

Chapter 6

Merrill A. Farley

Merrill grew up on a farm in Orem with fruit trees, cows, horses, pigs and chickens and a vegetable garden. He liked farming fruit trees but didn't enjoy the vegetable gardening. He was a good student and got along well with his brothers and sisters. He was student body president in high school so he was well liked. He also sang bass in a quartet.

As a young boy, Merrill was helping Reed Hacking, his brother in law, collect icicles outside one cold winter evening. The family wanted to make ice cream and needed the icicles. Merrill came down with pneumonia a few days later. He became so ill that he had to lay in bed for weeks with a hose going down into his lungs. He did not seem to be getting better. One day his mom ask, "Merrill, would you like to sit up?" As she helped him up, fluid began to drain out of his lungs. From that point on he began to recover. Later, the boys at school told him he was so thin and pale he looked like he had returned from the dead.

Merrill graduated from Lincoln High where he was active in photography. He enjoyed sports and lettered in tennis. At BYU he majored in agronomy and horticulture and was a member of the ROTC. It was while he was attending BYU that he met with a recruiting officer who encouraged him to join the Air Force. He was promised he would serve in the same unit as Stan.

WORLD WAR 11



The photo of Staff Sargent M. Farley and Staff Sargent S. Farley was taken April 21, 1945 at the Stage Door Canteen in New York City, courtesy of American Theatre Wing War Service, Inc.

Merrill's military service was described in the previous chapter. However, two additional newspaper articles are included here. One describes Merrill's military assignments and notes he married Sylpha while home on leave. The second lists the medals awarded both brothers after they were discharged from the service.



"Farley Brothers Leave To Resume Overseas Duty"

Technical Sergeant Stanley T. Farley left the Salt Lake Airport Monday to return to New York and then Scotland, where he is engaged in the medical corps, transporting wounded men from the European hospitals to Newfoundland, the Azores and New York, after enjoying a two weeks' furlough here with his wife, Ora Baum Farley, their son, Brent and his parents, Mr. And Mrs. Carl Farley and other relatives. His brother, Technical Sergeant Merrill Farley will leave today to join him in Scotland, where he is engaged in the same work. His bride, the former Sylpha Johnson, will remain here with her mother, Mrs. Lisa Johnson of Grand View.

Sgt. Stanley, in reporting their activities since going overseas some sixteen months ago, states they were eleven days crossing the ocean, landing in Scotland, then going to England where they were stationed with their ambulances at bomber stations, glider bases and paratrooper outfits. But it was after D-Day, June 6th, that their real work started, flying supplies into the front and bringing the wounded back to the hospital base in England.

"Back As Civilians"

Sgts. Stanley T. and Merrill A. Farley, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Farley of Orem, are home after three years of enlisted service in the air evacuation unit of the U. S. air forces. The brothers were fortunate in being assigned to the same squadron during their entire service, so were together

most of the time.

Honorable discharges were received at Gowen field, Boise, Idaho, on Oct. 22, 1945, and each was awarded the air medal for completing 50 or more air evacuation missions over England, France, and Belgium. Also, they have the good conduct medals, European theater ribbon with four battle stars, and the American theater ribbon. The stars were awarded for participation in the Normandy, northern France, Rhineland and Ardennes campaigns.

Since February they were stationed at Prestwich, Scotland, and evacuated wounded to the U. S. After finishing there, they were transferred back to Paris, France, where they continued the same work until released to come home. During their years of service each made 26 flights across the Atlantic. On one of these flights, while in New York, they met their older brother, Carroll, Mo. MM 1-c, Navy, who was doing convoy duty in the Atlantic

At present, Stan, his wife and little son Brent, are at home in Edgemont, and Merrill and wife, the former Sylpha Johnson, reside with his parents in Orem.



Sylpha and Merrill were high school sweethearts. They met before the war while attending Lincoln High School. Merrill could not help noticing Sylpha's beauty and he respected her for her high standards. They married on March 23, 1945, seven months before Merrill was discharged from the service and enjoyed a honeymoon in Southern Utah.



Stan and Merrill each received awards for flying over fifty missions over the English Channel to evacuate the wounded.

BUYING A HOUSE

After the war Merrill secured a teaching job in Gunnison, Utah where the young couple lived until Merrill decided he wanted to be his own boss. They returned to Orem. The government was offering pre-built houses to war veterans and Carroll had signed up for one.



Our home at 400 South 400 West in Orem

As narrow roads made it almost impossible to move the house to Mt. Pleasant, Dad purchased the home from Carroll and erected it on his lot in Orem. He built onto the house several times to accommodate our growing family.

Merrill got a job as an electrician at Geneva Steel Plant and purchased land from his Dad for a fruit farm. He and Mom planted many of the fruit trees on the farm. He grew apples, cherries, pears, and peaches.

