

# John Ivan Andrus

## An Oral History

by Edward Andrus Young, grandson

*This oral history was compiled from an interview of my grandfather John Ivan Andrus (Ivan), along with his wife Susie, conducted by me (Edward Young) in Sterling, UT during the 1980-1981 school year. It is focused primarily on the years of Grandpa's youth.*

*At the time, I was a junior at Manti High School and Grandpa and Grandma Andrus were living in Sterling with my parents, Keith and Erma Young. Grandpa Andrus had been very ill and had recovered just enough to carry on the interview. The experience of conducting the interview and compiling this brief history firsthand is one I am deeply grateful for. I have many fond memories of Grandpa and Grandma Andrus and I am grateful for the opportunity to have lived with them.*



**Edward:** What was it like when you were a child?

**Ivan:** Well, they were hard times. I was born at Big Cottonwood, Utah on the seventh of April 1897, to Milo Andrus and Elizabeth Boyes. I had thirteen brothers and sisters. Two of them died when they were young. One of them was about three or four, the other one a year or two older, or something like that, and then the rest of them lived until they were matured.

When I was born, we lived in a frame house. Then Father got fancy and added on to it. He built that with adobe, and then he really got fancy and added to it with brick, and that was the entire deal. One part of the house was a parlor, and the part that was made of brick was bedrooms, and the other part was frame. And when they got fancy enough to build a new house, why then, Father built a new house to live in. I was in high school when they built the new house. It was built of red brick. It is a lovely, lovely, house.

**Edward:** Were times better or worse than they are now?

**Ivan:** Oh, they were a whole lot better than they are now. We had nice times with all our brothers and sisters. We had good enjoyable times... never had any trouble with any of the kids, went to bed early, got up early, done what their fathers and mothers told 'em. What else did they do Susie? Ha, ha, ha.

**Edward:** What is your earliest memory?

**Ivan:** Oh my earliest memory is when my folks had come from Lambs Canyon with a bear that they had shot and hauled home in the wagon. I can remember how scared I was when I went out and saw that bear. Ha, ha, ha. When I saw what they had out there, you know – it was close out there to the barn – and when I saw what they had, I ran back to the house as fast as I could run.

**Edward:** What types of things did you do as a child?

**Ivan:** Well, my mother used to say, "Obedience is the first law of heaven, and order is its results." That's how it was, and whenever she said for me to do anything, that's what I done.

**Edward:** How did your parents treat you?

**Ivan:** Real well. My father never said much to me. My mother was always in charge. Father never said much of anything. I guess he thought she could always handle the situation. I was the baby boy, and my mother and father taught me to be honest and honorable, but my older sisters said I was spoiled.

**Edward:** As a teenager, did you go on dates?

**Ivan:** Oh man, I started datin' when I was about twelve or thirteen. We went sleigh riding and horse back riding... The trouble was, Ed, my older brother went out at night and come home all excited 'cause he had such a lovely girl. She had a little sister, she was about my age, and her sister was about my brother's age, and we had one for each of us. I latched on to mine and he latched on to his. I don' know why, but he never stuck to his, ...but I stuck to mine.

In Salt Lake Valley at that time they had quite a little bit of sleigh riding so consequently my father had a nice bob-sleigh and a nice team, so when he thought it was wisdom to go

sleigh riding, he would allow us to go sleigh riding when we got big enough. When we were little and wanted to go sleigh riding, he would take us sleigh riding. We'd take all the kids in the neighborhood and go sleigh riding. Then, when my brother and I got big enough, we'd do it ourselves, and the next thing you know I was smart enough so as I didn't need him and I'd go do it myself. The only thing there was at that time was horses – never had anything but horses – so we'd go horseback riding and throw the girls on behind us.

One time when I was a little fellow, I had this little girl, and we went riding. I had a little pony. I was about eight years old when I got it. My brother had a beautiful buggy ...it was a three-seater outfit, and a horse broke to ride. We never had a horse unless it was broke to ride. He had a girl and two or three of her friends out ridin', and I had this little girl with me. I thought I had a real nice, fast horse. I was telling my girl how much faster my horse was than my brother's. The big stuff in those days was to have a horse that could trot fast. Well, I was tickling my horse with a willow, I could stay even with my brother's rig, but I couldn't pass him. We was in this little buggy, and all of the sudden we struck this culvert. I was only watching my horse, and my girl didn't know enough to watch anything. We struck this culvert, and of course the horse didn't know anything, and it dumped us out. It was a two-wheeled outfit, with a seat and a little basket where you put your feet. I fell down in the bottom and then my ladylove came down on top of me. The rest of them laughed, oh how they did laugh, and here I was sitting down in the bottom of this basket. I was very embarrassed.

**Susie:** We used to go to house parties. We didn't have to have much of an occasion to have a party, somebody's birthday or something. Then sometimes the boys would walk the girls home. Isn't that right, Pa?

**Ivan:** It wasn't right, but they did it anyway. Ha, ha, ha.

**Edward:** What was it like when you first went out on your own?

**Ivan:** Well, I was only eleven years old when I left home with my girl. I took her to show her Lambs Canyon. I don't know if you could call that "on your own" or not.

One time we really went out in style. It was in the Salt Lake Theater. I took my girl out one night and I wanted the very best there was. I didn't realize I was out of order, but I wanted to show my girl I was the best there was. So we sat up in the front seats, right close to the stage; the most expensive seats in the house. But anyway, when my father found out I was down there amongst all the fanciest people, I really got in trouble. Ha, ha, ha. Here we were from out in the sticks, ten miles from Salt Lake.

