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Oral History Collection

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Hanssen, Evelyn and Gladys Miller

September 12, 1989

Interviewed by Irene Francis

IF: This tape is property of Custer County Library. It is part of an oral history taping. The subject of this tape is Gladys Augusta Miller and Evelyn Amelia Hanssen. The date is September 12, 1989. Gladys and Evelyn are sisters and we're going to ask them about their family, their father and mother and their grandparents. First of all, I'd like to find out who their husbands were. Gladys, I'd like you to tell me about your husband, what his name was and like that.

GM: Homer William Daniel Miller. He was born here in Westcliffe.

IF: Tell me why he has two names.

GM: After his grandparents, I think, cause his grandparent was Daniel and William, I believe. Well, really, it was an uncle too, that I think was part of it.

IF: So, then he was given those names when he was baptized?

GM: Yeah, seems like in those days, they did call the names to them.

IF: Mm hmm. And was he baptized here in the valley?

GM: Yes, he was.

IF: What church was he baptized-

GM: Lutheran church.

IF: The Lutheran church. Give me the date of his birth.

GM: July 10, 1913.

IF: Alright. Evelyn, I'd like you to give me your husband's name and his birth date.

EH: Carey Frederick John William Hanssen, born April 30, 1915.

IF: And was he also baptized here in the valley?

EH: Yes, he's baptized here.

IF: And why does he have so many names?

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EH: He was named after his uncles.

IF: Was-he was born here in the valley?

EH: Yes, he was born here.

IF: Do you know-tell me a little about their birth, if you know. Was, were they born at home or were they taken to a hospital, do you know anything-

EH: I think they were born at home. I think Carey was.

IF: Uh huh. And where was his family? Were they on a ranch or-

EH: Yes, they were on a ranch, out in the valley.

IF: Did his parents homestead?

EH: I think they did but they were up, towards the mountains more, and then they moved over by the Lutheran cemetery where they, well, that's where he was born, over there.

IF: Uh huh, so there was a house over there?

EH: Mm hmm. They worked on a movie, cut me, moved it and towards the bed and then they burned it down so-

IF: What movie was this?

EH: Comes a Horseman.

IF: Mm hmm, and that was, they moved it over by Lake DeWeese?

EH: Uh huh. Well, it's this, down Oak Creek Road away. That's where they moved it to and then they burned it down.

IF: Was the ranch owned by anyone else before?

EH: I'm not sure about that. It evidently was because they rented for a while another place, but then they moved over there. I think it belonged to somebody else but I don't know who.

IF: How about you, Gladys? Was your husband born at home or-

GM: I think so because I don't think they had anybody around. They might have their, what do they call them?

IF: Midwife?

GM: Midwife. He was born out in the valley too.

IF: Mm hmm. Now I'd like to know your maiden name. I'll ask you Gladys because your names are about the same. So, your maiden name was-

GM: Swanson.

IF: And spell it for me.

GM: Swanson.

IF: Did your parents, did your father come from this area, or did he come-

GM: From Germany, they all came from Sweden.

EH: Our father, our dad, yeah, he came from Sweden.

IF: From Sweden?

EH: Yeah, I think it was [unintelligible] Sweden.

IF: And he came to this area?

EH: To Cripple Creek.

IF: To Cripple Creek, and what did he do in Cripple Creek?

EH: He mined.

IF: Did you know what he mined? Was it gold or silver?

EH: I think it was gold because that's all that they talked about, was gold.

IF: And he didn't look for the gold. He worked in the mines.

EH: He just worked in the mine.

IF: Tell me the story about how you came to come here. You came here with, to live with your grandmother, but-

EH: Well, we lost our mother and sister in the flood and our dad worked up at Cripple Creek and well, he

couldn't keep us kids and still work, so he brought us down to grandma's and then we stayed with grandma.

IF: Tell me about the flood. You were going-

EH: We came down here to visit grandma and web's going home. Then, we got car trouble and our dad walked up to the-get help and then when they come, there was an awful rainstorm. They didn't think it was so bad and they pulled us right into the waters-

IF: Instead of out of them.

EH: Yeah.

IF: Did, were you on a highway or where you on a side road?

EH: Shelf road.

GM: I think it was more or less a side road.

IF: Were there other cars around? Did anyone else-

EH: Then? There might have been more but we didn't know. We were too little to know.

GM: I don't think there was much traffic on that road either. They didn't use it very much.

IF: I can see why, huh?

GM: It was such a narrow road.

GM: Nobody even spoke to us.

IF: Oh.

EH: We lost everything. The only clothes that we had was on our backs and it was [unintelligible] clothes.

IF: And so, your dad brought you here to live with your grandmother and give me the name of your grandmother.

EH: Well, let's see, Rowlina Henrietta Custer and she married O'Grisky. When we came down, she was married to O'Grisky.

IF: And her maiden name was-

EH: Merriman.

IF: Merriman. Did they have, did your grandmother have a ranch, did they have a ranch?

EH: Yes, they did. About 8, 10 miles out of town here.

IF: Mm hmm.

