



Douglas County History Research Center Oral Histories

Oral History Interview with
Mildred Stewart Graves
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Castle Rock Historical Society Oral History Project

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SUMMARY: Mildred S. Graves was born on her grandfather's [Stewart ranch] ranch three miles west of Castle Rock, Colorado. Her father, Douglas Noel Stewart, was a Douglas County Road Supervisor. Her mother was Lena Ayers. Mildred Graves' grandfather was George Patrick Stewart who was a Douglas County Surveyor, Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer and cashier of the Castle Rock State Bank for several years. He owned the geologic feature of Castle Rock, and gave it to the town. Mr. Stewart built and lived in the house at 422 Front Street in Castle Rock, built with stone from the quarry on his ranch. Mrs. Graves graduated from high school in Pueblo. She attended the Colorado Agricultural College in Fort Collins, Colorado, and married in 1932. Her husband taught in Vineland, near Pueblo, for three years during the Depression. Mr. Graves then worked as a Cooperative Extension Agent in Washington

MILDRED GRAVES: I was born on my grandfather's ranch three miles west of Castle Rock. My father, at this time, was managing and running the ranch for my grandfather. He was born there and it was his home during all his growing-up years. My birthday was April 24, 1912. I just celebrated my eightieth birthday. I lived with my parents on the ranch for the first six years of my life. My father was Douglas Noel Stewart; my mother was Lena Ayers. They met in college at Fort Collins, were married and then moved to the ranch to live. When I was six years old, we moved into Castle Rock from the ranch. My father was made Douglas County Road Supervisor and County Surveyor at that time. One of the things about my early years on the ranch that's memorable is that during the trial following the Ludlow Massacre in Walsenburg. My father was asked to be a witness just having to do with distances and measurements and surveys and this kind of thing. This was in the winter time when work on the ranch was not as heavy and there was a hired man to take care of milking the dairy herd of some thirty cows. And when he came home there was enough money to buy a Model T Ford which was our first automobile. And that was a very memorable occasion when that happened. Um -- we had ponies on the ranch and living there was -- was a wonderful adventure. When we moved into Castle Rock, an uncle, my father's younger brother, Gordon Stewart, had returned from World War I and he was willing to take over the management of the ranch at that time. We lived in Castle Rock then until I was ready for junior high in the sixth grade. Then my father accepted a -- a job with the Colorado State Highway Department as a maintenance engineer and we moved to Colorado Springs. We lived there for three years. Then we moved to Steamboat Springs, this was in 1926, and the hope was that they could somehow keep the roads open in that mountain community which wasn't possible because there was no heavy equipment to do it with during those years. I learned to ski there and enjoyed living there very much as did my parents. There was a social club called the Arbuckle Club, named after Arbuckle Coffee that they belonged to and enjoyed very much. Then in 1927, there was an examination for state highway employees and my father was transferred to Pueblo to that division which was the largest in the state. I graduated from Centennial High School there and then went to uh -- Colorado Agricultural College in Fort Collins and that was where I met my husband. My parents, soon after that, moved to Denver because my father was appointed head of the maintenance division for Colorado State Highways and he held that position until he retired in 1953. After I had uh -- gone to college for three years, I married my husband who was qualified as a teacher, that was in 1932 in the depths of the depression and at that time we moved to the little town of Vineland outside of -- Pueblo where he taught school for three years. Following that he uh -- joined the extension service and was County Agent in Washington County for a

period of about three years. Then he went to work for the United States Department of Agriculture as a soil conservationist and we moved to Sterling, where we lived for three years. Following that he was transferred to Agate and then to Simla along the continental divide where he had six and a quarter million acres of farm land in his territory. He was drafted into the army and was in service on Okinawa and Ise-shima for three years. At that point in time I went to work as the Home Demonstration Agent for Elbert County and this was what I did until school started in the fall. Then it seemed wiser to teach, so I taught home economics in uh --Simla for the following year. Then my parents living in Denver felt that we should come to Denver, we had three children then; a first grader, a third grader, and a fifth grader and we moved into Denver and I taught at Wheat Ridge High School for a year and then worked for Opportunity School in Denver for a year. Then when my husband came home we went to Monte Vista. That was his assignment with the Soil Conversation Service. We lived there for two years and then he was transferred to Glenwood Springs and had five-county area and I started teaching uh -- as soon as we got there with the understanding that it would be just until they could find a home economics teacher. Twenty-three years later I retired. During the years we lived in Glenwood Springs, our children grew up and went to college, married, and we enjoyed our life -- lives there very much. Then in 1979, we uh -- moved to Aurora to our present home and this is where we're still living. Now, do you want some more background information, what can I tell you?

CLAYTON: Well, when you were growing up, you mentioned that you lived on a farm, can you tell me a little bit about the cost of the cows, or the food, or what you were growing during those times?

MILDRED GRAVES: [*moving*] Ah, in those years the population of Colorado was less than 100,000 people. A three-bedroom home cost about \$2,500. The average income of people in Colorado was \$520.

