, and I looked up and here came Fern with one of her boyfriends out of this dance hall and started to walk down the sidewalk. They saw me coming, so I just kind of stepped over in front of them and blocked the way. She was with Jim. I said, "This is the end of the line for you, boy. I want an introduction to this girl." So he introduced me to her.

I went on out that night and got pretty well oiled up. The next morning I got up kind of late and went down driving around town about eleven o'clock. It was Sunday. I saw these girls driving around town down the street in this little old coupe Plymouth. I looked up and it was my wife, Fern, and some of her girlfriends. Unbeknown to me, they'd made a \$5 bet that Fern couldn't get a date with me, so she blew her horn and I wheeled around and went back down the street and stopped her. I said something to her and asked her if she'd like to go out that night and she said, "Yeah." I found out later that she couldn't refuse because of this bet. I should have gone into cahoots with these girls and picked up a couple of dollars on the side.



Melvin and Fern celebrating his last night in the military

We went out that night and we kind of enjoyed ourselves. After we'd been out for a while I made another date with her and we went out a couple nights later. Two or three nights later I proposed to her and she accepted, naturally. We stayed around Parker and enjoyed ourselves tremendously for a few days. We went out and took a lot of pictures and saw a lot of sights. 'Course I knew that country around there real well. We were able to get around and see and do a lot of things and enjoy ourselves quite a bit.

I went on back off leave around the end of October or the first of November and went back to my destination which was the Long Beach Naval Hospital. I was in there for a few days. They said, "Well, you need a little more recuperation," so they sent me over to this dilapidated, broken down Arrowhead Springs Hospital which was used for a resort before the war. And the room they gave me was about a \$40 pre-war room. They had a cottage there for Dorothy

Lamore that she used to keep. The stars used to drift in and out of there. Not too much, of course while we were there. But it was quite a sight to behold. It was quite a hospital-- had a couple of large swimming pools. We had a lot of fun while we were there. I met some pretty nice boys. Naturally. I didn't meet any girls, I already had one.

Then I went down to San Bernadino a few days later and picked out a nice little diamond ring, nothing real big. I took it back to Fern one weekend to make it kind of official.

I went back to Arrowhead Springs and they shipped me down to this place-- Corona Naval Hospital outside of Corona, California. While I was in there they proceeded to do some more operations on me. They worked on a skin graft. The week before I got married, which was about the second week in December, they went in and they cut a flap on my left side-- about a three-inch piece

of skin on three sides and put a piece of gauze on the underside to see if it would grow without the the tissue on the bottom. They left the graft on for a few days and found out it would grow all right.

Anyway, it was there when I went home to get married. So when we got married I had this big piece of skin hanging loose-- not exactly, but it was cut and being prepared for the skin graft. Anyway, that was the way we spent our honeymoon. It didn't bother us too much though. I think I was there for four or five days in Parker. We took a motel and we enjoyed ourselves a lot. We went to a lot of places. The only trouble was, I couldn't get my wife to stop working long enough to have a honeymoon. She was the industrious type. We had to kind of catch-as-catch-can, you know. I was always a pretty good wrestler anyway. It worked out pretty good. We had a lot of fun.

On the weekend I took off and went back to Corona. I got back over there and the old Doctor says, "Well, you might as well have stayed over there because the day after tomorrow you're going to go back for a four-day weekend for Christmas." So sure enough I came back to the hospital for two days and then took off for a four day leave. Only trouble of it was I met some of my old friends outside of Parker, about fifty miles, and by the time we got to Parker I was well oiled up. She didn't let me in the door, so I went over to Mom and Dad's who also lived in Parker. I kind of cleaned up, took a bath and relaxed for a while. Picked up Dad's car and went back over to the house and picked her up over to her mother's and went out and had a long talk. But anyway, we had a lot of fun that weekend and then I went on back.

I went back to California and it was raining cats and dogs all the way across the desert and we were running into washes all over the road. This old boy, Rick, I was hitchhiking with was driving about 80 or 90 miles an hour. Boy, I'm telling you, was I ever glad to see Riverside come up. I was through with that fast ride.



Fern and Melvin newly married

Well, I went on and eventually they completed the operation. They sewed my hand to my side and started the skin growing from my stomach to my hand and they left it that way for about two or three more weeks. Two weeks I guess it was. I stuck pretty close to the sack with that situation.