As the family grew, so did the farm. He purchased several additional acres of property in North Orem which he called “the North Forty.” There he grew apples, sweet cherries and pie cherries. As he had a bigger operation he needed more farm equipment. He learned welding and put together much of the equipment himself. He built a spring tooth, truck beds to haul the fruit in, trailers, sorters and two cold storage units so he could run the farm more efficiently. He built the barn, expanded the house, built a shed and constructed anything else that was needed.

He taught the family by his example of self-reliance and his belief that if there was something that was needed, it could be obtained or built by using simple ingenuity and hard work. He insisted that his children get a good education. We had to do our homework without fail. Consequently, we all did well in school. Both he and mom helped us on reports, school projects, etc.

There was always a lot of mechanical needs including tractors, trucks and cars and the farm equipment was always breaking down. He fixed most everything himself. I have seen him repair every kind of household equipment including the TV. There was nothing Merrill could not do if he had the time and it seemed he always found time to repair what was broken.

He was always active in the Church. He did his home teaching, was an elder, a seventy and later, a high priest. He was superintendent of the Sunday school. I remember him giving one minute talks in opening exercises at Sunday School when we were young. He also gave many hours of service on the church welfare farm and helped where ever he was needed. He was there to bless, baptize and confirm each of us children and answer any questions we had about the gospel.

He really enjoyed taking the family on short drives as well as long vacations. We visited every canyon land; we vacationed in Disneyland, we went to the Pasadena Rose Parade, drove up to Canada and traveled as far south as Mexico. Our family went back east on the train to Chicago to pick up a new car and we saw many Church history sights.

Dad loved trains. He and Mom took a train vacation to see Niagra Falls. Grandma Farley tended us for two weeks so they could enjoy that trip. Traveling with eight children was not easy but we had some great times together. Sometimes we joined Wes' family on a trip to Yellowstone or to Mirror Lake. Dad and Mom also enjoyed taking the entire family and their spouses on cruises.

Dad's welding skills did not stop with repairing or building farm equipment. He also built a swing set and some small vehicles which we rode on. Once Dad was welding on a ten gallon drum for a neighbor. It must have had gasoline fumes inside which Dad did not know about. We heard the explosion and Dad was burned badly and in bed for a while. That was the only time I remember my father being laid up.

After school many times he would wait for us to change into our farm clothes and then take us to the "North Forty" where we had to pick up brush and rocks. The older boys would do the pruning and we would all help harvest the fruit. The farm was our family project and we all learned to do our part. Sometimes we even picked early in the morning before going to school. Dad always paid us for our work and this taught us responsibility.

In this day of specialization it is hard for the younger generation to think they can save money by learning to repair their own cars or do carpentry work. Dad taught us to build machinery and grow fruit, vegetables and all kinds of produce. We raised our own beef and pork and cut it up and packaged it for the freezer. Being frugal was a way of life in our family. This made our education a continuing process.

Merrill was interested in finding new and more efficient ways to harvest crops. One year after seeing Wes' invention, he came up with a new way to harvest those sticky little pie cherries. He built some frames to support the parachutes which were stretched under the trees. He purchased a Friday Shaker which shook the cherries onto the parachutes. The boys moved the equipment from tree to tree. It shook all the cherries into trays. The trays were then dumped into bins of cold water. The fruit was hauled to the Pleasant Grove cannery in the bins. The Friday Shaker really cut down on the time it took to harvest pie cherries.

TRIPS, RECREATION AND FAMILY FUN

Merrill loved to go deer hunting in the fall. If he shot a deer, which he did quite often, it was hung up, cleaned and cut up. Mom and Dad liked to go out on the weekends. Sometimes to visit with friends, go to a movie or just go window shopping after the stores closed. We liked it when they were gone a long time to Salt Lake City because then they would return with surprises for us if we were good.

Merrill has always been close to his brothers and sisters. He enjoys sharing fruit with family members and since two of his brothers also had fruit farms and lived close, they would visit frequently, help each other out and enjoy one another's company. As his oldest brother, Carroll, lived in Mr. Pleasant, Merrill would often take the family down for a weekend drive and a visit.

Merrill and Sylpha worked side by side on the farm and there was always lots to do. They made a great team and there was joking and laughter when our family worked together. I remember Mom and Dad even singing a duet together in church. They made sure all their children were exposed to music. We kids learned to play the piano, guitar or accordion. We were required to practice so we could go to our music lessons well prepared.



LeAnn, VaLoy, Sylpha, Dwane, Merrill, Arland, David and Dennis with Grandma Farley

Family loyalty was insisted upon. What was said at home was left there and not repeated in public. We were expected to live by the golden rule. When there was friction between members of the family we were told to count to ten, talk, apologize and for give. This made for harmony at home even though normal problems and contentions arose. Dad left most of the discipline to Mom because he was gone so often working on the farm, at the steel plant or selling fruit.

