

# UPHILL - BOTH WAYS



**Volume 3 - Naples 1923** ©

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DEDICATION

To my Mother...



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## Introduction

Naples played a curious role in my early life. For various reasons, it was the most difficult of my history to sort out. I struggled a long time to sort out the chronology of events in the first 6 years of my life and think that I have them nailed down. Using bits and pieces of seemingly unrelated information, my memories, mom's memories, and talking with Harold, I have laid out the events and the sequence in which they occurred. Before talking about mom and her family, I will explain Naples in detail so you understand what the term "Naples" meant to my nuclear family. Unfortunately, it is impossible now to fix the specific dates for each transition, but the years can be identified in each case, and sometimes the months can be narrowed down to 4-6 month periods of time. I found Grandma Merrell's history several years after starting this volume, and it resolved some of the uncertainties. You'll see her story below.

Naples figured very prominently in the history of Marie and James Alvin. The odd thing is that I didn't know that until last month, while I was trying mightily to decipher their peregrinations. It is so odd that I didn't understand the role of Naples in our lives because I was physically present in Naples many times, so was an active participant. A child doesn't see anything but the local moment. I was simply here, and then I was there, and so on. Further, I think I have condescended to and patronized Naples, regarding it subconsciously as just a little farming community where mom's relatives live out their lives, while I've "been around." Silly me. Naples was the base operation for our little tribe that wandered helter skelter over the landscape for 14 years, from 1941 through 1956.

Mom's and dad's repeated returns to Naples complicate the telling of the story of Naples. Naples was actually interludes lasting from a month to years that filled the spaces between Seward 1941, Salt Lake City 1942, Hanford, Washington, Pearl Harbor, Vernal and Seward again. As I explained in Volume 1 - Introduction, I have chosen to keep all of those experiences separate, putting them in chronological order because I experienced them separately, not as interludes to Naples. I want you to see them that way, too.

Naples was the refuge that mom and dad turned to when money ran out, when they didn't know what they were going to do next. They were always welcome to return and live with mom's family while they figured out their next step. They returned there several time. Here's a chronology of events that illustrate the

order of their comings and goings vis-a-vis Naples. This innocuous collection of dates took a heck of a lot of time and research to figure out. Naples was mom's and dad's base of operation. The **references to Naples are in red.**

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- 1923 -Mom was born **in Naples**. Her family moved to Rainbow in 1925.
- ~1929 -Mom **returned to Naples** .
- 1939 - Mom went to Mercur, met James Alvin and decided to marry. Mom **returned to Naples** .
- 1940 -Dad went to Seward "to earn his fortune".
- 5-14-1941 -Mom and Mable go to Seward where she marries dad,  
-In November, she **returned to Naples**. Dad stayed in Seward to sell his house and to get fossil ivory from Fairbanks.
- 12-15-41 -Dad **returned to Naples** and worked at odd jobs for a few months.
- 1942 -Marie and James Alvin went to SLC where he enrolled in a government-sponsored program to become a machinist.  
-The Remington Arms Plant went on line 2-1942 and he was hired on.
- 3-31-42 -I was born.
- 5-28-43 - -Dick was born.
- 12-43 - -Remington Arms went on stand-by and laid off employees.  
-Mom and dad and Dick and I **moved to Naples** .
- 09-12-44 - -Dad went to Hanford, Washington plant in the Manhattan Project to work on reactor pile.  
-Dad **returns to Naples**.

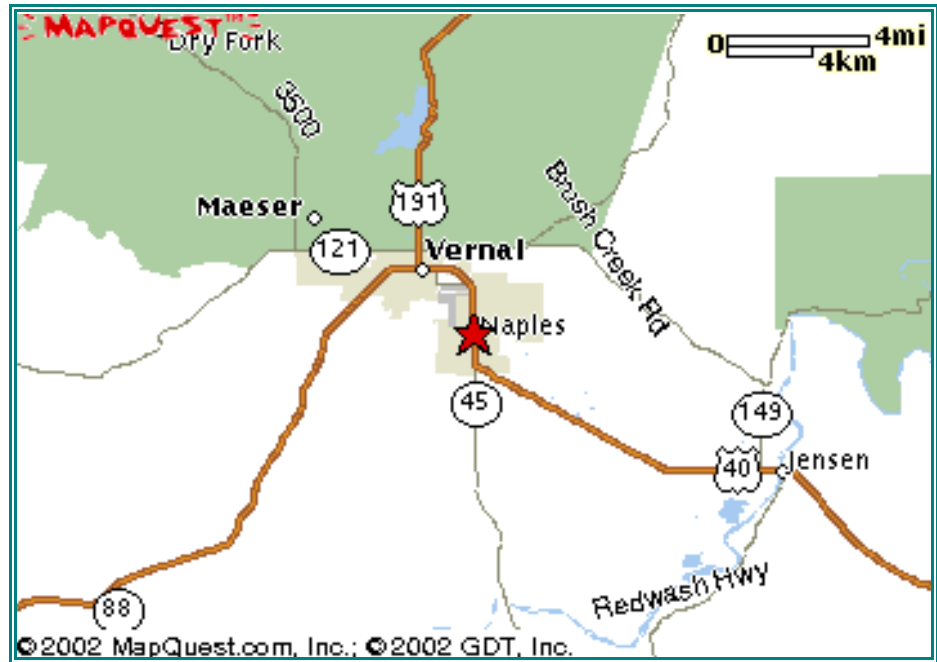
- ??/1945 -Dad goes to Pearl Harbor - his first union badge is 5/6/1945 and his last dues were paid for January-February-March 1946.
- ??/1945 -Dad **returns to Naples**.  
-Mom and dad buy the Ashton Place west of Vernal.
- 1951 -We go to Seward, Alaska in two groups.
- 6-1953 -**Return to Naples** for the summer from Seward.
- 6-1956 -Dad takes job at Harvard and flies to Nova Scotia, The rest of us **return to Naples** for the summer before going Boston.
- 

