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Cody, Myrtle

1986

Interviewed by Irene Francis & Debbie Hood

Myrtle Cody's family arrived in the West Mountain Valley in 1876. Her family were part of the French colony from Canada and her mother was born in the valley in 1891. Her mother married John Canute, a member of the Germany colony who had also been born in the valley. Myrtle went to the Canute school through 3rd grade. There were also German students at the school.

When she was eight years old, her family moved to Hillside and she went to the Greenleaf school. In Hillside, when she was around 11 years old, she and her brother had a few matches and lit their straw stack on fire. With the help of a neighbor, they were able to put out the fire before it did too much damage, but after that, she never played with matches again. In Hillside, there were lots of currant and chokecherry bushes and they would pick the berries and her mother would make jelly out of them. She also remembers hearing a mountain lion in their pasture in the evenings.

During the Depression, times were difficult, and Myrtle had to quit school to help her mom. They raised pigs and potatoes. Finally, they moved to the Scholfield place near the property she currently owns and she went to the adobe school and had to retake sixth grade over again. She graduated from 8th grade with Dorothy Wagner and Dorothy Frank and her mother took her white taffeta wedding dress, dyed it light blue, and made a graduation dress for Myrtle.

During those days, the only recreation folks had was to go to dances (around four times a year) and to visit families and relatives. They also went to church. Her mother was a Catholic and attended the Catholic church in Silver Cliff, but when she was baptized, the church had been moved to Westcliffe.

Her father died of a massive heart attack when she was in school. Her mother used her father's insurance money to buy half of a ranch. Her mother and her brother went to Rosita, bought a house, tore it apart, hauled the lumber back to their ranch, and rebuilt it. They lived in that house for nine years. Eventually her mother married Ray Vickerman, a cook at the Alpine Lodge, and he ran cattle on their land and treated Myrtle and her brother like his own children.

Myrtle married Fred Squire soon after her mother's marriage. She met him in school in Hillside and he fell in love with her, but was too bashful to pursue her, but he never forgot her. When he was older and working in Central City at a hard rock mine, he wrote her and told her he loved her. She wrote back and he came to visit and brought a silver ring with a blue stone. Years later, when he moved back to the valley, they had their first date on 4th of July. They were engaged for two years until they finally married.