

Oral Histories

Number: OH 37

Date: 5/3/90

Condition:
Good

Holdings:
WP Library

Initials: DP

Interviewee: Taylor, Esther Sams

Interviewer: Davine Pera

Abstract: Side A

00-86 Esther's father was born in Montrose and later moved to Telluride. Her mother was born in Ophir. Her mother worked for Dr. Agnes and his wife. Esther was born in the brick house on Oak Street, which was a hospital at that time. She attended school through the 9th grade in Telluride. She also attended school in Old Ophir and Ophir Loop when she stayed with her grandparents. She and her parents lived in the Hanlon, house that later burned. Father worked for the Telluride Transfer and drove the stage to the Tomboy Mine. He also drove the school bus (horse and buggy or sleigh) from Pandora to town. Her father was killed in the Butterfly Mine when she was 11 years old.

86-137 She names different childhood friends. She did lots of hiking as a child and talks about picking wild raspberries. She was married at the age of 16. Her husband was a miner and they moved around a lot

137-150 Speaks about the time it took to go places; half a day to travel from Ophir to Telluride. Ophir was a thriving town at that time. The Galloping Goose and the train came through on the way to Dolores.

150- Father drove a sled for hauling freight to the Tomboy mine in the winter. Names different teachers she had in school.

190-249 Names various businesses that were in town. Two barber shops in town then. Her mother, Lena Blixt worked for the Phone Company for 25 years. Her husband, Oscar Blixt had a mine up Bear Creek.

249-341 She talks about the John Cassgrande murder. One of his daughters, Perina, lived with Esther's mother for a while after that. There were lots of unsolved mysteries during the bootlegging days. She use to go with friends to Ouray to deliver whiskey. John Smock owned a still near the Hoag Ranch. Speaks of different people that sold bootleg.

341-447 She mentions Big Billie who was a madam at one time and ran the Silver Bell. Talks about the Gabardies who owned a liquor store and some cribs on Pacific Street. They also owned a pool-hall at the Senate and rented cribs to "girls on the line". Mentions Swede Marie who cleaned for the "girls". Stories of Swede Marie.

447-525 Talks about Tom McMahn and his wife and children and the lovely house they had. Speaks of his life after his divorce and how dirty he was.

525-581 Speaks of the different nationalities in the town. Mentions her grandparents.

Side B:

00-130 Speaks of the social life during early years of marriage. Dances were big part of life then. Sweeney had an orchestra and played for dances around the area. Charlie Whitson was a great piano player. Describes the coal furnace at school and speaks of janitors that worked there. Mentions the Rebecca Lodge. Talks about the dances at the recreation hall and the Swede-Finn hall. Talks about the Finnegan family She was a teacher and he was County Commissioner. Also talks about Nora Ruffe and the dances that were held in Placerville. Esther attended public dances with her parents. The Richards owned a dance hall in Ophir.

00- 130 Speaks of the community in Ophir. Mentions the newspaper in Telluride.

154-283 There was two hospitals in town, the Miner's Union building and the one in the brick home of Dr. Agnes. Names different people that were born in the brick house. All the Pengrazzi girls went to school in Ophir with Esther. Speaks of various people she knows.

Description: sound cassette (73 minutes)

Subjects: Side A

Early history

Childhood memories

Tomboy

Bootlegging

Red Light District

Tom McMahn

Nationalities

Side B

Social life

Ophir

Hospitals & Doctors