CLAYTON: Are we talking about when you were a child or --

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, uh-huh from the years 1912 to 1918. My father's Ford cost \$690, gasoline was thirty-four cents a gallon, a loaf of bread uh -- was a nickel, a gallon of milk thirty-four cents, although my parents were able to um -- have nearly all of their uh -- food from the ranch, all the meat, all the eggs, all of the dairy products that we had. And we had a big garden and lots of chickens so in the fall of the year when my father butchered, he would take probably seven or eight butchered hogs to the meat

market and then he would have a credit through the winter for the staples that we bought. A postage stamp in 1918 cost two cents.

CLAYTON: Was there a post office?

MILDRED GRAVES: There was a post office, there was a telephone office, when we moved to Castle Rock there was no electricity for the town, but soon after the DuPont Company at Louviers uh -- contracted with the City of Castle Rock to furnish electricity. And I remember well uh -- the day the lights were turned on, it was Armistice Day the eleventh of November in 1918. And uh -- my little brother put a metal gun into the light socket and immediately blew out all the lights and blew him clear across the room. The gun had a wooden handle [*laughter*] which probably saved his life. I can remember the 1921 flood when we lived in Castle Rock. When the trains finally came through from the south from Pueblo, they were covered with mud and one day there was a great big dog on top of the train, riding almost all the way to Denver. And my grandmother's house was a stone house right across the street from the railroad tracks so we could watch the trains going through.

CLAYTON: Which railroad are you talking about?

MILDRED GRAVES: The Denver and Rio Grande railroad on the east side of town um --

CLAYTON: Do you remember the street where it was located?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, -- I don't -- Wilcox street is the cross street there and I think Railroad Avenue [*she is talking about Front Street*] is the street along the railroad tracks. And it seems strange now that it was very, very desirable to build a home or have a home facing the railroad tracks. And my grandparent's home was made of stone lava rock quarried on the ranch where the stone quarry is that is still being used. They are still getting stone from that quarry, it's been reactivated.

CLAYTON: Do you remember if that's west of --

MILDRED GRAVES: West of Castle Rock.

CLAYTON: Santa Fe?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes.

CLAYTON: Quarry? Did you see the stone quarry?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, there is a road up to it and you can go up to the top and look down into the quarry. There's a great hole there where the stone has been taken out. I can remember going to visit an uncle and aunt, my father's brother and his family over on West Plum Creek and my father would bring in big river stones and heat them in the oven of the old coal stove to get them very, very hot and then they were placed in the bottom of the buggy and our uh -- robes were made of hides of the horses that had been on the ranch, and so we were bundled up, and while it was a buggy without um -- enclosed windows or anything we were warm and cozy going across to my uncle's ranch on West Plum Creek. That was Herb Stewart's ranch. And in the summer when I was in grade school, I would spend weeks there because there were five girls in that family and a boy. And in the summer we would leave early in the morning on horseback and take a picnic lunch and go up in the Devil's Head country where Uncle Herb had a forest service permit to check on the cattle that were up there in the summer and then get back in the evening just in time to bring the cows from the pasture over on Jackson Creek back to the barns on the ranch for milking.

CLAYTON: You mentioned that your ranch was three miles from --

MILDRED GRAVES: West of Castle Rock, yes. And it was about eight miles, then, to the West Plum Creek road and south to my uncle's ranch. And another uncle lived uh -- at a ranch in Larkspur, on farther on the West Plum Creek road now called the Banner Ranch. And all of them had milking short-horned cattle so that they had both the beef and the milk from the cattle. And that was a wonderful place to visit because there were seven in that family; four boys and three girls, nearly all older than me but much, much fun to visit when we would go there.

CLAYTON: Did your ranch have a name?

MILDRED GRAVES: Um -- It was just the Stewart Ranch, as far as I know. Uncle Herb's was West View Ranch and the one at Larkspur, the Banner Ranch, as I said. And there were about eight hundred acres on that ranch and my uncle's ranch had 1520 acres, and my grandfather's ranch where we lived 1760 acres. The house on the ranch was a two-story house of the lava stone quarry and then had an addition that was the kitchen, great big kitchen and dining room there were framed that were added before we lived there. And so it was, it was a fun place to live and grow up.

ELAINE GRAVES: Which one was the one that was at the Meadows?

MILDRED GRAVES: That's grandfather's ranch, 1760 acres. And the Indians were gone uh -- before we lived there and there are many wonderful stories of the Indians coming and wanting to trade a rabbit for my grandmother's oldest baby girl. And her talking away as though there were men in the house, though they were all gone uh -- and finally the old Indian got up and left. I remember the northern lights as they were called. The Aurora Borealis which was so plainly visible to the north from the ranch house and how much fun we had.

CLAYTON: Was that a certain year that occurred, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, just off and on through the years. When it was necessary to come to Denver to the dentist or to the doctor, we would uh -- go to Castle Rock and take the train to Denver one day and it was always an over-night trip because that was twenty-five or thirty miles and that was a long way. And then we would take the train back the next day.

CLAYTON: You had no doctor in Castle Rock at that time?

MILDRED GRAVES: There was one doctor in Castle Rock but if you need any special kind of care then he would send his patients to Denver. And there were no dentists in Denver at all. In Castle Rock the activities for children were bicycle riding and roller skating, there was no swimming pool, there was no tennis courts. We were fortunate in being able to play night games after uh -- supper in the evening until the curfew rang at nine o'clock, and that was the nicest friend we had because nobodies parents had to come out and call them and when the curfew rang, it didn't matter if we were in the middle of a game; kick-the-can, or run-sheep-run, or whatever, uh -- it just stopped and all the kids went home.