My parents did not think it fair to have a dark cloud hanging over a child's head while they waited for father to come home and do the disciplining. When Dad was home, he took an active role in our lives helping us with homework or discussing our problems. We were not allowed to say ain't or use profanity. Our speech today is a reflection of the way we were brought up and the values our parents placed on using proper English.

Merrill built his own log splitter to deal with the huge pile of tree trunks he and Arlen hauled from the farm to the house. Many of the logs have gone for firewood, and some have gone for more artistic acquisitions such as gun stocks or cherry wood clocks.

The only time we saw Dad sit when we were kids was when he sat at the dinner table, or relaxed to read the newspaper. His favorite TV show was the honeymooners and he liked the Friday night fight. These days he enjoys a good ball game or a book in his easy chair or simply visiting with family members or friends on the back lawn.

Merrill is a generous as well as an honest person. He made sure his children knew that he never sold any fruit he would not eat himself. There is no end to the people who drop by year after year wanting to get some of those delicious Farley apples. He never wasted fruit. He knew it needed to be picked at just the right time. The difficult part was finding pickers.

Perhaps the biggest shock to our family was VaLoy's death at thirty-four. VaLoy was a medical assistant and she was good with

computers. However she suffered from arrhythmia and wore a heart monitor. She assisted in eye surgery on the day she died and then went home to prepare food and pack for a trip to Lake Powell. Upon arrival, her friends decided to go into town for additional supplies. VaLoy felt tired and declined their invitation to go with them. She only wanted to take a nap. They returned to find her as they had left her, curled up in a blanket. She had died in her sleep.

Sylpha's Poetry

Mom is a gifted poet. She has written many poems which we used in talks and for school projects. The two that follow were read at Grandma Farley's funeral: "The Genuine Label."

Grandma just felt the fabric,
Her touch was sure and fine.
She knew her wool and cotton,
And how to stretch a dime.
Her hair was bright and lovely,
From brushing it a lot,
She never tried to make it
A color it was not. . .
And the same old dress she wore
Was always neat and clean,
There was no label in it,
Yet she looked like a queen.
Of times we should remember
Although it gives us pain,
That first day we came to earth,
We were all dressed the same. . .
It's what you are that matters
Just like in Grandma's day,
And no amount of labels
Will pave or change the way. . .

Merrill published Sylpha's poetry in a book entitled On Wings of Thought in November, 2002. He enjoyed giving copies as gifts to friends and family the Christmas after her death on July 2, 2002. The book included many of the poems she composed and kept in a box under her bed. Merrill illustrated these with pictures of the family.

AS GRANDPARENTS

The grand kids in our family all know Merrill as "The Jelly Bean Grandpa." He always has an assortment of candy in his pocket. One day, one of them was telling his mother where he had been. "I was with "Mr. and Mrs. Jelly Bean," he reported. Merrill likes to share a good story and jelly beans with all of us.

Dad married the right person because he has quite an appetite. His family can vouch for this. You would never know it to look at him. None of those calories ever settle on his frame. Sylpha is an excellent cook and always has the delicious food he and the rest of the family always appreciate. Mom felt Dad always has too many irons in the fire. We kids find it hard to know where all that constant



March 31, 1995 - Merrill and Sylpha's Golden Wedding Anniversary. From left, back row - Arland, Dennis, Ron and Roger. Seated: David, LeAnn Harris, Merrill, Sylpha and Duane. Daughter VaLoy, born July 9, 1956, died at Lake Powell on September 1, 1990.

energy comes from. The job is never done unless it is done right and dad never leaves a job unfinished. These days the better part of the property was cleared by Merrill and Arlen to make way for Orem's new hospital. However, they still have enough property left to take care of the family fruit needs.

Merrill can best be described in this very abbreviated life sketch as kind and caring, ambitious, well educated, honest, responsible, and well liked. He has a great sense of humor and loves to see others enjoying themselves. He appreciates a good story. He only gives advice if it's asked for. Generally he lives with a "live and let live" attitude. He will help whenever he can and never makes excuses.

Dad expects the best from others and that is a great motivator to those of us who are fortunate to know him. He is actually a man of few words and many deeds. Although he has accomplished a lot during his life time, I know he counts his loving family as his greatest joy and his biggest success in life.

Life Sketch by LeAnn Farley Harris

CRUSING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS



The December 1994 cruise included Merrill and Sylpha and six of their children -- LeAnn and husband Curtis Hill Harris; Duane and his wife Kristi; Daughter-in-law Gina and son David; Merrill and Sylpha along with son Arlen. Roger in the fore front with Stan and Ora. Who stand next to their friend Val. Wes and LaVon standing beside Dennis Farley on the left.