Eventually I'd go back to Corona. Finally they cut me loose when I went back over to Parker. In the meantime, Fern moved to Phoenix and went to work for a telephone company down there. I guess it was Bell. Eventually I got her to leave Phoenix and come out to the Corona Hospital where I was. We rented a little place there. Kind of a kitchen privilege type thing from this little woman everyone called Mrs. Abernathy. We stayed there a few months until I got out of the service.

After that I went down to Terminal Island and stayed for a while while she was still up at Corona. I was down there a few days when they were terminating me from the service because of my hand and the disability I was

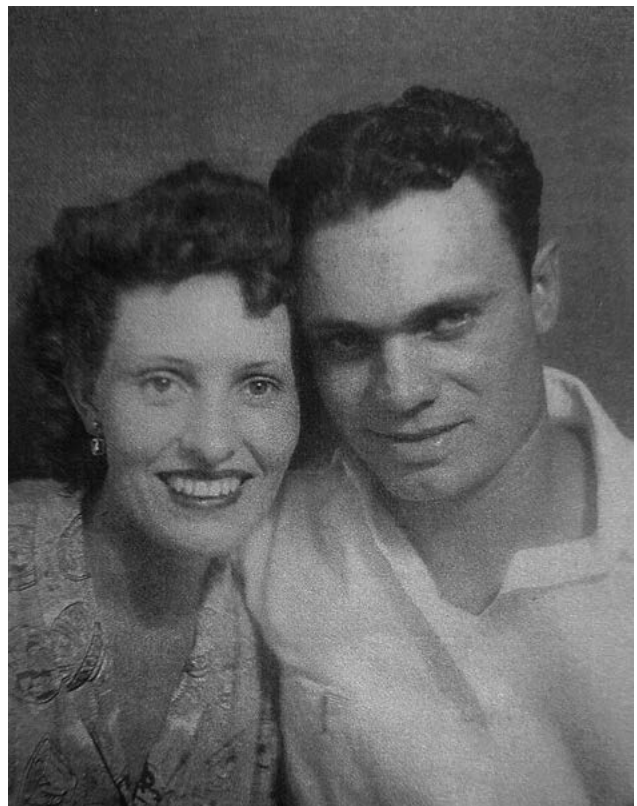
getting. Then they eventually sent me to San Diego and I was mustered out of San Diego after about a week down there. We were going to celebrate that night. I went back to Corona and picked up Fern and took a bus over to Los Angeles. Thought we were going to kind of do the town that night. I never will forget that either. We had quite a time. Went down to the Paladium, Brown Derby, and a few places like that.

But you know, I got the shock of my life a few years later. I gave her what I thought was a nice little corsage that night in Los Angeles and bought her a gardenia. I found out it nearly killed her because she didn't like gardenias. One time a few months later I bought her another gardenia and we went out and I said, "What did you do with the corsage?" She said, "Oh, I forgot and left it in the refrigerator." I found out then I'd been wasting my cotton-pickin' money. She didn't even like them, couldn't stand the smell of them. Anyway, that was the last of the gardenias; had to switch over to orchids. Anyway, we went on to Parker and her folks I believe lived there. Yeah, they still lived there in Parker and her dad was working there.

I'm going to have to back up here and tell you something. Man, I can't let this go by. The night that I proposed to her was on the 12th day of October 1944. I got everything all ready that day and said, "Boy, I'm going to really give her a good one. I'm going to give her the surprise of her life." So I took her down to this canal at a place where the head gate splits going to Parker and Rock Dam. Along about ten o'clock at night I took her out in the middle of this canal across this big gate which is a cement gate about 12 or 14 inches wide. I walked her out across this tumultuous waterfall coming through this gate. If we'd ever fallen in there, you'd never have seen the likes of us again. But I walked out across this thing and I got her out in the middle of it and I said, "By the way, will you marry me?" She said, "Yes." I don't know whether she was afraid not to, but anyway that was it. She accepted without any fight or anything like that. I thought that it might be kind of important at this time to remember the time and the

place of proposal of marriage to such a beautiful girl. To also know that it was a sure bet.