CLAYTON: Now where did the curfew bell come from?

MILDRED GRAVES: From the fire station, they had a volunteer fire department that was very, very active and the people were just the men in town who were the firemen. But they all had training and once a year they would have a state fireman's convention, I remember one year it was in Cañon City and that was a long way to go. And, then they would see the latest in fire-fighting equipment and uh -- learn all the new

techniques of fire fighting and then bring all of those ideas home. Um -- during World War I, the Red Cross was very active in Castle Rock and the women uh -- would make bandages and the men would raise money and I can remember how -- what a vital part of our growing-up years that was.

CLAYTON: Was there an army uh -- fort or --?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, not anything like that, the nearest one was Fort Logan, in Denver. And that's where the men who went to service were um -- drafted and where they left from and returned to when the war was over. I uh -- remember my brother had a pony, he was four years younger than me, and uh -- rode all over the country on his pony. I rode with him sometimes but I was old enough for a bicycle and so that was wonderful for the girls in town to ride the bicycles and enjoy. We had a campfire group for, for little girls and that was lots of fun to belong to the campfire uh -- group and participate in those activities.

CLAYTON: What did girls wear when they rode bikes and what did the bikes look like?

MILDRED GRAVES: Mine was an Iver Johnson bike, coaster-brake and that was wonderful and we wore high-topped shoes and long stockings and uh -- our hair was long, mine was braided and one of the, the things I was most proud of was the beautiful hair ribbons that my grandmother sent from Fort Collins, that was my mother's mother; so that I always had pretty hair ribbons. In grade school I can remember there were forty of us in the first grade and the teacher was Agnes Alford, A-L-F-O-R-D and she was a wonderful, wonderful teacher and you never heard of a child not learning to read or write. We learned the Palmer method of writing and Lewis Ferry [sp?] system for reading and non-readers, or slow-readers were just unheard of, everybody learned to read and write and spell. And uh -- I was given the "Child's Garden of Verses" by Robert Lewis Stevenson in the third grade because I could spell the word 'mountain' and that was the word that others were not able to spell. But I think of that so often and did through my teaching years of the systems that were used then without any of the modern, modern aides that are available today and yet everybody learned to read and write. Our minority group were the uh -- Spanish, Indian, Mexican people that worked on the railroad and there were several children in almost every class and some of them lived in Castle Rock. And their assignments were the Santa Fe Railroad or the Rio Grande. And then there was a colony south of town at Tomah, T-O-M-A-H where several families lived. But they were very much a part of the community; there was no

difference at all in how the children were treated or how intelligent they were. There were some of them who were wonderful artists, I remember. And they were able to draw so well and uh -- that was wonderful. We had track meets in the spring that, probably, today would be called field day. There were, there was a family at Greenland, the Higginsons, and the Higginson boys were big and strong and had lived on a ranch and they won everything in the track meets and the field days that we had in the spring. That was fun. There was a basketball team, but no football because there weren't enough students to make a football team a possibility in those years.

CLAYTON: Do you remember the names of any of the Spanish-American, um -- and I imagine some were natives once they were born there, ah, after their family came.

MILDRED GRAVES: There was a family of Perez, P-E-R-E-Z and the girl in my class was Louise Perez and she was just a wonderful friend and -- and part of all our activities, which we weren't even conscious of, I think, in those years as is true now. There were seven hundred people living in Castle Rock at that time. There was a grocery store, Mr. Michael Isaac was the grocer who had come from Denver and had a wonderful, wonderful grocery store. There was a good restaurant, um --

CLAYTON: Do you remember where they were located?

MILDRED GRAVES: Michael Isaac's grocery store was a block south of Wilcox on the southeast corner of the intersection. And the restaurant was diagonally across the street on the northwest corner of the intersection. There was a post office a -- around the corner from what in those years was the First National Bank and now is the Masonic Temple. And, next to it was a, a dry-goods store, and then the telephone office was there and there was a little, little house moved into town and uh -- part of that house became the first library, and that was very interesting. The court house was the beautiful old court house that was burned down and that's where my father's office was and his father was the county treasurer, for many, many, many years. And his office was there and uh -- my father's oldest half-brother, Uncle Jim McInroy was the county assessor for a good many years. And part of them were democrats and part of them were republicans and they just got along fine. It was just whoever would [chuckles] be willing to take the office and do a good job, I think. County Commissioners were uh --very much a part of the political scene as is true today. I'm trying to think, are there other --

CLAYTON: Do you remember any of the names and are some of those people still there in Castle Rock that you went to school with?

MILDRED GRAVES: My very dear friend, Mary Clark Briscoe, passed away just this spring, we were in the first grade together and all the way through school. The Lowell family was part of the old-timers then, the Dakan family from West Plum Creek was very active, Frank Dakan was a county commissioner for many years. The principal of high school was Mr. Ward and his daughter, Margaret Ward, was in my class. And Maxine Stream uh -- and Mr. Stream was a rancher who lived in Castle Rock.