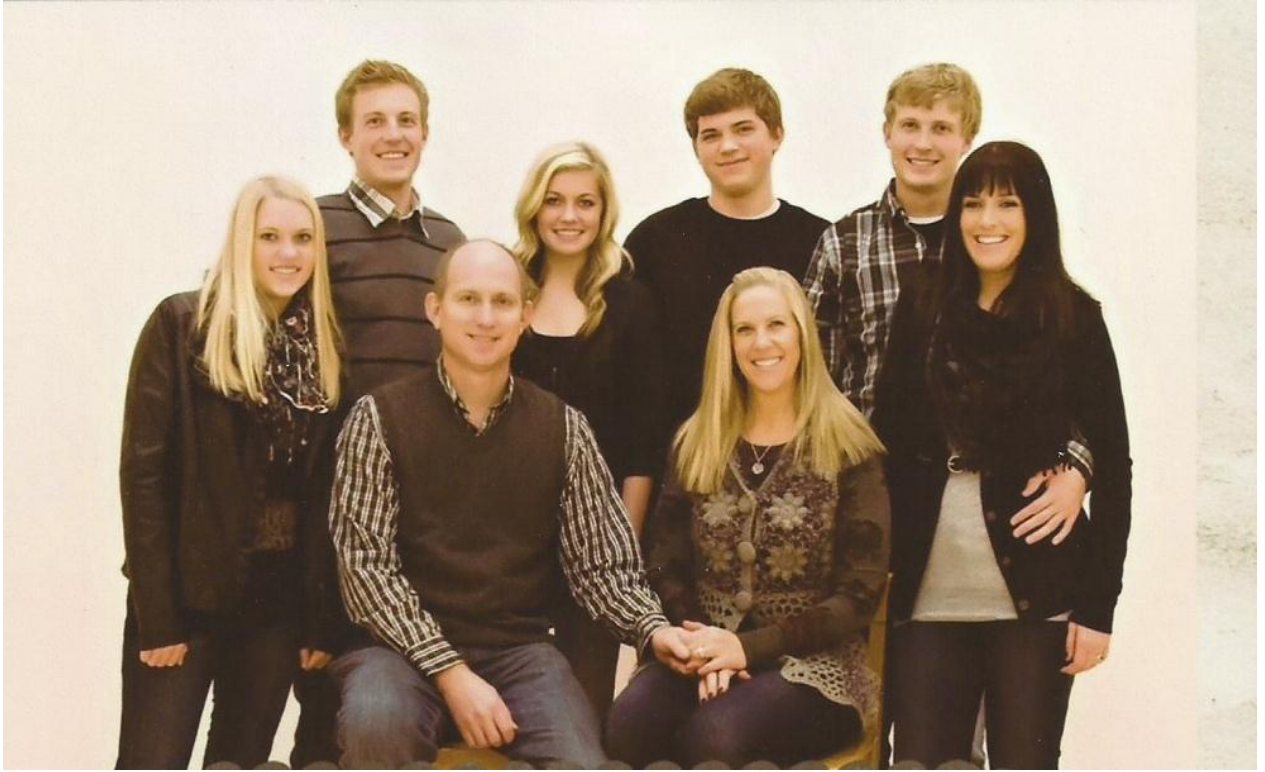


Merrill paid for Princess Cruises for his nieces Carla, Corinne and husband and Diane to accompany him and his girlfriend Gloria. (above) on a trip to the Eastern Caribbean. During the night flight from Salt Lake to Miami Merrill became very cold. So during the layover in Atlanta, Everett used his body heat to warm Merrill. Corinne and Diane looked on. He had suffered several bouts of pneumonia, so getting cold was life threatening. Later he said, “Everett saved my life.”

Merrill invited girl -friends, Janet and Gloria, on a cruise to the Western Caribbean over President’s Day the next year. Diane’s husband Tom had never been on a cruise. Merrill and Wes were keen on having him come along but he was directing a comedy, “Tom, Dick and Harry” which was scheduled to open the week after the activity so Tom was reluctant to take any days off. Diane called Mountain Ridge Jr. High’s and explained the situation. Mrs. Paula Fugal, the principal, spoke to tom and threatened to write him up for insubordination if he did not reschedule the play and join his relatives on the Farley cruise as he had put in hundreds of extra hours. Tom did. Head custodian Boyd Luke who overheard the exchange later said, “Wish I could be reprimanded like that.” Tom asked Merrill how he planned to handle two girlfriends on the same week long activity. “Very carefully,” He replied.

Merrill became so ill he was unable to leave home that February. His thirty guests had to set sail without him. He died on July 26, 2007 – just five months later. Thanks Merrill for introducing all of us to the joys cruising. You were a classic example of living life to the fullest.

Duane and Kristi Farley Family - 2012



Duane & Kristi with children. Standing include Eva, Jordan, Emma, Spencer, and Josh Farley with wife Shanae