EH: The Capnicks live on it now, Susan and David Capnick. That was our home.

IF: Did they come over with the German colony?

EH: I don't think right with the colony but they come shortly after that.

IF: But the O'Grisky that she married was, did he-

EH: His folks.

IF: His folks came over with the colony. Now you're out on the ranch with your grandma O'Grisky.

EH: Yes.

IF: Did you attend school near the ranch?

EH: Yeah, it was about half a mile from Colfax school, was the school we went to. We graduated from Colfax school.

IF: And it was one of the one room schoolhouses. Do you remember any of your teachers?

EH: Yes, I remember some of them.

GM: Mabel Enges was one and Mr. Johnson was one. Maeve [unintelligible] was one. I can't think of any more.

IF: How old were you when you started the school? Did they take you, did they have such a thing as kindergarten or did you start in first grade?

EH: I started up at Cripple Creek and I was in the 3rd grade and still in the 3rd grade when we came down here cause we started up there, I did, and then, our dad brought us down here and we went on to the 3rd grade. My [unintelligible] was my 3rd grade teacher then. I won't say for sure.

IF: Was there one teacher in the school or was there-

EH: Mm hmm.

IF: Just one teacher.

EH: He would have all lessons too. He taught everyone, all reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, anything.

IF: What would you do when you were in 3rd grade and you had your lesson. Then she was teaching, for instance, somebody in 8th grade?

EH: We were doing homework. We'd be doing, just your studying.

IF: You better be quiet, huh?

EH: Yeah.

IF: How far away was the school from the ranch?

IF: About a half mile we had to walk.

IF: You walked-

EH: Mm hmm.

IF: You walked in all kinds of weather.

EH: Yeah.

GM: Uh huh.

IF: Nobody took you?

EH: No.

IF: You remember any snowstorms that you had to walk through?

GM: Sure did.

EH: Every winter. In the snow.

GM: The wind would blow and make, you know, rows, and we climbed over the row, we climbed over the fence there was so much drifted snow.

EH: You just bundled up real good and no horses or anything. Nobody could get on a horse.

GM: No, we always walked.

IF: Do you remember some of the people you went to school with?

EH: Well, I know mine, let's see, Howard Jones and Mabel Jones, Elvins Ulrich and Ed and Frank Snyder. They were in my class.

GM: Well, they were, from beginning to end, I mean, there were different Snyder boys. I think there was four of them and there was two older boys and an older girl.

IF: Was there church out there at that time or was that the Lutheran church? Was that out in the valley at that time or had they already built the church in Westcliffe.

EH: At that time, I think it was in Westcliffe already.

IF: Did they have a school?

EH: Yes, a summer school because Elmer went to the summer school that was out in the valley and they went to the summer school. Harry did too, and German school.

IF: Did they teach in German?

EH: Yeah.

IF: Were a lot of the services in German? Did they have German-

EH: Yes, at first, they were. Uh huh.

IF: And, as time went by, they had English.

GM: Then it got so they'd have English every Sunday except, I think, the first Sunday. Then they'd have the German service.

IF: You said summer school. What would they do in winter? Would they go to the-

EH: They'd go to the grade school then. Elmer went to the Bick school and we went to the Colfax school and they were just like the kids are now go to all 8th grade.

GM: Harry went to the [unintelligible] school.

IF: So, with the summer school, would they teach them more than, would they teach them just religion or was it a regular school along with it?

GM: No, they read and talked German.

IF: They taught in German, like a catechism?

EH: Mm hmm.

IF: In order to make your confirmation, so you went to the, uh, I see.

EH: We didn't go though. We didn't get confirmed until, oh I was, it was in '34, wasn't it, when we-

GM: '31, I think.

IF: Did you have chores on the ranch?

EH & GM: Mm hmm.

IF: What did you have to do, Gladys?

GM: Well, we milked cows, fed the horses, fed the pigs, fed the chickens. We done everything that was on the farm to do.

IF: Would you have to do that before you went to school?

GM: Yep.

IF: How about you Evelyn?

EH: Did the same. My job usually was always go getting the cows, and I always liked to do that.

IF: Did you have a dog or something to go with you?

EH: No, just on foot.

IF: Uh huh.

EH: On foot. You have to treat the [unintelligible] bark. The cows heard the [unintelligible] bark. Cows started coming home.

GM: [unintelligible] I used to always get the cows.

IF: Oh. You would call them.

GM: Mm hmm.

IF: Well, how did you call them? Did you just say – here, cows, or what would you do?"

GM: Yeah, usually something like that. Come on, Bossie, you know, like that.

EH: We had all our animals named.

IF: Did you slaughter your own animals?

EH: No, we had a bunch of ducks that was supposed to have been butchered, and nobody'd butcher them. I don't know who butchered them, but we didn't do it!

IF: Because you made pets out of them?

GM: I did chickens though. There were a lot of chickens.

IF: Pretty hard to make a pet out of a chicken. Did you have any pigs?

EH and GM: Yes, yes.

IF: How about 4H? Was there any 4H at that time?

GM: If there was, we didn't know it.

IF: How about town? Did you get to come into town?