CLAYTON: You mentioned the, uh -- I think that you said the uh -- Ludlow Massacre, could you tell us just a little bit about that, did that mean something to people in Castle Rock?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes, even though it was way south, it was a -- a conflict between the miners and the union. And uh -- the miners struck and all winter long there was no work for them and there -- I don't remember a lot about it, except there was bloodshed and it was a matter of great concern to the whole state. Um -- the rock at Castle Rock belonged to my grandfather for many, many, many years. And he gave it to the City of Castle Rock with the stipulation that there never be any advertising of any kind placed on the rock or on the land around it, that was as far as my grandfather owned. And uh -- there is a boundary line above which houses cannot be built and when the uh -- fifty-foot uh -- star was placed up there, it was with the understanding that it just be of uh -- religious significance to signify the Christmas season and the flag is there. But uh -- the rock and the surrounding land now belongs to the City, but always with the proviso that there never can be any advertising.

CLAYTON: Do you remember the star going up, Mildred, what happened?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes! Oh, that was done primarily by the firemen, they kept it as an observation of the Christmas season that would be wonderful. It is about fifty feet high, I think, and the bulbs have to be changed or placed in it on a day when there is no wind at all because it would be too dangerous to change the bulbs or put new bulbs in on a day when the wind was blowing.

CLAYTON: Did you see the firemen put that star up?

MILDRED GRAVES: I don't remember that, no I think that was after we had moved away from Castle Rock, but I do remember the conversation about it in my grandmother's house. Um -- I was baptized and christened and married in the little Episcopal Church in Castle Rock as were my son and his wife and a granddaughter and uh -- there have been babies christened since and so that's uh -- a very, very important part of our heritage and our roots.

CLAYTON: The name of that Episcopal Church was?

MILDRED GRAVES: Christ Church, Castle Rock.

CLAYTON: And it was located where it is now, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, oh yes. And the stone is from the stone quarry and the house across the street to the east belonged to my grandmother's sister, Caroline Ball, and that's also made of stone. And then there's a house just on the same street west of the church that belonged to a Civil War Veteran, U. T. Smith and his wife. And they lived in that little house for all the years that I was growing up. And uh -- Mrs. Smith and my grandmother and, and uh -- my grandmother's sister were very, very dear friends. They would spend afternoons together. And my grandmother crocheted and Mrs. Smith tatted beautifully, beautifully and Aunt Carrie embroidered. And they would bring their stitchery and have tea and have wonderful visits in the afternoons. And uh it was just a block down the alley from the home where we lived right across from the grade school to my grandmother's home. And um -- that was very wonderful growing up with grandparents so close that were very much a part of your growing-up years. And uh -- in those years there was a white picket fence all around my grandmother's house and uh -- as gifts of -- bulbs and flowering plants were given to them, then they were planted and there were beautiful, beautiful spring flowers always on the inside of that white picket fence and a great, huge lilac bush and, also a honeysuckle bush by the front porch. And uh -- that was a very special place in my growing-up years and, also, in the lives of cousins who, who were very, very close. Grandma's house was always a place we loved to go. And when we were invited there for Sunday dinner, often she would cook what was then called a leg of mutton, which would, of course, in today's world cause people's eyebrows to raise, but deliciously cooked lamb in those years. And, always tea, my grandfather's ancestry was partly French so didn't matter what dessert was served there was always a white rennet dessert called Blancmange that was served with raspberry jam. And there might be

other desserts, but always that one regardless of what else. Now what else do I need to tell you?

CLAYTON: Did your family originally live in Castle Rock or tell me a little bit about the French background, did they come to Castle Rock?

MILDRED GRAVES: My grandfather and grandmother, both, were born in Australia. Um -- my grandfather's father was a doctor and had gone there from England because he had tuberculosis. He died there as did two older brothers and a younger sister. One brother uh -- survived and my grandfather was seven years old and he was sent back to the island of Jersey off the coast of France and was raised by two maiden aunts. And when he was seventeen, he came to America to visit an old uncle who was living in Douglas County. My grandmother's father was a jeweler in England, had gone to Australia to buy gold in 1855 during the gold rush and then went back to England and uh -- lived there for several years and then came to America with his wife and nine children. And settled uh -- at the Oaklands which is the original ranch on West Plum Creek and when my grandmother was seventeen, she married Patrick McInroy who was a Scotsman who had come and they had five children. And he um -- was bringing in a load of hay and fell off the load of hay and was killed and so my grandmother was a widow on the ranch with five children and then met my grandfather and they married and they had five children, next to the oldest of which was my father. So he was born on the ranch uh -- where I was born, west of Castle Rock, as well. And then he went to school in Fort Collins where he met my mother. And she had a very beautiful singing voice and was a music student at Colorado Agriculture College and he graduated in Civil Engineering and that's how they met and married. And then she came to the ranch as a bride with him and then I was born a year later, so those are my memories.

CLAYTON: The French uncle that was back in history of Douglas County, do you remember his name?

MILDRED GRAVES: Isaac Stewart, but he was Scotch, he was Scotch.

CLAYTON: He was Scotch.

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh and my grandfather's heritage was all Scotch. But he was raised by these old maiden aunts off the coast of uh -- France and the Island of Jersey.

CLAYTON: You mentioned when you lived up around Estes Park, I believe, you said--

MILDRED GRAVES: No.