Naples figured often in the first fourteen years of my life. After 1956, the connection between mom and dad and Naples was broken. We never even visited Naples again as a family. I left home in Boston in 1960 and Dick left home from Provo in 1961 and we never lived together as family again. But up to the time I was fourteen Naples, - not Vernal- played a big role in our lives.

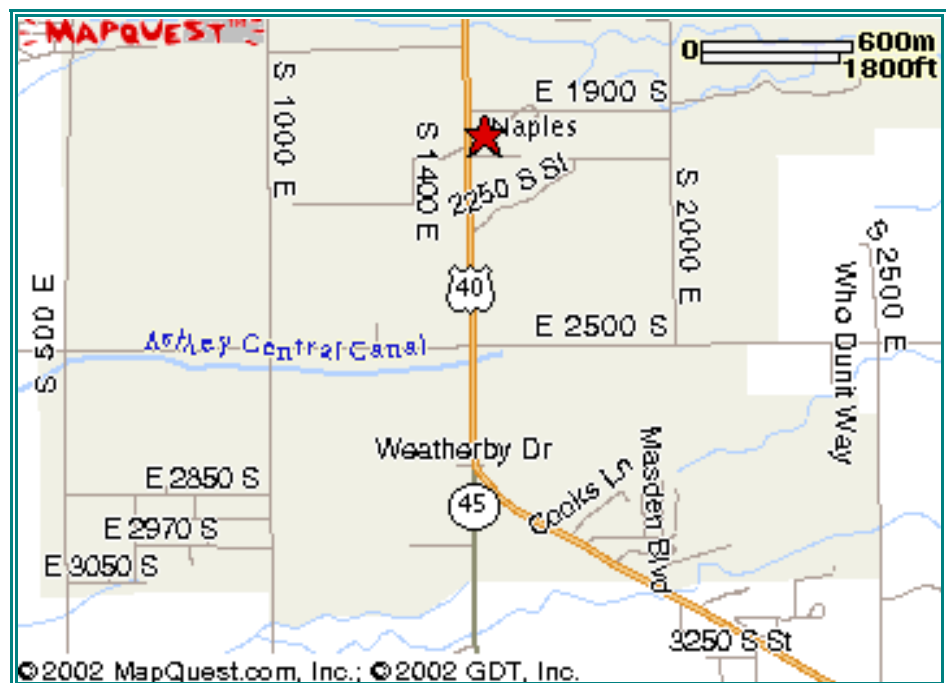
It is so odd today to look back and understand this business about Naples being our mecca, our anchor, our harbor in the storm. All these years mom and dad have spoken about going back to "Vernal", always "Vernal." They NEVER said they were going back to Naples. But the reality is that we never went back to "Vernal". We always went back to "Naples". It was always Naples, not Vernal. Mom's family was our contact point in Utah. I don't understand why this was so and since dad's dead and mom's memory is shot I cannot ask them why that was so. Perhaps they had some sort of sensitivity about admitting that they were going back to a tiny farming community that had about 2 stores, one gas station and no post office. I don't know the reason, but they never referred to going to "Naples" although that's what they always did. Indeed, when we spent time in Naples, it was a treat to get to "go to Vernal: to swim, to go to the museum or to take in a movie. I understood the difference even then, yet I never clarified the business. Not until I worked on this tome did it come into focus.