When I was eight years old my sister, Elizabeth, went out – well, there was a man come up from the Uinta reservation with some ponies, about thirty or forty of 'em. He bought them from the Indians and he brought 'em in to sell to the people. My sister was so pleased to get something for me and my brother Willard that she got some ponies for us.

I was too young to do anything with a wild pony; they were buckskins. It wasn't very long before my brothers had 'em broke so we could handle 'em. My pony lasted all through my childhood. My pony died when I got old enough to leave for work, but Wid's pony lasted 'til he had two or three kids and then we killed him for coyote bait; but my pony died younger. He was probably about eighteen years old when he died. Mine was the fastest pony in the country. There was no other pony in the area that could run as fast as my pony did. Wid's couldn't run so fast. When Father had our team out on the thrasher, we would haul grain and mine was balky, but Wid's pony was always where he was supposed to be, but mine was a fast one.

**Edward:** What were your school days like?

**Ivan:** Well, I never had very much trouble at school. My mother didn't let me go to school 'til I got old enough so'st I knew about what I was to school for...

**Susie:** Didn't you go when you were five years old?

**Ivan:** Yes. Ha, ha, ha.

**Susie:** They *thought* you was smart enough to go to school.

**Ivan:** The reason I did that, is 'cause my sister, Mary, was a schoolteacher. She got me up there to tutor and go to school, and I got bull-headed at that time. I should a' gone later but I had – don't tell this on me, Ed – I had more on the ball when it come to goin' to school than most a' the kids did. Don't tell this on me, for Pete's sake. So I got along. I was able to go to school when I was younger – when I was nine or eight or seven years younger than the others. Some didn't go to school much in those days. Clarence Bowthorpe quit school about in the fifth grade. Oss Taylor went 'til he was about in fifth or sixth grade, then he quit. Then, later on, he decided that he wanted to be smarter, so he went to high school.

I was a better ball player than most kids 'cause I had a brother, Willard, to play with me, and we each had a ball and a glove, and we could play catch. So consequently, I had so much more advantage; most kids didn't have that advantage. They either didn't have a ball and glove, or else they didn't have a brother to coach 'em. So I had a better chance. There just wasn't hardly any kid that had that chance. Since I had a better chance than most kids I got to be on the main team when I was still just a little feller. I could pitch somewhat and I was out there once and ol' Clarence Bowthorpe threw a curve ball. I saw it coming and I ducked under so it wouldn't hit me, and I done well but the trouble of it is, he threw an 'out-drop'; and I dropped all right. Ha, ha, ha. He was older– about six years older than I was – so I went to miss the ball like I ordinarily would and he had a fancy manner of droppin' it. He curved it and dropped it so when I ducked down to miss the ball the ball dropped down and hit me in the back of the head. Ha, ha, ha. The man that was supposed to catch the ball caught me in his arms and carried me over to the shade and they went on with the ball game. But the darn thing was over before I could

play again. When it was time to start school why I'd recovered sufficiently that I could get up and go to the school.

I was champion wrestler, Ed, no two ways about it. I was the best wrestler there was in school. I don't think it was entirely due to my experience, I think it was natural for me. I had more ability to wrestle than I did anything else. Some people can sing, some can draw, some can do other things, but my things was wrestlin' and haulin' manure. No kid could haul manure better'n I could.

**Edward:** What was wrestling like then?

**Ivan:** We didn't have this fancy stuff, it was just a matter of grabbing hold of each other and who ever could throw the other'n down was the winner. I threw down every kid in the school. We didn't have none of this fancy stuff they have now, it wasn't this kind of trash. When you was throwed down why you was down. I had enough ability that I could still do it when I was in the army; because I had so much ability that way and I had some experience. I never met a kid while I was in the army that I couldn't handle.

**Edward:** What were some of your army experiences?

**Ivan:** Well, the army experiences... I did all right. I got quite fortunate; I got into the supply company. I got the privilege of driving a four-mule outfit. My job was to haul whatever they needed hauled: manure, gravel, food, bread, supplies to the kitchen, ...whatever they wanted me to haul. This was at Camp Kearny, in World War I.

During the winter, it got quite cold at times. We were only issued two blankets; that was not enough. Sometimes we added overcoats and the like. We lived in tents and the mess halls were frame buildings.

The mules were fed one and a half gallons of grain every day. So they'd always be ready to run. Sometimes the sergeant would come along to make sure I was doing everything right. I was never supposed to leave my seat. We never traveled alone in the army, and whoever rode with me was supposed to load and unload the wagon while I held the lines. Sometimes I got softhearted and went back there to help 'em. One time, all of the sudden, the mules took off and started to run. They ran right up to the mess hall. They stopped so fast that it rammed the wagon tongue up and unhooked the doubletrees. By then I had got back up on the seat and had hold of the lines, but the singletrees had dropped onto the heels of the leaders and I couldn't stop 'em. I could only guide them so they didn't run into anything. When we was going through camp, the sergeant saw us coming and stood in the middle of the road, waving his arms. The mules ran right up to him and then stopped. He hooked up the doubletrees and I went back on about my business. That was the only runaway I ever had in the army.

**Edward:** What did you do after you got out of the Army?

**Ivan:** One of ours neighbors wanted to go on a mission, so he wanted to lease his place to somebody. So we made a deal and I leased his farm and bought his horses and cattle. Then I thought I needed a cook, ha, ha, so I got my ladylove that I left behind when I went into the army. I got her and we were married in the Salt Lake Temple.

The following years were spent buying land and raising a family. We had fun times and lived during both bad times and good times. And in April of 1959, we moved to Lava Hot Springs, Idaho. During the past few years we have lived here in Sanpete a lot of the time. With exception of all the rocks, this is beautiful country. Ha, ha, ha.