CLAYTON: No -- uh -- past Greeley somewhere.

MILDRED GRAVES: No, I lived at Sterling for a while, three years after I was married but that was not in my growing-up years, no. We moved to Colorado Springs when I was ready for junior high because my father went to work for the State Highway Department.

CLAYTON: You mentioned when you lived close to the mountains somewhere and this was --

ELAINE GRAVES: Steamboat.

CLAYTON: Steamboat Springs.

MILDRED GRAVES: Steamboat Springs.

CLAYTON: -- that they had a hard time doing the construction, how did they manage?

MILDRED GRAVES: They just closed the roads, they couldn't keep the roads opened any more.

CLAYTON: Did they use animals to -- *[both speaking at the same time]*

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, got around *[both speaking at the same time]* with horses and then the Moffet Tunnel was completed and when moved from Steamboat Springs to Pueblo we rode out from Steamboat Springs to Pueblo on the first regular passenger train through the tunnel and that was quite an event and the engineers were all on the train talking about it and what an engineering feat it was to complete that but then that made the uh -- the trip from Denver to that part of the state so different because until that time the trains all went through Pueblo and Cañon City and up the Royal Gorge and through Leadville and then back down through Glenwood Springs and uh -- across the state bridge to the northwest corner, Steamboat Springs and Craig.

CLAYTON: You mentioned, also, that there was a coffee that was special.

MILDRED GRAVES: Arbuckle Coffee!

CLAYTON: Was coffee grown in Colorado?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, no, it's just like -- no, it was a brand of coffee that they liked very much just as Folgers or Hill Brothers or Maxwell House would be now, but this was Arbuckle Coffee, so that's the name they took for this social group in Steamboat Springs. And uh -- we walked every place there, then, and uh -- we would go to Sunday school on Sunday morning and then cross-country ski until -- oh late afternoon and then go to someone's house for uh -- oyster stew or chili or whatever was available and then potato soup was a very, very popular soup. And then we'd all have to go home because we would have get lessons for school the next day. But our -- our ski clothes were hiking boots, high laced hiking boots and jodhpur-type trousers and then heavy mackinaws or jackets and caps and our skis were all home made.

CLAYTON: From what kind of wood? Were they made in the area or by your family?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, yes, they were made in the area but usually there were people who made skis as a business and they were wooden and the toes turned up and they were made in proportion to your height and your size. And, and we thought that was wonderful, and we skied across the country just without any problems at all, it was wonderful.

CLAYTON: Was Castle Rock, or Colorado known for its skiing as much then as it is now?

MILDRED GRAVES: At Steamboat Springs it was, there was what was Holliston Hill, which had been built in the very early, early 1900's and many, many of the young people in Steamboat were ski jumpers. That was just what they --

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

CLAYTON: Mildred Graves on May the fourteenth.

MILDRED GRAVES: I was telling you about the skiing in Steamboat Springs and uh -- that it was just a part of the life-style of the community, the area. All the young people skied and uh -- there was no prestige, particularly with it. The young men who uh -- became world-named skiers were in school at the same time; Gordon Wren and Pete Withers and Laurence Leckenby [sp?], and several of those boys that just learned to ski and were part of our classes in school, then became really well known; part of this, of course, was stimulated by the 10th Mountain Division uh -- during World War II. And uh -- the encampment at Pando and this really brought skiing into the fore in Colorado, more than just a local activity and recreation for the people.

CLAYTON: How do you spell that camp and where was it located?

MILDRED GRAVES: Pando, P-A-N-D-O, and it was near Leadville, you would go now, over Vail Pass to Minturn and then take the road from Minturn back up to Leadville and it was in that valley. These men from the 10th Mountain Division were trained for duty in the Italian Alps.

CLAYTON: Army?

MILDRED GRAVES: Army. Very, very famous division. And it was one of the, one of the really wonderful places for training uh -- winter survival and uh -- all the things associated with working and fighting in, in uh -- the high Alps of Europe. Camp Pando was closed very suddenly through a mistake in Army orders. An order was issued to close a camp in Texas that had a similar name and somehow in the transfer of the orders it reached Pando that that camp was to be closed. And so, just as Lowry Field is to be closed now, it was closed and everything was moved out of there um -- prematurely, because this was not the intent of the Army to do this but that's what happened there. But a good many of men from the 10th Mountain Division then came back to Aspen and that was really the beginning of skiing in Aspen. And then that was followed, of course by Vail and Copper Mountain and Cooper Hill was the one nearest Pando that was used, and then Telluride and then the others have just blossomed from that, but that was the beginning.

CLAYTON: Were there any Army or prisoner-of-war camps down around the Castle Rock area or Douglas County area?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, not any at all. They were, the nearest was Fort Logan which was very active and one of the big training camps and that was the one. But the

prisoner-of-war camps were in southern Colorado, mostly, not any in the Castle Rock area. It was too close, I think, to the city for them to want to use it for that kind of a thing.

CLAYTON: Was there a lot of troop activity through Castle Rock on the train?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, yes. And I can remember the troop trains going through during World War I. They would go south on the Santa Fe Railroad and north on the Rio Grande Railroad. So they were passing and going back and forth just as they were in subsequent wars and subsequent conflicts but uh --

CLAYTON: Now you mentioned during the war that you were a home demo --

MILDRED GRAVES: Home Demonstration Agent.