**Naples and Vernal**

This map places Naples for you. It is **the red star - ★ -** in this map, about 3 miles east of Vernal on US 40. Colorado is a few miles east of the town of Jensen. The green block above Jensen is the Dinosaur National Monument. The river running through Jensen is the Green River that heads down to the Colorado.



Naples became the Merrell family home when Fuller acquired a 35 acre farm in 1920. It remains the focus of the Merrell family. In the second map, grandpa's 35 acres are located beneath the words "E 2500 S". It is a long narrow, strip of land, sitting on the north

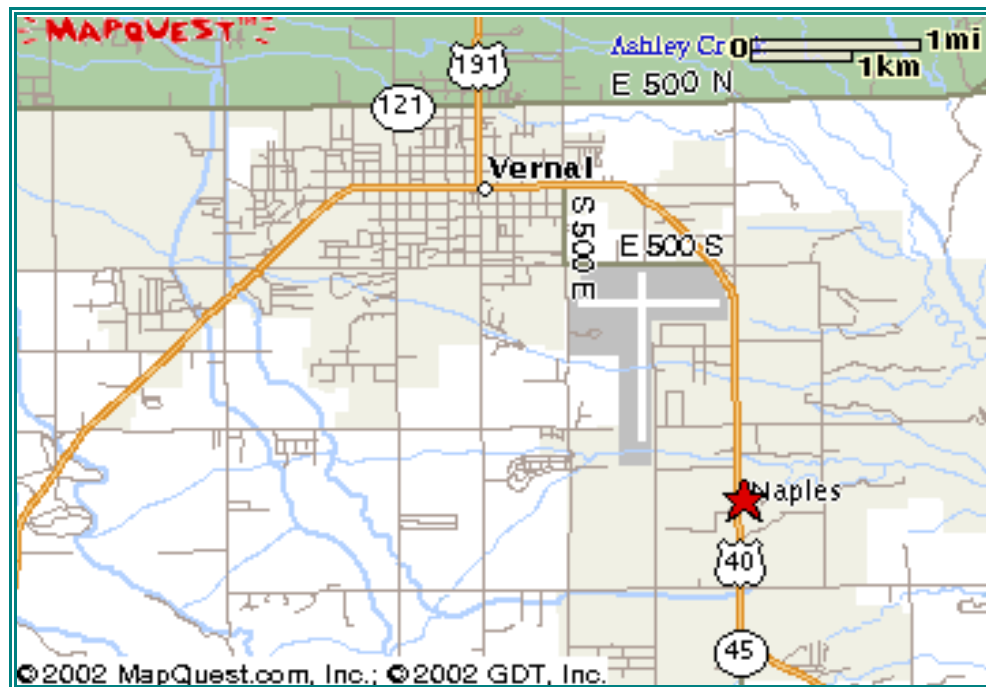


side of that road. It starts under the "2" and extends eastward to the junction of S 2000 E.

Harold's home is located today on the NE corner of the junction of S 2000 E and E 2500 S. I used to walk there to visit cousin Sandy in 1945. Harold, 99 years old in 2002, told me that after he dies his house will be razed but he will continue his life in the old house until he dies. He built that house himself with lumber he bought from a sawmill that he was working in at the time. Uncle Grant lives west of Harold a quarter mile on the south side of that street about under the "E". The original 35 acres are occupied by a dozen or so grandchildren of Grandpa and Grandma Merrell. Most of the original 35 acres remains in the family today. Grandpa's own farmhouse is located, even today, just below the "00"s of "2500".

This map shows where our own Vernal farm was located in relationship to

Naples. Our farm was on the east side of the road that runs north-south through the state road sign "121". We were a quarter mile south of "E 500S". Grandpa's house was south of Naples and a bit east of



the US 40 sign. When I was 6 I walked with a small suitcase from our farm clear over to Naples to visit grandma and grandpa Merrell.

The town of Jensen is where grandpa and grandma Merrell lived as kids. It started out as a fort in the 1800's to protect white settlers from Indians. I'm sort of sympathetic to the Indians. One of the original buildings in that area was the Burton Farm. It was built about the time of the Meeker Massacre and settlers would enter the one acre fort when there was danger. The location was later called Riverdale which is at the confluence of Ashley Creek and the Greenriver. Eventually another name had to be chosen to satisfy the US Postal Service because they wouldn't accept the name Riverdale. A Jensen family had lived there for some time and been involved in the development of the area so the family name was given to the community. Note that this family has no relationship to our own. Jens Jensen, tho emigrated from Denmark, was an only son a was his son Samuel, and his grandson Alvin. Dick and I and our descendants are the only Jensens who are directly related to each other.