Okay, now we'll get back to where we left off. We're back in Parker, Arizona, again after I got out of the service. I was discharged on September 5, 1945. We stayed around a few days there in Parker and then went on down to her sister, Mary Montierith's in Safford, Arizona. We took a bus through Phoenix on up to Safford. Took our little belongings with us. I got a job working at some mine in Morenci, Arizona. The Morenci copper mine was a big open-pit operation. We stayed there and spent Christmas there. We had a pretty good Christmas. We had quite a time. Eventually I bought a little old model-A Ford Coupe. I had another model A before that one, before I went into the service. We bought a new set of tires to put on it and then the cotton-pickin' mine went on strike in about March. They said there was a good possibility they'd be on strike for three or four months. I didn't want to be indebted to the company store so we



Fern and Melvin newly married

picked up and moved to Arvin, California where my dad was living at that time.

I drove the old model-A Ford all the way. It took us a while. We stopped off in Parker on the way to visit her folks a little bit. She was six months pregnant at the time with Harold, and by the time we got to Bakersfield, one side of her face was completely paralyzed. We went in the next day to see this chiropractor. He worked with her a day or two and got her face back to normal. We moved into my mother and dad's house for a few days till we could find a place to live.

We lived there in 1946 in a little old apartment on Haven Drive in Arvin, California. About that time the missionaries started coming around and getting kind of nosey. Me not being a member of the Church, why they started slipping in there trying to convert me without me knowing it, but I caught up with them. I never will forget this time, Wendell Barker, who was a good friend of ours, finally got the missionaries in our home and they started teaching me "the lessons." After the first lesson, I pulled out a cigarette and lit up and I thought of ol' Wendell's eyes were going to pop out of his head. I never did figure it out till it was all over and my wife said, "You're not supposed to smoke in front of the elders like that!" I said, "Well, why didn't you say so? I didn't know that." Eventually a year or so later I joined the Church, but that was up in Bakersfield, so we won't talk about that now.

On the 25th day of June, 1946, Harold was born. I wanted a boy and course that's what he was. And it all worked out real good. I was working on this place, Digeorgia's Fruit Farm there. They had all kinds of big ol' grapes, vegetables, fruit and what not. I worked there about a year, then I went to work for this place called Frazier-Wright Company in Bakersfield. Better than 90 cents an hour at the fruit farm. I worked there for about a year, then I went to work for some construction outfit building a steam plant outside of Bakersfield. This was 1947-48. Cheryl was born on the 18th day of February, 1948. That made us a boy and a girl which was working out all right.



Fern and Melvin with Harold and Cheryl

On the 14th day of May some more missionaries came around. All this time, course, I was being contacted by the various missionaries coming around. These two missionaries, one's name was Kidman and I can't remember the other one. I'd been out the night before and got pretty well oiled up and had a big headache on Sunday morning. I wasn't feeling too good, and I was kind of disgusted with life in general as far I was concerned. The missionaries came on that day—the two lady missionaries. They said, "Brother Munn, why don't we take your cigarettes away from you and we'll give you a couple packages of gum to replace them." "Sounds like a pretty good idea, I'll take you up on that," I said. They did and they got on the phone and called the group leader and arranged for a baptism that night—one day before my 25th birthday. That was May 14th, my birthday was on the 15th. I was baptized that day and confirmed at the font side. There was a little old lady, I remember, about 80 years old baptized about the same time. The gospel comes to both the old and the young.

Before too long I had a calling in the church. You know it doesn't take them very long! I was ordained to the office of a Priest and put in as Sunday School Superintendent. By May 14th or 15th of the next year I was ordained to the office of an Elder in Bakersfield. We had already moved to Bakersfield. We lived on March Street in a veteran's housing project on 34th Street. So we were all ready to go to the Temple on the first of September. So we took off for the Temple. We went to Arizona and visited around. We went to visit Fern's folks over in Safford. Then we buzzed on up to northern Arizona, whipped on by the Marble Canyon and crossed the Colorado. Then we went on up to Kanab and the Kiabab Forest up to St. George. We visited Zion's went to St. George on the 14th day of September and had our endowments in the St. George Temple. We were sealed for time and all eternity which was one of the moments in my life that I've cherished above all else. Ethelyn and Gary were born under the covenant as they weren't born until later. So if we live our lives worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ we will all once again be joined together in the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father as a family, along with our grandchildren and their children. This was 1949.