EH: Not very often.

GM: No, not very often. That was a treat when we got to come to town.

IF: Would you, how would you come to town? Would you have a truck or a wagon on-

GM: I think our uncle then had a car out there. Model T or whatever they had those days. But we didn't get to come to town very often.

IF: When you did get to come to town, do you remember any of the stores that were here?

GM: I can remember one was a shoe store cause we wore a lot of shoes out and we had to come to the store and have shoes fitted and that was down there by where Jennings Market, somewhere in there.

IF: Well, there was a hardware store, Beeman Hardware in Jennings at one point. Did you think they might have sold shoes?

GM: No, they didn't at that time. They just had lumber and all that kind of stuff.

IF: So, this was a regular-

GM: Kettle and Taylor was the one, I think, wasn't it, that sold the shoes? They had shoes in part of their

store.

IF: Is that the same Kettle family that is here now?

GM: I believe it is-

IF: Kettle?

GM: Branch off of them.

IF: [unintelligible] was the name. So, this was a shoe store, where they had any clothes too or just shoes?

GM: Just shoes is all I remember. That's all we, grandma always sewed our clothes.

IF: How about you, Evelyn? What do you remember of town?

EH: Well, I know we had two drugstores.

IF: Who were the drugstores?

EH: Moth was one of them and Adams was the other. Was it Adams or was it Mark that was related to Canda's? To Canda?

GM: Merriam, yeah, Merriam.

IF: And Adams. Where was the Adams drugstore? I know where the Merriam drugstore was.

GM: Well, they were opposite streets, but I don't remember what place it was. The store has changed so many times, you don't remember.

IF: Right. What did you do for entertainment?

GM: We had chores to do all the time. We didn't know what entertainment was.

IF: You went to bed.

GM: Well, we did crochet a lot.

IF: Uh huh.

GM: And then we'd play cards. We played poker, but with matches.

IF: How young were you when you learned to crochet?

EH: Oh, I didn't do it too much, crocheting. I never had time, didn't seem like.

IF: You were doing the chores. But you, Gladys, did crochet.

GM: Yeah, I did some, but it's like then we didn't have any. Ev and I always on it, we worked as a man on the ranch, and we helped with everything. With plowing and dragging meadows and stacking hay.

IF: Did they, did you grow any agriculture at that point? I mean like peas or-

GM: We had some lettuce. We had a lot of that. And potatoes.

IF: And then, you would bring them into town. Was there the railroad here then? Is that how they would ship them, the railroad?

GM & EH: Yeah.

GM: The lettuce they did.

IF: Did you have to help pack any of those?

GM: We picked them.

EH: Yeah, we picked them. Somebody else packed them.

GM: Our uncle brought them to town. But we'd have to get up early in the morning and pick peas, and we picked them all day long. We tried to see how many bushels we could, or hampers that they called them then, how many we could pick in a day. I used to know but I forgot whether it was 12 or 13 hampers a day.

EH: This would take you all day, from like sunup till the sun, supertime when the sun went down.

IF: Do you remember how much they got for peas, a bushel of peas?

GM: I can't remember just what it was. It wasn't very much. Seems like it was about \$3 a hamper or something like that.

IF: And you take them into town and probably pack them in ice-

GM: They'd sort them out. They'd have sorters here in town here and sort them out cause they want a good pea, and I imagine then they packed them.

IF: Would they shell them?

GM & EH: No.

EH: They would shell them wherever they-they'd take them away from here before they were shelled.

IF: Evelyn, your husband had a, still had a thrashing machine and a steam engine which is sitting next to your house right now.

EH: That's Gladys.

IF: Oh, that's Gladys. OK, Gladys' husband had, her husband, Elmer, had a thrashing machine that belonged to his family?

GM: Well, it was his uncle's and it was all in pieces down in Florence, and Elmer helped him bring it up here and he told Elmer that if he would fix his vehicle, that he would give it to Elmer for fixing his vehicle, so he didn't have no [unintelligible] either, I guess. And Elmer fixed his vehicles and give him a dollar so that we could have it recorded and its ours.

IF: Oh, that's nice.

GM: And Marvin and Elmer would get up early in the morning before they had to go to school and Elmer go to work and build on it, was out here, oh out of town, oh, half a mile, I guess. And then when school's out and Elmer's off of work, then they'd go out there and put it together again.

IF: So, they got it all together and then-

GM: They brought it to town.

IF: But the thrashing machine, did that-

GM: That was out at the Millers because-well, Elmer's dad sold the thrashing machine for iron, I guess, and he give the thrashing part to Elmer. So that's how come we got it.

IF: And his family, I think you said, took the machines, the thrasher, different places?

GM: Yeah, uh huh. They had another steam engine and took this behind them and they went all through the valley and thrashed grain. There was quite a bit of grain around here too.

IF: What kind of grain was that? Just old wheat?

GM: Yeah, and barley wheat.

IF: Did you use that to feed your animals or would you send it away from here?

GM: Feed our animals and then sell what you had left.