I don't have any family history about my mother's grandparents, so don't know how the two families ended up living in Jensen. The only information I have is from the book "Jensen, Utah - Where is it?". It reports that:

*"John Alexander Angus was born in Spanish Fork in 1862. He married Mary Jane Gribble. They came to the Uintah Basin in the Spring of 1886 with their two daughters Christina "Teenie" and Mary."  
(1979:314)"*

John Alexander, according to grandma, lived in Jensen for some time which explains how she met Fuller. Fuller's extended family also lived in Jensen, including Merrells as well as Remingtons. Harold said that the Merrell place was on the Greenriver upstream from the bridge.

Given the date of his birth and the time he went to Jensen, I've wondered if Brigham Young had ordered these families out to one of his outposts. A bit of history in case you don't already know it: Brigham was the greatest colonizer of the North American continent, bat none. Of course, he had a captive audience of hundreds of thousands who would do his bidding. He had a monumental vision from the time he settled in Salt Lake valley until his death 30 some years later of creating a continuous string of LDS settlements from Mexico in the south to Canada in the north. He succeeded in that dream. He'd simply call families to go settle such and such a location and away they would go, a carpenter, a black smith, a few farmers, a cartwright, a miller and so on. He'd just create a town by edict

with the necessary skills to make the town survive. By the time he finished, he had created more than 120 settlements from the Juarez Colonies -where John Taylor hid out from the feds for a while in the 1880's I think it was- up to Cardston, Alberta, Canada. If you saw a map of these towns, you'd see a continuous chain of them running north and south through the Rocky Mountains.

The little bit I know of the Vernal and Jensen area makes me think that Brigham didn't actually order settlements in those areas. Exploration for natural resources and land probably prompted these settlements to develop and then your ancestors decided to take advantage of the resources that sounded more encouraging than where they lived.

Some of Fuller's relatives, the Remingtons, lived in the Jensen area. The Remingtons moved to Rainbow camp and Fuller Remington, grandpa's name sake, helped set up the operation. That explains in part how Fuller ended up going there later.

## Ferries

Volume II of Rodger Polley's "The Uintah Railway - Pictorial History" states that "Merrill Brothers" (page 371) ran a ferry across the Greenriver in Jensen, one of many that operated prior to the time the bridge was built. I asked Harold if this would have been our relatives and he said he thought so because they lived a short distance above Jensen and did have a small ferry.

I used ferries like this in the Amazon basin. The operation is disarmingly simple: the river current provides the power to move the ferry across. There is no need to paddle, there are no motors, and no rudders. In the image it's hard to see it but the ferry is secured to is a taut guy wire that runs across the river from bank to bank. The guy wire is the

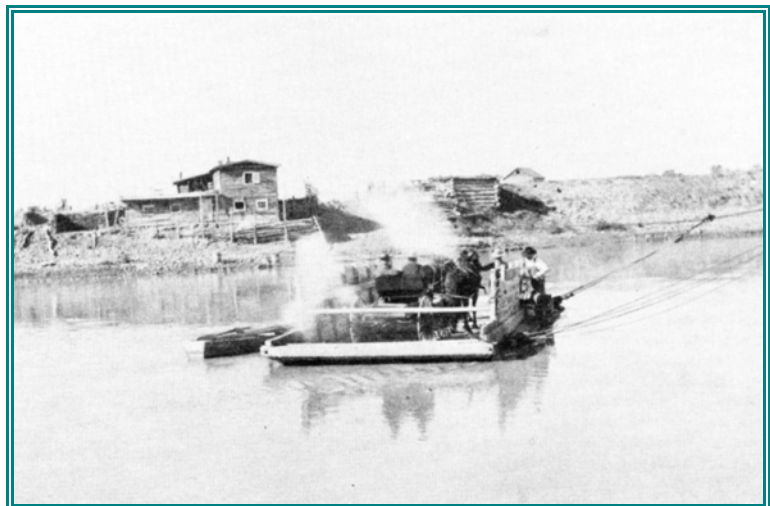


Figure 7 Ferry at Jensen (Jensen, Utah page 7)

basis for what happens. In this image the ferry is moving away from the viewer going to the far shore. To make this happen, the front end of the ferry was secured closer to the guy wire than the back end of the ferry was. You can see the different length ropes holding the two ends. These ropes are fastened to small trolleys that roll freely on the guy wire. As the current pushes on the long side of the ferry, the ferry moves along the guy wire on those trolleys. When the ferry reaches the bank, the two ropes are reversed.

This ferry was tended by men who did it to make a living, so there was someone there to get the ferry to the bank where a traveler needed to cross the river. But in the Amazon, some of these ferries were left untended on the bank after the traveler got across. In Peixe, we had to wait for hours to get across a river because the ferry was on the opposite bank and there was no one to return it. Someone finally came down the road, re-rigged the ropes and came across to our side. That wasn't because they wanted to help us. They just wanted to get across the river.