On the 31st day of December, 1950, Ethelyn was born, just under the wires in time for income-tax deduction. So then, we moved into a new house which we had purchased near the Bakersfield Third Ward, which was only an empty lot at that time. We had bought one close to where the church was going to be. Moved there in 1951. About November 28, 1951, Gary was born. That was our little family. We were happy to have our two boys and our two girls. We didn't particularly care to have any more at that time.

And we will revert back here a little bit. After I was working over there on this construction job, in 1948, I think it was, I went to work for Gardner and Weikel over on 28th and H Street in Bakersfield. Anyway, I worked there for about five years. Then I went to work at the airport for about six months. Then I went to work for Adam's Motor

Company before the old man died. I even sold milk one time for the Golden State Milk Company. Then I went to work for Kern County Airport out at Minterfield as a field manager for a while. Then I went to work for Lockheed Aircraft Company when we were building the U-2, there on North Road back in 1956-67. After that project was finished I more or less was unemployed for a couple of weeks and then I went to work for 3-Way Chevrolet in Bakersfield and worked there for a year or so. Along about that time was when I'd come over to Vandenberg where Colman Christiansen and his wife were living in a nearby place called Arroyo Grande. They asked us to come over and pay them a visit, and at the same time took a look at the situation at Vandenberg. We saw they had some openings there for automotive mechanics and I put in for the job there. A couple months later they told me I could go to work in Vandenberg along about the 22nd day of May, if I wanted to.

Gary was just born. Before Gary was born I was put in as Elder's Quorum President of the First Quorum of Elders



Melvin with young Harold and Cheryl



Melvin and Fern with young Harold and Cheryl

in the Bakersfield Stake, just after the stake was created. Then I was called in the Stake Mission for a while and was ordained to the office of a Seventy and I worked under Cornwall who was a famous member of the Church as far as people go. That name was quite memorable. I worked with him for a while. Along about the time I thought I was going to settle down and make a pretty good missionary, they asked me to go to work in the Bishopric. I was under Warren Wilson who was the Bishop at the time. So I worked with him a few years. When he was released, N. Brent Richards was put in as Bishop and I was also retained as his first counselor. I stayed in that position for about six years in Bakersfield.

Then we moved to Vandenberg and Lompoc. I was a Quorum advisor for the Aaronic Priesthood for two or three months and the next thing I knew I was called back into the Bishopric under Don Wallace.

During all this time we were having a lot of fun going fishing. We'd take our vacations and go to Arizona. Then we found this place called Camp Nelson outside of Bakersfield. In 1954, when I was working at Pontiac, my wife threw all the kids in the car (I didn't get a vacation that year), and drove all the way up to Camp Nelson herself. It was about 85 miles up in the mountains. They had a little trip up there all by themselves and Harold caught his first fish. I think he was about nine years old. Caught his limit every day while they were there and the rest of the kids learned how to fish. We had a little 9' x 9' tent that we used; a little pyramid tent that we used for a few years. We later got a larger tent. We used to make Camp Nelson some way or another. We enjoyed many beautiful and wonderful days in the Sequoia National Forest up in that area.

We never could forget the Van Camps. We have to bring them in on our lives because the first night we moved into Lompoc[...] they were here to greet us with a hot dinner



Left to Right Harold, Cheryl and Ethie

the first thing. They were standing by to help us unload our stuff. Ruth brought in a spaghetti dinner. While we were unloading, why she was getting it on the table. Before we could leave to go back to Bakersfield, she had us come in and sit down and enjoy her wonderful food. She's always been such a great cook, you know. The only thing, I was a little disappointed in, was she didn't have any ice cream. She makes real good ice cream.

In 1961 I made a remark to the Bishop one day that they should have some good missionaries—stake missionaries, that we ought to be looking around at the members to see who to call to be put in as stake missionaries. The Bishop said, "That sounds like a real good idea, how would you like to be a stake missionary?" I opened my mouth that time when I shouldn't have.