IF: Evelyn, will you tell me about on the farm, how would you, how would they till the soil and =

EH: We had plows. At first, it was with horses, but then, later on, we had tractors that we could plow with.

IF: When you had the horses, how would you plant the grain? Would you have-

EH: Horses, too, we had a regular drill that would sow the seeds. The horses pull it and the grain would fall down and make the rows.

IF: But you'd have to guide the horses?

EH: Mm hmm. Of course, then, later on, we had the tractors to do it with.

IF: Now, to get back to school a little bit, do you remember, I'm going to ask you this, Evelyn, do you remember any types of activities, special programs you had like Christmas or-

EH: Oh, we used to have little plays. Then, they'd invite another school like the Beck school or the Canute school. We'd get together and have a little play or something like that, just for entertainment.

IF: And they schools were too big, were they, could they hold any dances of anything in the school-

GM: They used to have dances in the Colfax school, the basket socials too.

IF: Tell me about a basket social. What's a basket social that you want for lunch and then, you take it there and somebody bids on it. And whoever bids on it, then, that's the person you had to eat with.

IF: Was this like when you're in your teens?

GM: Mm hmm.

GM: So, it was kind of a romantic thing.

GM: Yeah, that was, you might say.

IF: Now, high school. Did you attend high school?

GM: I just did one year, that's all. Didn't have the money to go, so just went for one year.

IF: Now was that up here in Westcliffe?

GM: Yes, in that other schoolhouse before they had this new one.

IF: With the brick, the brick building. You said you didn't have the money. Did it cost money to go to

high school then?

GM: Well, it was like clothes and books and things like that that you needed and we just didn't have it so we couldn't go.

IF: Then how would you get in from the ranch when you did go?

GM: We stayed in town then. I think we rented a place, didn't we?

EH: Yeah. Was it up here on this side of the courthouse or in the, Mrs. Georges' real estate is in there now.

GM: Yeah.

IF: So, you, just you two girls would rent the house and cook for yourselves and you'd stay there all-

GM: I went two years. The first year, I drove back and forth with the Sniders and then towards spring of the year, no, right after the [unintelligible] had the wrecks, then I got kind of scared. Then I came to town and stayed with Harry's aunt and uncle, Lizzy and Harry Schultz, and then when they had to go out and do their work, then they took me out there and brought me to town every day.

IF: They had a wreck? What kind of wreck did they have?

GM: Car wreck. I was in it. Yeah, going too fast I guess.

IF: Was this in the truck or-

GM: No, brand new car.

IF: What year car was that?

GM: I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you what car it was. It was a brand new car and anyhow, it was demolished. I still don't know how we got out of that car.

IF: How many were in it it?

GM: Frank and Ed and I, was just the three of us. See, we lived right next door neighbors to them and we walked over to go to school with them.

IF: How about your sister, let's see, he had a sister and a brother. Carl, did he graduate from the high school?

GM: No. None of us graduated from high school. I went two years and Ev went one year. And that was it then.

IF: OK, after you went the one year, did you go back and work on the ranch, or how about you, Evelyn? Did you get a job?

EH: No. I didn't have a job till after we moved to town, you might say, well, just a little slow, I did work at school.

IF: What kind of work did you do at school?

EH: Oh, kitchen help.

IF: How about you, Gladys? Did you ever have any other kind of job?

GM: No, I did one, well, a major out there had this little baby, and it died and I went and helped him for a week and then they went to Grandma's and asked Grandma if I couldn't work for them for my board and room. And Grandma says, dad gets your board and room at home. She don't have to go work for it and she wouldn't let us go. Nobody wanted to pay us. I did a lot of housecleaning too before I got in the school. Well, after, I did a little bit but not as much.

IF: Would you come into town and do the housecleaning?

GM: There and in the valley, just any place where they would need somebody.

IF: Ok, when they needed somebody, how would you get there? Did you have a car-

GM: I did then, uh huh.

IF: Now, in recent, in some of the recent years, you have worked as cook at the school. How long did you work at the high school, Gladys?

GM: 22 years.

IF: And how much in the-

GM: 15 years, and then I worked six years up at the Center as cook.

IF: At the theater center.

GM: But before that, I cleaned houses here in town and we papered and we painted [unintelligible] we could do.

IF: Would that be just by word of mouth that you-

GM & EH: Yes, yeah.

GM: Then [unintelligible] Harry and I always, well, Brian did too, to get together and do a lot of papering and painting and all that kind of stuff.

IF: Now, after you got married, Evelyn, what did your husband do?

EH: He was on the farm all the time.

IF: Did you live on the farm?

EH: Mm hmm.

IF: When did you move into the city?

EH: It was in, I think, around '74. See, we just rented the farm all the time and they wanted it for themselves, so then we had to do something different. So, we built a house here in town. Of course, Harry was working on the county at that time too.

IF: On roads, or-

EH: Mmhmm, on roads. Well, then he was county boss for, I don't know just how many years, but for several years.

IF: And didn't he have something to do with weighing?

EH: Yes, he took care of the scale after he got to where he couldn't work on the county any more. He'd take care of the scale.

