

Paula Rych



Interview

Sylvia F. Riskus was born on Jan. 24, 1918 in Kemmerer Wyoming to John and Sylvia Pulos. Soon after her birth her family moved to Gun Quealy Coal Company, which today is a ghosttown. Her three sisters, Georgia, Mary and Helen, were born there.

The family lived in a mining camp. Her father, like all the other men in the camp, mined coal for a living. Young Sylvia would play with all children of all ages in the camp. They would play "Run My Sheepie Run", a game which children today call "Hide And Seek", "Kick The Can", "Baseball", and "Hopscotch".

She also attended school from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Gun Quealy. They were taught in a one room school house and her teacher was Mrs. Collins.

The family then moved to Sweetwater Wyo. to another mining camp. Her youngest sister, Elsie, was born there. She attended 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades with Ina Debernardi as her teacher. She rode a bus to the New High School in Rock Springs after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The children were taught general subjects like math, reading, and writing but very little science. There was no physical education but the teacher would take them outside to play games. The teachers were very strict and children could even be slapped on ghe hands if they spoke without permission.

This was the time of the depression so there were very little jobs available. Sylvia would babysit, though, for \$1 or 15¢ a night. Her work was steadier than her fathers. Every morning they would receive a report on whether her father would work that day. He usually worked only 1 or 2 days a week. Her mother helped out by working at the Gun Quealy store as a clerk.

The families food supply was helped by the credit they received at Miner's Merc. And her grandparents would also send food from their farm in Utah. Her grandmother made most of their clothes but her mother had to wear her father's shoes during the day.

In the house her mother was the disaplinarian and she was very strict. They had to be in at 8 p.m. and their school-work had to be done.

There wasn't much money for holidays so for their birth-days they were happy to get cake. For Christmas there was one present under the tree. There was no churches in the camp but a First Baptist's minister would give a sermon every week.

Her father followed politics closely and, of course, sided in with the worker's and unions.

In 1949 she was married to Pete Riskus at age 31. She met him while working at Montgomery Ward's. They had one child Franklin on April 12, 1950. She now has 2 grandchildren living in Rock Springs; Troy, who is 13 , and Sonya, who is 10.

WYOMING STATE ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT  
BIOGRAPHICAL FORM

NAME: Sylvia F. Riskus

PRESENT ADDRESS: 727 Wendell Ave

1. Present profession or occupation: Clerk
2. Occupations followed in the past (give dates): Clerk - Bi Rite Drug  
Montgomery Ward 1938-1949 Clerk - Bookkeeper - T. J. Shoes Clerk  
Chevron Gift Shoppe
3. Date of birth: JAN 24-1918 Place of birth: Hemmerlee, Wyo
4. Date of moving to Wyoming: —
5. Full name of parents (give mother's maiden name)  
JOHN PULOS, SYLVIA F. WEST
6. Names of brothers and sisters (and to whom married):  
GEORGIA MANTED STEPHEN  
MARY JANCANELLA SILVIO  
HELEN PULOS  
ELSIE RICE EARL
7. Schools attended (give dates):  
St. Lucy  
Sweetwater  
Rock Springs, Wyo
8. Places of residence in Wyoming (give dates):  
GOBEL ST  
130 L ST  
727 WENDT AVE. 1949
9. Military service (dates, awards, area served, rank, etc.):  
NONE
10. Political offices held (give dates):  
NONE
11. Political affiliation: DEMOCRATE
12. Religious affiliation: FIRST BAPTIST Church
13. Marriage (spouse's name, date and place of marriage):  
PETE RISKUS  
ROCK SPRINGS, WYO MAY 29-1949
14. Children (names, dates of birth, grandchildren, etc.):  
FRANKLIN RISKUS - APRIL 12-1950  
GRANDCHILDREN  
TROY RISKUS NOV. 6-1969  
SONYA RISKUS SEPT 5-1972
15. List of clubs and societies of which you are a member:  
Eagles