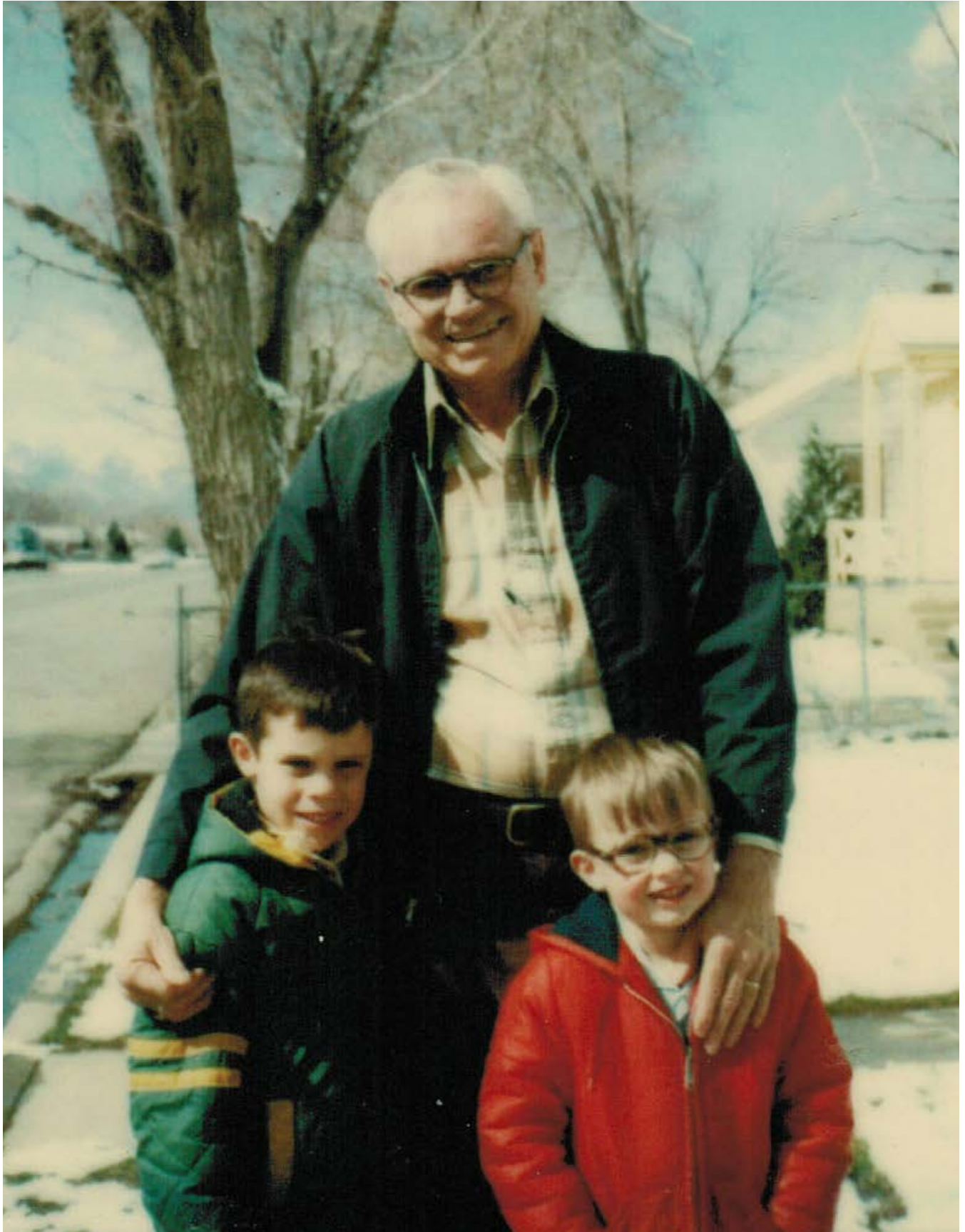
I'd been born and raised in Southwest Arkansas and I'd

not been back there for about 22 years and the family hadn't been there, so I thought it would be a good idea to take them back and show the kids what the country was like back there. This was in 1962. In the great hospitality of the Southern people, the good food and the beautiful country, we had a good time. We took our trip back by way of Arizona to visit Fern's folks. Went down to El Paso, down to Juarez for about a few hours, and we camped outside of El Paso up on a hill toward Carlsbad, New Mexico. Then we went to Ft. Worth and camped outside in a little park. They had the biggest mosquitoes I've ever seen in my life and the biggest bugs too. They can have Texas and all their big things like bugs. We went on into Arkansas.