CLAYTON: Were a lot of the women doing jobs during either of the wars and what was it like for women during that time?

MILDRED GRAVES: Well, during World War II, of course, the big employer of women was the Army uh -- munitions factories and the airplane uh -- manufacturing plants that were here. Women were employed in all of the military industries in vast numbers then because the men were all gone to service. And that was really with, I think, the employment rate for women went from about eighteen percent to something like forty percent of women employed in the; well eighteen percent of women working to about forty percent of women working in the military, in some capacity or other. So that, that brought a big change in Colorado. And then, as the men came home, of course, the population had grown and there was a not a period of time, as I can remember, when there was vast unemployment. The unemployment time was during the depression. And I can remember the bank closing in 1929 when President Roosevelt -- closed all the banks. And if your money was in the bank that was just the way it was. And then it was years before people were able to reclaim their savings. We lived in Pueblo at that time and the steel mill was closed. There were men, particularly, just wandering from place to place but there was no revolution, there was no looting, there was no stealing. Men would come to my mother's house and uh -- want to clean the basement for a sandwich or wash her windows for a quarter or uh -- help in any way that they possibly could. But they wanted to work for any money that they got. When I was in high school, this was in Pueblo, I worked at the telephone office, and it was way down in the rougher part of town where the telephone office was, but I felt perfectly

safe. I went on the street car and came home on the street car, no problems at all. And there was no thought ever, of stealing from anyone, which was a very, very different situation than the world as it is now. And uh -- my father was criticized a lot because he gave some of the highway jobs to young men trying to get there college education instead of giving all the jobs to married men. If your husband was working, then there was no way a woman could get a job. If the woman was teaching school, for example, her husband couldn't find a job. And uh still, people didn't starve because they kind of took care of each other. When -- my husband first started teaching east of Pueblo, that was in 1932, and when he would go to visit his uh -- ag projects that the boys taking agriculture in high school would have a pig or a calf, whatever, and they would ask him to stay for lunch. Their lunch might be two slices of cold fried potatoes with beans for the filling, and that's all they would have for lunch. That was when hot lunches at school first -- were started, so that the children could have hot meals at school. But, usually, in this part of the country people could raise crops and everybody had a *big* victory garden. And grew as much of the vegetables and fruit, lots of people had a few chickens for eggs, -- [sneezes] but I can remember that as being the depression, and particularly in Pueblo where so many, many men were out of work.

CLAYTON: Did you ever get to Castle Rock during that time?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes.

CLAYTON: And what was it like for those folks?

MILDRED GRAVES: They were fine because they had gardens and they had chickens, and they raised rabbits and the people living in the country would bring milk and eggs and cream and butter to town. So it was less affected than the industrial areas in the east where Elaine grew up, I'm very sure.

CLAYTON: Just a couple other questions I have and then if you would like to just go over some of the other important events throughout your life and as you grew up. You mentioned coming to Castle Rock to school and that was from the ranch, could you tell me the name of the school, maybe how you got to school?

MILDRED GRAVES: It was the Castle Rock Grade School and the reason we moved into town partly because there were no buses. If you -- my father and his brothers walked to school, the three miles from the ranch when they growing up. That was the

way they got to school. Some rode horseback but we lived right across the street from the school so that transportation was no problem at all.

CLAYTON: And the weather was?

MILDRED GRAVES: The weather was wintery in winter and uh -- lovely in the summer and it was the Castle Rock Grade School and the Douglas County High School, and it still is the Douglas County High School and at that time it was the one high school in the county. And, the high school students would come from Parker or Larkspur or Louviers and board in Castle Rock with families there during the week and then, usually, they would go home for the weekends either in the automobiles that their parents had or ride horseback as many of them did. There was a barn with three stalls on the back of my grandmother's house where the buggy and the horses were kept and when the family would come to town they would keep their horses and buggy there. And that was the way that was done. There was a wonderful music teacher in Castle Rock, Mrs. Reynolds, that we nearly all took music lessons from and she played for dances in the communities around through the years. She, usually was able to hire um -- a drummer and sometimes a violinist from Denver who would come and the dances usually started about nine and the women all took either sandwiches or cakes and at midnight they would have sandwiches or cakes and cake and coffee and then uh -- dance until about two o'clock. The granges were very, very popular in those years. There are two between Aurora and Parker where they still have lots and lots of activities. So, ah --

CLAYTON: What kind of music did you dance to?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, square dances and waltzes and schottische and two-steps and fox trots and, ah -- round dances, ballroom dances except for square dances, lots and lots of square dancing then. And that was lots of fun for the young people. And they had lots of barn dances. And they would, usually in the barns, could only have the dances there when hay wasn't stored in the barns. And they had [*interruption, phone ringing and Mildred asking Elaine to turn on the oven*] ah, corner triangles across each corner which was like a shelf with a high, high barricade in the front where they put all the babies to sleep. And they put, you know, three or four, six babies in each corner. There was a wonderful woman, Mrs. Nowells, who lived across the alley from us in Castle Rock and she was our baby-sitter. She took care of us when mother and dad went, so we weren't taken to the, to the community affairs as much because we were so

happy when Mrs. Nowells came because she made hot chocolate and sugar cookies and all those good things for us, so that was fun, so that's what we did. Now what?

