A Narrative

When I tried to figure out where to go to get a story from anyone in my life, I really got lost. Lots of family and friends, lots of stories but I wanted something new! So here goes!

I was talking to my mom this last weekend and we started talking about her and my fathers’ adventure and life in Idaho. How did they get there? Why did they go there? Why did they pick Idaho and why would two Native Californians pick up and just leave?

My parents were married in October of 1978 but even before that they had already talked about leaving California to try a new environment and maybe start a family somewhere else. They didn’t know where they wanted to go but decided to check out employment in different states. They wanted to live in a small town that had mountains; rivers and wilderness close by, as they both loved the outdoors. My father was in construction, even though his father warned him not to go into that trade and my mother was a travel agent. They then proceeded to apply for positions in different states, mostly on the west coast and northwest.

My mom sent out three resumes for travel agents and then saw an ad in a Travel Agent magazine that was looking for a travel agent trained in the use of American Airlines computer system, which my mom had already been using for quite some time. She called the ad and spoke to a woman who had an agency in Pocatello, Idaho and she was looking for someone to help her install and train others in the use of the American Airlines system. That travel agency would be the first computerized travel agency in the whole state of Idaho. There it was the perfect opportunity to move and start fresh, my father and mother in a new place and a new beginning. So in November of 1978, they left family and friends to start their new adventure.
Once they got there and realized that they definitely weren’t in California anymore, they had to acclimate to the weather of the area… cold! They knew it was winter, of course, but how did they know that their first experience of winter in Idaho would be the coldest in almost 40 years? They didn’t!

Life was a challenge. Once they settled in, dad had to look for work, which wasn’t the easiest thing in the winter season for a carpenter. So the job search began and dad ended up finding a job at a company called Simplot. It was a fertilizer company, known around the world.

Now that they both had jobs it was time to learn how to deal with such cold weather. After a couple of times of waking to a frozen car battery, dad thought it would be a good idea to disconnect it each night and bring it in the house. That seemed to work. They both like the out of doors and exploring, so that is what they did. They did that in the winter, a block at a time, since that was all the cold they could stand, after all it was almost 25 below. They went out looking for hiking boots and jackets that would actually keep them warm when they were out. Mom told me about their first Christmas there. They decided to go snowshoeing Christmas morning to the top of Scout Mountain and have breakfast. She recalls it as being one of the best Christmases ever!

They had no money and were struggling but the idea of being out and discovering new places to camp, fish and hike was what made them happy. They got to discover places like Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Yellowstone National Park, the Sawtooth Mountains and the Grand Tetons while they were there. I think they really enjoyed it!

They were settled and loving their new life, when my dad was hired by the State of Idaho in the Transportation Department. Both of my parents had good jobs and decided it was time to buy their first home. The house was great from what they tell me. And it amazes me that they only paid $28,000.00 for it and they told me their house payment were something like $375.00 a month. They did a lot of work on it, remodeling to make it comfortable to begin a family.

Life for them was good and when my mom found out that she was pregnant, they were pretty excited. In fact, everyone in the family on my dad’s side was really happy. First grandchild and all! Getting ready for a baby kept them busy and both of them were still working at the time.
My dads’ parents came out for a visit in July of 1980 and it seemed that at that time things started to change a bit.

During their visit, my mom’s brother passed away suddenly and she had to leave to New Mexico for the funeral. Later, my father lost his job and things got tough. They started to doubt that their move was the right thing to do, being away from family and friends. But they just kept showing up every day.

On January 1, 1981, their son was born and it was as if nothing else mattered. They took their son on his first camping trip at two months old and it was great. Mom says she can still see her son on the bank of a river in a car seat, while they were fishing next to him. They did a lot together outdoors, the three of them, hiking with their son in a backpack, keeping life simple. They didn’t have a lot of money but knew how to be happy even struggling and not having to spend a cent.

Their son turned 11 months old when they made a difficult decision to move back to California, where my dad knew he could find a job. The struggling financially and the idea of losing their home that they had loved, was difficult but they knew a change was necessary.

We moved to California in November of 1981 and started over. Something that I believe happens a lot in our lives, but I know that my parents did enjoy every moment and new adventure they took when they lived in Idaho, hoping that the best adventure was becoming new parents.