IF: The scale, I know it's by the courthouse but I don't know, does it weigh the-

EH: Hay and cattle and things like that, when a big truck would come in and wanted to be weighed, why then, he'd go over and weigh it.

IF: And then, that would, would that be for the town of Westcliffe? Why do you weigh that truck?

EH: Well, it would be for whoever bought the hay or the cattle or something. They'd want to know how much it weighed and like that.

IF: So that they'd know how much to pay for the hay.

EH: Yes.

IF: It had nothing to do with the highway.

EH: No, not that. It was just so that people knew what they had to pay for and things like that.

IF: I see. Gladys, when you moved into town, what did Elmer do?

GM: Well, we lived out on the, well, he worked for the farmers, and we'd move from one house-I think one year, we moved five times, going helping the farmers, and then when-

IF: So, he was like a ranch hand, is this what he would do?

GM: Yes. And then Gus Menzel had the garage and he told Elmer to go, why don't we open this garage down there, you know, where Roscoe had his? So, they run the garage and then Elmer got to driving the school bus and then he drew for Clerk and he got that, and he worked for that for 22 years too, I think, 19, 22 years.

IF: Now they didn't have a Clerk's office at that time. Did they have other people underneath him?

EH: Yeah, yeah. He had two or three other girls underneath him.

IF: And it was for 22 years he was the County Clerk.

EH: Yes.

IF: Is that a job that has to be voted on?

EH: Yeah, yeah, every, what is it, every two years, three, four years? And then he'd have to go out election year and-

IF: Now both of you lived through the Depression.

GM: We sure did.

IF: Tell me about the Depression in this area. Do you feel like it, people in this area were as hard hit as they were in the city?

GM: No. We had always a roof over our head and food and that meant a lot. We didn't have nothing else, but, as long as we had food and a roof over our heads, it was alright.

IF: How did you feel about that, Evelyn?

EH: Well, about the same. I know, of course we had, you'd only buy so much sugar and flour and all that.

IF: Was the banks, did any of the, you had a bank here at that time in Westcliffe. Did the bank stay afloat or did the bank close down at that point?

GM: It closed down. Well, we didn't have much to do with the bank cause we didn't have enough money to put in the bank. (laughing)

IF: Even before the Depression.

GM: Then in the wintertime when we was out in the Valley, Elmer only got \$25 a month, and in the summertime, he got \$30 a month. We didn't have much to live off of.

IF: How about you, Evelyn?

EH: Well, it was just what the farm brought in. If the hail got you, you didn't get nothing. If you got a good year, of course it seemed like every year there'd be something. You wouldn't get a good year. But anyway, we'd just go from day to day, you might say.

IF: I think you all had slim pickings.

EH & GM: Yeah.

EH: But it didn't hit us like big cities cause we always had food.

IF: Did they have a WPA or-

EH: They did.

IF: Is that what it was called?

EH: Yes.

IF: What was it called? Was it called the WPA?

EH: WPA-we called it- (laughing)

IF: What was that?

EH: We Piddle Only. That was the remark that was always made when you hard about a WPA.

IF: Uh huh. Did they, was it work on the trails or, what did the WPA do around this area?

GM: I think they did, but we-

EH: On the roads and different things like that, you know, whatever had to be done. Work on roads and different things.

IF: Would they hire people from around here? Or would they bring people in, do you remember?

GM: I don't remember cause we never had anything to do with it.

IF: Cause you were on the ranch. How about when war, let's see, the second World War, well, do you remember the first World War?

GM: No, I was born then, and I was four years old when it ended.

IF: Ok, so then, how about the second World War? Do you remember the second World War?"

GM: I sure do.

GM: I don't remember too much. It had me worried cause I, well, we was married then it started and I didn't want to go home and I didn't want to go Elmer's folks and I didn't know what to do, but then we bought this house.

IF: Was he, did he go into the service?

GM: No, he would have went, I think, the next call, but we had Marvy then and I think the next call, he would have gone.

IF: And how-

GM: He was in 4F right the beginning on, the reason I don't know, but they took them by that, 4F or-

IF: He was ok to work on the ranch. (laughing) Were any of the men exempt from going because they were working on ranches?

GM: I think so. I think that's why they got exempted is that someone had to stay home and help.

IF: Someone had to keep food on the table. Your husbands didn't have to go into the service. How about children?

GM: I had a son in the navy.

IF: Develyn.

GM: And a grandson. The grandson's been in the navy for 13, 14 years now.

IF: Career man.

GM: Mm hmm. I think he wants to make it his career.

IF: Uh huh. And your son?

GM: He didn't like it that well, so he got out and he's an agronomist now.

IF: What's an agronomist?

GM: Well, they raise different kinds of seeds and ship them all over the world, seeds that we buy to plant. They take care of seeds, that kind of stuff.

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IF: So, they can tell how different seeds grow in different climates.

GM: well, that too, and it just, whenever you buy seeds, it comes from what they raised.

IF: I see. Anybody else in your family that-

EH: My eldest, on a farm up in Hudson. That is, he doesn't own it but he rents it [unintelligible] homes from the farm.

IF: And Gladys, what does your son do?