CLAYTON: Anything else that you would like to go over and tell me about your life and how much has changed in the area?

MILDRED GRAVES: A custom that was so popular when we lived in Castle Rock was May Day. And the day before May Day we always, all the school kiddies would uh -- walk the hill that we called Crocus hill east of town where the big water tanks are, and uh -- pick the crocuses and the spring flowers and at school that day we all made May Baskets. And then on May Day we would take May Baskets to our grandmothers and to uh -- the lady that took care of us, and uh -- the neighbors, who were older people; and that was just wonderful. Mr. Smith, a Civil War veteran, made us a birdhouse for bluebirds out of a wooden Jell-O box and it had Jell-O across the outside. And it was a little wooden box and he told us that, for sure, the bluebirds would nest in that house. And my dad put it up on the clothesline post and, sure enough, the bluebirds nested there for years and years and years. And my bother and I had bantam chickens, a Banty rooster and some little hens and laid little bitty eggs and my dad made a -- a cage or a house for them that was under the eaves of the back porch and we had the bantam chickens for several years. That was a fun thing for our pets, and we enjoyed that a lot. Um --

CLAYTON: Well you are doing so well, your memory of the time and the event is so excellent and you have the Graves Family Tree and an album that looks pretty old with some interesting pictures --

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, this I put together from our beginning, come and sit by us [*aside to her daughter re. the phone call and oven*]. I made a photocopy of this for her --

CLAYTON: What is that?

MILDRED GRAVES: This is the Douglas County's Curtis family and, ah, this tells about the Curtises coming to Douglas County and in 1971 there was a hundredth anniversary reunion and at Oaklands when people from all over the United States came back and this is little bit of it and you may take that.

CLAYTON: Oh, you are giving it to me --

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah --

CLAYTON: And I can, also, put this with your recording?

MILDRED GRAVES: Sure, sure --

CLAYTON: -- in the library. Well thank you, Mildred, that is very, very kind, it will be well-welcomed. Uh -- is there anything like this available that you are aware of in Douglas County right now?

MILDRED GRAVES: I don't know about this particular thing, at this time there was a lot in the newspapers and I had asked them to send all the information to my parents and my mother didn't know what it was and when it came she just pitched it. So –
[laughter]

CLAYTON: This is called "Hoss's Column, Douglas County's Curtis Family" by Houston Warring.

MILDRED GRAVES: And this was in the Record Journal, and I need to tell you, too, that Bud Curtis who was Henry Curtis III, has diaries that, ah, are very, very precious and he, probably, can give you a good deal more information than I have on the Curtis Family from the beginning. But now --

CLAYTON: Where does he live?

MILDRED GRAVES: On West Plum Creek at Oaklands.

CLAYTON: All right. [*background conversation between Mildred and Elaine*] and you gave me that address?

MILDRED GRAVES: I have it. Carroll Hier, he is one, he is a first cousin.

CLAYTON: Carroll Hier is your first cousin?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah.

CLAYTON: And he is still living at 6415 Peakview?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah, and his mother and my father were first cousins, no, he is my first cousin, ah, his mother and my father -- my father was his mother's second cousin. Anyway we're cousins and I'd have to figure that all out.

CLAYTON: Okay. Well thank you.

MILDRED GRAVES: Well, now do you just quickly want to go through this?

CLAYTON: I'd love to.

MILDRED GRAVES: All right, this is my father and my mother in Fort Collins when they were in college. Douglas Stewart and Lena Ayers.

CLAYTON: A-Y-R-E-S?

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh. And, this is the music building on the college campus and this is their wedding picture, they were married in Fort Collins on the tenth of June and then came right to Castle Rock in 1911. This is my grandfather's house in Castle Rock and my grandmother's house. And there's the white picket fence.

CLAYTON: White picket fence.

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh -- and this is my grandfather and grandmother. And there was a little cottage right beside this house that was the first one built by grandmother's father for her to bring the daughters to school and stay in Castle Rock. And now I think there is a fence between but there was a well, a wonderful well, between the two houses. And it was still very, very much where they got their water.

CLAYTON: Is this house still --

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, uh-huh --

CLAYTON: -- there? And that's on what street, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: It is on the corner of Wilcox and I think it's Railroad Avenue, but I'm not sure. It is were you come down from Franktown into Castle Rock, right on that corner; on the east side of the railroad tracks. This was the ranch house, ah -- and

this was the part added later, and this is the living room and a bedroom, and two bedrooms upstairs.

CLAYTON: Now this is located?

MILDRED GRAVES: On Grandpa Stewart's ranch, but now it's gone.

CLAYTON: Oh, it is gone?

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh.

CLAYTON: Was it built in sections, it looks like over --

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, this was the original and then this was added later. And this was the dining room and on the back of that a big kitchen.

CLAYTON: Is this the only picture like this that exists, that you are aware of?

MILDRED GRAVES: I don't know, there may be others. I don't know. And there are my mother and dad and my mother and my father and Uncle Herb riding horseback, and my mother on her roan horse. And this was me, when I was a year old [*laughter*] --

CLAYTON: And your dress is very typical of the times?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, yes.