We really enjoyed the trip. Although Fern had never been back there and she didn't realize how hospitable the people were back there, when we returned to California, she said it was one of the most wonderful trips she had ever taken. And I felt good for that; I was glad that she enjoyed herself.



Left to Right Harold, Melvin, Ethie, Gary, Fern, Cheryl



Fern and Melvin newly married

A little after that, the next year I think it was, the Santa Maria Stake was formed, It was split off of the San Luis Obispo Stake. I was in the mission presidency by the time the stake was split. They pulled me out of that position and put me on the High Council of the new stake.

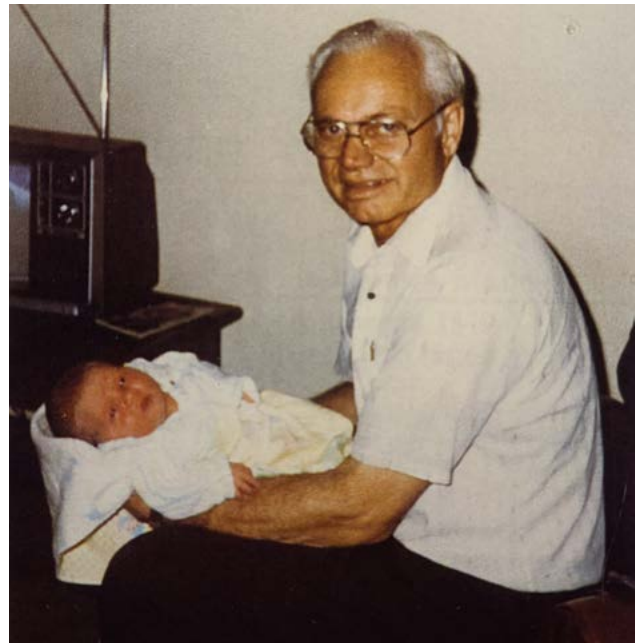
In the meantime, I think it was 1965 in December, Harold left on his mission for Argentina. He went to BYU for three months to the Language School prior to going down there for 24 months. Then he returned on the 17th day of December, 1967. We picked him up at the Los Angeles airport. He flew in about three or four hours late on the Peruvian airline. We were scared to death that something had gone wrong because the plane was coming late but everything traditionally was fine.

Cheryl was going to BYU and met her husband, Tony Cox, whom she married to and now have two wonderful grandchildren, Kimberly and Jennie. Her baby new baby should be born anytime.

Ethelyn had been married about three years and has a wonderful little girl, Rachel, whom we all love very much. We always enjoy being around our grandchildren and having them around us too, to see them grow and their lives change day to day and to be able to enjoy their presence. We only dread to see the day that we will not have them around and Grandma and Grandpa will be all alone. We hope that we can still be able to travel and see them and to enjoy being with them.

Course, then, in 1971 on August 25th, Harold and Teresa were married in the Salt Lake Temple and we were able to travel to the Salt Lake Temple to meet Teresa for the first time and to go to the Temple and to be with them a few days before they went to the Temple. We got very well acquainted with her, and we think she's one of the most wonderful little girls in the world. At this time, which is a year and a few months later, we're all together. On the 27th of August, 1972, Teresa gave birth to our first grandson. We're real thrilled about this and we're looking forward to having them home for Christmas this year, 1972.

Course, we're real fortunate that Ethelyn and Doug live



Melvin with newly born granddaughter Leah Dahl one week before passing away.

only a short way in Bakersfield, where my mother and dad live, Melvin Harold Munn, Sr. We're able to go up there and visit with them and visit Doug and Ethelyn and see little Rachel. We also see my brother, Jim, who lives there on the east side of Bakersfield. Then I have a sister living three or four blocks away from my mother and dad. Grandma and Grandpa are getting kind of old now, my mother and dad. I think dad's eighty and mother's about seventy-five. Also I have a brother that lives down in Long Beach, California. Vernon has been living down in the Los Angeles area now for about six years. He works for the union in the hiring and placing of dropouts and people like that, kids from school.

Anyway, this is a history and background of all our family. I appreciate being part of the whole group and being able to share the blessings of this life, and I pray that we'll be grateful for the blessings that we receive day to day.