GM: He works for the Ontario Waterworks for-

EH: That's your grandson.

GM: Oh, sorry. Marvy, he went to school and then when he went to California for a year and he worked on the airplanes there, and they was laying them all off and he would have been one of the ones that got laid off. So then, he come home and then he worked for the Custer County, and then he goes out for Custer County roads and then he put his application in for the state and he got it, and he's been in the state ever since. He's a mechanic for the state highway up in Buena Vista.

IF: So, your husband's working with him on the steam engine and that kind of helped him be what he is today.

GM: Mm hmm.

IF: And your grandson, you were going to tell me about him?

GM: And he works up for Ontario Waterworks for Colorado Springs, only it's up in Buena Vista.

IF: I see.

GM: He's got a big job.

IF: Your son graduated from Custer County High School. Do you remember what year?

GM: 1959 I believe.

IF: And Evelyn, your children, did they all graduate?

EH: They all graduated from high school here. See, Wayne was in '60 I guess and Laverne '61 and Arlene '62. They graduated one right after the other. And then [unintelligible] came footer along and graduated in '75 I think it was.

IF: I see. Meaning to get into the social life a little bit of your community life. What kind of, now you attended the Lutheran church and you were confirmed in the Lutheran church. Tell me about some of the get togethers in the church. Do you remember any of those kinds of things?

EH: Well, we never got to go-

GM: They had a Walther-

IF: A Walther, Walther?

GM: They called it Walther-

IF: How do you spell that, do you know?

GM: Walther.

IF: What is that for?

GM: The young kids. They would go different places and do a lot of different things.

IF: How about social, picnics? Did you ever get to go to any picnics or such as that?

GM: After we was married, we did, went to the Lutheran church picnics [unintelligible] For a long time. Then in school, we had pro picnics, and they'd invite one school, another school or something. We'd play ball and have a picnic.

IF: There near the school.

GM: Yeah.

IF: Now, how did you meet your husband? I'm asking first Gladys.

GM: Well, I just remember, well, we was neighbors. I think about three miles apart. We used to associate with one another and that's how come. He wasn't a stranger.

IF: You finally decided that you were pretty special-

GM: After a while.

IF: You were friends first.

GM: Yeah, we was friends.

IF: And Gladys what year were you married in?

GM: 1936, June 21st.

IF: And so, you're married how many years?

GM: 44 years before he passed away in 1980, the 24th of December 1980.

IF: 1980. Your wedding, did you just go and get married or-

GM: We were married in the Lutheran church. I had a gown on and a veil and then Grandma give a dinner for us out in the Valley, invited friends to the dinner. That was really nice. It was a nice day for that too.

EH: Yes, it was.

IF: How about you, Evelyn? How did you meet-

EH: He was round in the Valley with us and we'd get together at these dances and all. That's how we got together.

IF: And what year were you married in?

EH: '38, 1938.

IF: You were married how many years?

EH: 42 years. He died in 1984.

IF: How about your wedding? Tell us about your wedding.

EH: We just had a simple wedding. We was married after church-

IF: After church on Sunday?

EH: Uh huh, and my brother and a cousin of Harry's was [unintelligible]. We went for our honeymoon right to Oklahoma from there. We didn't have no reception or nothing.

IF: Right from the church you went. You wore just a regular dress?

EH: Yes, I just had a regular dress.

IF: Gladys, do you still have your dress?

GM: Mm hmm, I do. I have my dress and my shoes and my veil. Shoes I can't-

IF: How nice. That's neat. I'd like to see that sometime.

GM: I'll have to dig it out.

IF: Good.

EH: I still have my dress but it's just, well, it was a blue one, and it's one of these that fits your figure.
(laughing)

IF: Oh. I'll have to-

EH: I shortened it.

IF: You shortened it?

EH: Uh huh.

IF: Now you can have it long again. They're all back in style. (laughing) How about your food that you had in your family? What was your favorite food, Gladys?

GM: It was ham and potatoes and peas, and that really was good.

IF: They would boil the ham or bake it or-

GM: Or fry it.

IF: Fry it!

GM: Well, we'd cure our own ham and then we'd have to-

IF: Well, you did have pigs on the-

GM: Yeah, ranch.

IF: How about you, Evelyn? What's your favorite food?

EH: About the same cause we always had the same. Potatoes, gravy and ham, more ham than beef.

IF: Did you ever have that many desserts at your dance, at your family, bigger family meal?

GM: No, we had meat and potatoes.

EH: A lot of bread.

IF: Did you bake your own?

GM: Yeah, grandma would make bread every day.

IF: How about washing? Did she have a regular wash day that she would-

GM: Yeah, on Monday. But she washed on the board by hand.

IF: And did you have water in the house at that time>

GM: No, no.

IF: You carried it from the well. How about electricity? Was there electricity out there?

GM: No, we didn't have electricity. No, why that came after, yeah, was after I was married, electricity came out there.

IF: So, you would have gas lanterns.

GM: Yeah, or [unintelligible]

IF: Did you have one in one room and one in another room?

