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Grandma & Grandpa

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Laverne Reische

Meridian, CA

November 12, 2017

Grandma & Grandpa

Personal Experience Narrative

Informant: Laverne (Verne) Reische is my grandfather on my father's side. Verne still resides in the same area our family has been for many years; his home is located on our family farm where walnuts are grown. My grandfather grew up on that same farm, however it was much smaller than. My family has resided in the Sacramento Valley along the Sacramento River for four generations now. Most of our family on that side still resides in that same area, so there are many cousins who become very good friends while growing up. My grandfather later married my grandmother Zoe Thomas while in flight school in Texas. They spent most of their lives in the Sacramento Valley area.

Context: My grandpa told me this story over a Sunday morning chat while I was home to visit family. While I am home I always go and talk to my grandpa. Lately, I have been inquiring about our family history as well as his experience growing up. This story came as a response to the question, "How did you meet grandma?" I had heard bits and pieces of this story before but I wanted a more complete version. My grandpa does not tell stories unless someone asks him a question that reminds him of a particular story. He is in the early stages of dementia, so it has become increasingly important for me to learn as much as I can so that I can carry on his stories for the future generations.

Text: Met grandma when I was going through flight school in Texas. Blind date. Bruce had met a girl, Bruce DeVries had met a girl in Corpus [Corpus Cristi, TX]. And so she found a date for me and that was Zoe. [Interviewer: How did you know she was the one?] Grandma, mmm, she was a girl that all I know. It was fun. Butter and Marie [my grandmother Zoe's parents]. They were they had a household that was very welcoming you might go in there walk over people sleeping on the floor. Uh they had a friend who came from El Paso to Corpus he was in the Navy, a seamen down from Corpus. And he and his buddies were there a lot beause he worked for your um great grandpa had a service station in El Paso and he worked at the service station. And he was in the Navy and he was stationed down there when Butter and Marie moved down to Corpus. So he would come down and he'd have buddies with him and they would spend the night just sleeping on the floor.

I didn't know grandma too terribly long before we got married. I can't remember when we first started dating. When I got out of the service I came home. I think before that though I took leave or something her mom came out here and we drove out [journey from Corpus Christi, TX to Meridian, CA, 1936 miles in the 1950s]. That's when she met my parents, they lived where Eric's house is now, but not in that house. Interviewer: How'd you know she was the one you were going to marry?] Couldn't find anybody else. I was 21 she was 18. I was 4 years older so I guess I was just about 22. We got married in El Paso, not Corpus because that's where they came from. Butter and Marie, all there family was in El Paso. It wasn't very big because everyone had to come to it. From my family there was only my aunt and uncle Tom and Gene and mom and dad. Jim and Kerm came, I think that was about it from my side of the family. There wasn't very many.

They liked Mexican food. Zoe and Marie knew how to make that. Marie did a lot of the cookin because when mom started getting her Parkinson's she wasn't able to do a lot of that stuff. So as long as Marie was here we ate dinner with them almost everyday. We were living in Sacramento and I got a chance to buy this little place. The company I was working for down there was in an uproar. They laid me off then hired me back as a fee appraiser like your dad. You work for the individuals and not a company. You know they didn't want to pay all the benefits and stuff so they would just pay you by the appraisal. So then we moved up here cause I can that anywhere. This place came up for sale.

Texture: I don't typically think of my grandpa as a funny guy but he told this story with a lot of humor. My grandma passed away almost 11 years ago now, so it is fun to listen to my grandpa talk warmly about her. It makes me curious if my grandpa was a much more light-hearted guy when he was young and with my grandmother.

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