Eulogy (May 15, 1923 - April 19, 1982)

Melvin Harold Munn was born May 15, 1923, in Prescott, Arkansas, to Melvin Harris and Edna Marie Munn. He was the fourth child and the second boy, and the only child to

receive his father's name, which he honored. One sister, Catherine, preceded him in death. He has two sisters living: Vernon and James Munn, both of Bakersfield, California and two sisters, Hazel Jackson of Bakersfield, California, and Marjorie Benson of Poway, California. He has four children and 15 grandchildren: Melvin Harold, married to Teresa with 5 children; Cheryl Jane, married to Tony Cox, with five children; Ethelyn Marie, married to Douglas Dahl with four children; and Gary Wayne.

Melvin's family lived in Arkansas until about 1939 when his family of eight moved to Parker, Arizona, to try farming. January 11, 1943, he joined the Marines and was shipped to the South Pacific. Here he became friends with Paul Cook, a Mormon. Melvin had never known any Mormons before, and the example Paul set did much to prepare Melvin for the Gospel. (Paul is here today.) While serving in a camp near Hilo Harbor, Hawaii, he received third degree burns, which led to the amputation of his right little finger and many skin grafts. This, however, never affected his grip when he shook hands, as many of you well know. He could always make you feel like he was breaking your hand.

He met Fern Bertha Whitmer in Parker while on leave from the hospital. Three months later, on December 14, 1944, they were married. They lived in Corona, California, for a short time. After he was discharged from the service they lived in Morenci, Arizona, then Arvin, California.

It was at this time, age 25, that he was first taught the Gospel by the missionaries. After going through three sets of missionaries, he finally became convinced of the truthfulness of the Gospel, and became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The family bought a home in Bakersfield and lived there until 1960, when Melvin went to work at Vandenberg AFB as an auto mechanic. He worked there 12 years until his massive heart attack in July of 1972. This forced his retirement, and it was only then that he revealed to his family how much he disliked being a mechanic. The



PHOEBE AND Dick Ostlie of the Executive Shop for Men in the Lompoc Plaza announce the appointment of Melvin Munn as manager. Munn has lived in the area for 17 years and is retired from Civil Service. He and his wife, Fern, are parents of four children. He is an active member of the Mormon Church.

sacrifices our parents make for us. It turned out that his great love was selling, and he worked off and on for men's clothing stores until four or five years ago, when his health no longer allowed him to work.

Truly, the highlight of his life came when he and Fern were called to serve in the St. Louis Mission from February 14, 1980 to July 14, 1981. There, in Sikeston, Missouri, they were proselytizing missionaries. In addition, Melvin served as Branch President and District Leader. Truly, he and Fern magnified their calling. Choice people were baptized into the Church, and due to their relentless activation efforts, the branch grew from 20 to 70 people.

Melvin wore his name tag everywhere, even though the Church had counseled otherwise, for safety purposes. He shared his testimony in the grocery stores, barber shops, everywhere! It was during a "chance" meeting in a barber shop that he discussed the Church with an elderly gentleman who turned out to be a retired minister. In the ensuing months, Melvin and this minister developed a close relationship where Melvin was the teacher and the minister the student. That was Melvin's gift, to teach, expound, and love people into the Church. This ability to touch lives endeared him to all who knew him, not the least of which was his own family.

What made him unique was his keen sense of humor and the jokes he liked to tell. Pity the poor person who didn't know Mel when they called the house and he answered the phone saying, "This is me...is that you?" His humor even carried over into his efforts to conserve money. It wasn't unusual, when the children were growing up to be fined 10 cents for forgetting to turn off the iron or the television. And to this day they find it hard to waste water on long showers

Melvin magnified his church callings, which were many. For many years he served in the Bishopric in Bakersfield under Bishop M. Brent Richards, then later with other bishops in Lompoc. In addition, he served on the High Council, as Stake Missionary, Stake Mission President, High Priest

Group Leader, teacher, and more. It wasn't unusual for him to be up until two or three in the morning irrigating the cotton on the welfare farm in Bakersfield. His dedication to the Lord's work was total--he never complained.