GM: No, we'd just pack one [unintelligible]

IF: In the morning, when you got up to do your chores, was it, did you ever have to take your lanterns outside or you would-

GM: No.

IF: You wouldn't do anything until it got-

GM: Well, I don't think we ever had a lantern [unintelligible] had a lantern.

IF: So, when it got dark, you stayed indoors.

GM: Call it a day, yeah.

IF: How about your bathrooms? Was there any indoor bathrooms or that was outside too?

GM & EH: Yeah, mm hmm.

GM: No bathtub or nothing. Washed, to a bathtub-

IF: Saturday night bath. How about doctors in the Valley? Do you remember any of the doctors that were here? You didn't have a clinic for a long time.

GM: We had Dr. Fee, that was our doctor then and he-we didn't know what it was to go to a doctor even.

IF: Did your grandma have any recipes that she would use on you when you got sick like-what would she do?

GM: She'd tie, we'd have bacon and she put salt and pepper on the bacon and put that around necks to make mustard plaster, and then she'd make onion soup.

IF: Onion soup?!

GM: For coughs, yeah.

IF: Was this wild onion or did she-

GM: No, onion soup, just the regular onion, put a lot of sugar on it and put it back in the stove-

IF: Thin it?

GM: No, just to keep it warm. Make the juice, it would make juice.

IF: Chop the onions, is that how you would do it, you chop the onions?

GM: Slice the onion, put it in water, just put the sugar on it and let it make its own juice, pure onion juice.

IF: And you took this by your moth?

GM: For cough syrup.

IF: For cough syrup? She put it in a jar or would you even have time to do that?

GM: She made it in a cup, uh huh, and on the stove.

IF: And how did that work?

GM: It seemed to work good.

IF: Real strong, huh?

GM: I can't remember that, but it was strong enough. Then we took a spoonful of sugar and put, uh, I had it on my tongue,

IF: Lemon?

GM: No, coal oil.

IF: Coal oil!

GM: And that was for a cold.

IF: The same that you burned in your lamps?

GM & EH: Mm hmm.

IF: Take it by mouth.

GM & EH: Mm hmm.

IF: How about an ear ache? What'd you do for an ear ache?

GM: Take some oil, put it in your ear.

IF: Stomach ache?

GM: I don't remember what for a stomach ache.

EH: I don't remember that either.

IF: How about if you had diarrhea or where it was sick at your stomach?

GM: I don't remember. Just never had that.

EH: Well, if we did, we just got over it.

IF: What kind of toys did you particularly have? Did you ever have any dolls?

GM: Had one doll.

IF: How did you get that doll?

GM: Kind of a bad situation, I guess. You kind of, sore feelings. Dad just bought me a doll and the rest of them didn't get no doll. Remember that, Ev?

EH: I remember that.

IF: Must have made you sore. You were the older? Is that why you got the doll? [unintelligible] Were you supposed to pass it down or that was your doll?

GM: Yeah, that was my doll but I just did-we would play with, I remember in the summertime, we'd play store and we'd take sunflowers and pick the leaves off. That was for peaches and then seed inside that would be for cherries. We'd play with that but we didn't have anything.

IF: What did your doll look like?

GM: It was a nice doll.

IF: Was it china or was it-

GM: No, it was just-

IF: Composition?

GM: Yeah, mm hmm. I don't remember what happened to it or anything?

IF: Please turn this tape over for the competition on the other side of the tape. How about you, Evelyn? Did you have a favorite toy?

EH: Not really. I just played with anything we could get our hands on.

IF: Tell me, did you have a doll?

EH: Martha's doll was what my aunt gave us for a Christmas, she kept the head until Christmastime and then Santa Claus brought it.

IF: How long did you believe in Santa Claus?

EH: OH, I just can't really remember that but it wasn't too long, course we always wondered how the Christmas tree got decorated and all that. She would do that just the night before after we went to bed.

IF: Your aunt would do that?

EH: Uh huh.

IF: Now you didn't have electricity so what would you use for lights on the tree?

EH: Had candles, in the candleholders.

IF: So, your tree wouldn't really stay up too long? Was it just that night that you had it up or-

EH: No, we'd usually put it in a cold room and we'd keep it till Eastertime with all the decorations on. Course we never lit it or anything but just kept it in the front room and never did go in there.

IF: How did Santa Claus come? Would you just wake up in the morning and there would be your-

EH: Yeah, just wake up in the morning and the things would be under the tree.

IF: You were told that Santa Claus brought them. So, I ask because in different areas, they have Kris Kringle come about two weeks before Christmas and throw nuts in the door and the children are supposed to know he's coming and they have to be good for those next two weeks. Did you hang stockings up?

GM: I don't think so, not that I ever remember.

IF: Did you exchange gifts amongst yourselves or just the children?

GM: Just the children. We'd get a gift and that's about all that it was.

IF: You'd get one gift.

GM: Mm hmm.

IF: At the church, did they have church programs?

GM: As long as I can remember they did.

IF: Where young people had pieces and-

GM: Uh huh.

IF: Now, a little bit ago, before we started the taping, we were talking about the Black Slipper Club and that's been an organization that's been in this area for a long, long time. Could you tell me how that started and what type of a club it is today, how it did start? You want to tell me, Gladys?

GM: It was an extension of people coming to learn, you know, embroidery or paint or stuff like that.

IF: How did it start? You tell me a little bit about it, Evelyn.

EH: Extension club and they, you couldn't get no leaders for that anymore, so it was mostly older folks who decided to call it the Black Slipper Club because we were-

IF: What would you do for the Extension? Would you have crafts-

EH: Yes.

IF: Did they have a director at that time?

EH: They did from Canon. He come from Canon.

IF: He come from Canon, and he show you the crafts or-

EH: Well, no, they would just talk about it.

IF: How to do certain things.

EH: Uh huh.

IF: They say anything about cooking too or-

EH: Yes, we had some cooking and then some [unintelligible] things and embroidery or do whatever they wanted to.

IF: You have a book here-

EH: Yeah, this is the Black Slipper when it originated was in January 1964 but that was the Black Slipper Club.

IF: Now this is the women that were left from the Extension. That was just called an Extension Club.

EH: Mm hmm.

IF: So, you all liked each other well enough to stay together and what did you turn it into? Did you still do crafts or what did you do?

EH: For a while we did, but it was all getting old so we said, what shall we call it? And you know, all the slippers had the meeting, red slippers, black slippers and I don't remember the other. Anyhow, they called it Black Slipper because we was all getting a little older.

IF: Oh!

EH: That's how it got its name.

IF: I see.

EH: Extension club was something like the 4H club now although they did it with animals.

IF: Let me read off the names of these people that were in the club. Flora Beck, Bessie Coleman, Betty Copeland, [unintelligible] Cody, Emily Camper, Nell Cash, Elizabeth Geroux, Evelyn Hanssen, Sylvia Heinrich, Gertrude Canobe, Gladys Miller, Marie Squire, Edith Vickerman, Rose Vickerman, Noel Vickerman and Collette Brant. How often does your Black Slipper Club meet now?

GM: Once a month.

IF: Once a month and –

GM: The second Thursday of every month.

IF: And what do you do now when your club meets?

GM: Play cards.

IF: And do you gather more people into it or is it just kind of the same group?

GM: Well, it had it so that there would be only 15, 16 members, that's all the larger they wanted it. If somebody would leave or something, why then, they would add some more, just to keep it the same size cause we always met in the houses and some houses aren't big enough to handle more.

IF: Do you still meet in your home?

GM: Mm hmm.

IF: That's wonderful.

GM: Whenever Christmas came around, we always had dinner and whoever was serving for that Christmas, we'd really have good food on and then we'd go open our gifts that we'd have, we'd exchange gifts.

IF: Exchange gifts. Do you think that life is any different in the area today? You think that the people do a lot of the same things that the people in the past did? Ranching, do you feel like there's-

GM: It's different. You used to know everybody around here and visit everybody and go to town on Saturday evening and visit till nine o'clock and the stores were close. Now, there's nothing. You don't even know half the people anymore.

IF: But you used to be able to go in the store and at night it's going to close, you would go?

GM: You'd go at that time so you could visit with the people.

EH: In the streets and visit with people.

GM: You went in the evening and then just visit till the stores closed. That was around nine o'clock.

EH: It was around nine o'clock.

IF: And so, you'd just come out on to the street and visit. Do you remember the dances up above James?

GM: Yes. Up above Grandma's House, the ones that I remember.

IF: What kind of dances would they have, would they have to have a special occasion, would they, certain club that gave it or just because some wanted to get together?

GM: The Catholic Bazaar always had theirs at Christmastime and we always went to that dance.

IF: What kind of orchestra would they have or would they get, did certain people play certain instruments, like you played-

GM: Well, I, harmonica. Well, they'd have, usually Hazel Walker and Elmer Miller and Eddie Cooney. Those usually did all the music.

IF: What did Eddie Cooney play?

GM: The banjo.

IF: And Hazel Walker played the piano.

GM: And Elmer the accordion.

IF: And that would be a dance.

GM: Mm hmm.

IF: What kinds did they play? Polkas?

GM: Any kind. All kinds.

IF: Slow dances and-

GM: Not like the dances they do nowadays.

IF: No, no. How many would you usually have at your dances? Just one big room at that time?

GM: Up over-

IF: What was down below?

GM: A grocery store.

EH: A Piggly Wiggly at one time and [unintelligible] was there for a little while too. And [unintelligible] had it for a long time. It was a good grocery store.

IF: Do you remember, someone told me at one time that the Episcopal church had, used to put these luminaries out on the street. You ever remember that?

GM & EH: No.

IF: Those kind of decorations?

GM & EH: No.

IF: The Lutheran church has always had night service, candlelight service on Christmas.

GM: And then they'd always fill candy bags and give all the kids candy and we'd have the church full, just everybody coming to get the candy bags.

IF: Candy, oh, that's nice. I sure appreciate you two telling me all about this and I really hope that someday young people listening to this will know how the Wet Mountain Valley used to be. Thanks!