Melvin and Fern shared two great loves--one temporal and one spiritual. The spiritual was their love of temple work, which they did frequently. The temporal being their love to fish together. He was a great fisherman, and could catch his limit every time.

Probably one of the most outstanding qualities Melvin had was his love for his country. Tears flowed freely whenever he heard the National Anthem, and he always displayed the flag on national holidays. He honored the flag and country, and could not tolerate those that did not.

However, the Lord knew Melvin's life on earth would be cut short, and gave His counsel in his patriarchal blessing to this effect:

Keep the word of wisdom strictly, and your health shall be preserved. If you keep the Fast day on the first Sunday of each month and will assist in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, and will not withhold yourself from giving to the needy of your own kindred, your light shall be as the morning and when necessary your health shall spring forth speedily and your righteousness shall go before you.

Indeed, this was literally fulfilled.

Even his death was timed precisely according to his Patriarchal Blessing which had promised "*the genealogy of your people shall come into your hands and the means for this work shall be obtainable.*"

A great deal of family history had come his way, but Cheryl, the family genealogist, could not find the time with her five children to document it for temple work. Strange events came into play and a meeting was arranged for Cheryl to meet a non-member cousin, Roxie Ann Wessels from

Kansas, to combine funds for genealogy research. Cheryl received a call at 6 p.m. Monday night from their cousin and her husband in Grand Junction, Colorado. Arrangements were made to take place at 12:30 at Temple Square the next day. Melvin died that night around midnight, *the means had been obtained*.

Melvin knew his time was near to pass on. He tried every way possible to prepare his loved ones for this eventuality. He felt very strongly he had missionary and genealogy work to do on the other side.

The person he loved most in this life, Fern, will have the most wonderful memories to hold on to. Mel and Fern had one of the closest relationships of any married couple. Anyone who was around them saw them wink at each other, hold hands, walk together, or with his arm

around her. Their lives were intertwined in life and their spirits will forever be intertwined in death by virtue of the Everlasting Covenant of Temple Marriage.

Military

My dad, Melvin Harold Munn, Jr. known as Junior to everyone, joined the Marines January 11, 1943.

Highlights:

Places he went:

- New Caledonia in the Pacific. They asked if he wanted to join Carlson's Raiders and he told them to drop dead.
- Tonga.
- New Zealand while loading a ship he and his buddy, a Mormon, dad wasn't picked up a couple of cans of hard tack to eat because they were hungry. He and his friend had to do three months (only ten days) in jail and cost him a stripe and \$33 a can.
- Hilo Harbor, Hawaii at Camp Taraou

The Fire

It was time for him to take his turn doing mess duty which they usually do in the first couple of months in the service. He'd been in a year and it was time. He was put in charge of the garbage—GI Inspector, for 30 days. My dad said:

There was a kid I was breaking in that day, the 31st of March 1944. He went to draw some gasoline out of the barrel to clean them. They had some pretty hot stuff, I think it was aviation gasoline. We'd pour a little in these barrels and strike a match to them to sterilize them. The wind was blowing when I was filling the can and it kind of saturated my arm. I poured some in one can and when I looked up this kid was about to strike a match. I warned him not to strike a match til we get all done, then we'd light them one at a time. I looked up and he threw a match in the can and the whole place went up in flames.

I was pretty well afire, so I started screaming and started to run. I hit the ground rolling and when I did I took all the hide off me from one side to the other. I was peeled just about like a . . . I don't know what. I was still burning when this old sergeant came out and grabbed a blanket somewhere and threw it on me.

I'll never forget when they first pulled the bandages off me after they'd been on for about ten days. They'd put the smelling salts under my nose when I would pass out and they would pull a few more inches of bandages off. My hand was in pretty bad shape. My thumb was somewhat frozen in one position. Then they tried to put saline dressing on me covered by salt-water dressing all over me.

He was in a tent and they put maggots on him so they could eat the dead skin. Icky. He lost his little finger.

When he and my mother got married, his hand was sewn to his stomach to try to grow skin over where his little finger had amputated. He always had hairy skin where his finger used to be.

(I'm writing memories from my cousins about aunts and uncles and here is what he said about my dad. "I remember that Uncle Melvin's hand was sewn to his stomach. Wonderful thing. Missing fourth finger." By his nephew, Rex Whitmer, Jr.)