CLAYTON: The hair styles?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes.

CLAYTON: Can you describe them?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, mother's hair was long and she had a beautiful tortoiseshell comb, and uh -- her bracelet, I have, was her engagement gift from my father. And she had on long white gloves, you see, and I had on little black patent leather button-up slippers.

CLAYTON: And that was typical for a child in those days?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes, uh-huh.

CLAYTON: And the hat?

MILDRED GRAVES: A crocheted bonnet with great ribbons on the side.

CLAYTON: 1913 is the date on that.

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah, uh-huh. And there are my dad and mother and when there was just me. And this was taking the cream to town.

CLAYTON: And what is taking the cream to town? There's --

MILDRED GRAVES: Well, they milked cows and they separated the cream right on the ranch with an old hand separator and they uh -- took the cream to Castle Rock to the train to go to Denver and they kept the -- skimmed milk, then, and that was fed to the hogs.

CLAYTON: Now, this is like a buckboard with wooden wheels?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah. Uh-huh.

CLAYTON: Spoke wheels and a cowboy hat or straw hat.

MILDRED GRAVES: A straw hat.

CLAYTON: On the man --

MILDRED GRAVES: On my father.

CLAYTON: -- on your father. And these are tin or metal cans.

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes!

CLAYTON: -- of some kind. An open buggy where the cans are stacked in the back and it looks like these are slats on the sides so you can see the cans. What road was he coming down?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, he was just coming across from the ranch, ah, over the hill and then down uh -- past the cedar, is it Cedars Cemetery into Castle Rock. And they, usually, took it to the, took the cream to the Rio Grande depot to go into Denver instead of the Santa Fe depot to go to Pueblo. And, then, this is the machine shop on grandpa's ranch and the shed for the machinery and the hayrack -- there. And this is my grandmother with the little colt and me on the horse. And this is mother and dad going to town in the buggy.

CLAYTON: Is that the same buggy we saw taking the milk?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, no this is a driving buggy with a top. And this, my father used a buggy like this for his surveying. And the horse was Dick and when he surveyed over in the Parker area and was through, he'd be through about four o'clock and he would head old Dick over the road, the same road that goes from Franktown to Castle Rock now, and he would go to sleep and the horse would [*laughter*] drive home. So then when he got home at five-thirty he'd had a nice nap to milk the cows and do the evening chores. [*laughter*] And the horse knew the way home without any trouble at all. [*coughs*] And there I am with a cousin and this is Golden, this is the Castle Rock at Golden, I don't know why that happened to be in there, but it did. So, anyway -- and then here is the beginning of the family, now this south of the stone house, you see.

CLAYTON: In Castle Rock?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, on the farm, on the farm, the ranch. And there is my dad and mother, and this is when there was a lot of the family together. This is my dad and mother, an uncle and an aunt and another uncle and aunt, another uncle and aunt. And here are the sisters-in-law: mother, and aunt Effie, and aunt Maude and aunt Katie.

CLAYTON: And they lived in the area to?

MILDRED GRAVES: They lived at Larkspur, they lived in Castle Rock, they lived in Denver.

CLAYTON: And did you tell me their names, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: Ah, well -- ah dad's three brothers here, Frank McInroy and Jim McInroy and Herb McInroy, half brothers. And their wives were Aunt Maude, and Aunt Effie and Aunt Katie. And this is grandpa, my grandfather Stewart with me, ah,

when I was probably two. And then here's another one like that. And here's grandpa and grandma with the grandchildren that were there that day. This was Alice McInroy and Stewart McInroy and Frankie McInroy, cousins, they were. And this is Violet McInroy and Effie McInroy and me. And there we are.

CLAYTON: In the middle of a road somewhere.

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh this was the road that came down, see there's the machine shed and the house is here. And the windmill is still standing, it still is there at the Meadows, but it's the only thing left. And then, this is my brother when he was tiny, and they, ah, screened in the back of the porch, all of this, you see has been screened in here. And then this was a family picnic with all the family and this was Happy Canyon was a place where they loved to go for picnics. And these were cousins from California who visited.

CLAYTON: There were no houses in --

MILDRED GRAVES: No, oh no.

CLAYTON: -- Happy Canyon then. Was it named Happy Canyon at that time?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, yes.

ELAINE GRAVES: Do you know how it got that name?

MILDRED GRAVES: I don't know who named it, it always was just that, it was a wonderful place for picnics. And here are some more of the, of the cousins, see there were five girls. And this is me on one end. And, this is the same group as before.

CLAYTON: The dresses have changed a little bit here, Mildred.

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes, and the --

CLAYTON: Skirts and --

MILDRED GRAVES: -- long black skirts and white linen blouses, a lot of them. And then here are grandpa and grandma and the four Stewart brothers. Uncle Gordon, the youngest, and my dad, and Uncle Herb and Uncle Charlie who was a veterinarian,

went to CSU and practiced in Colorado Springs. And there they are all with grandpa and grandma. Then we moved to Castle Rock and this was our first house in Castle Rock and it is now called the Lewis House. And it's up as you go to the fair grounds. And there's my dad and me and me and Pat and this was a nice house.

CLAYTON: Does the house look the same as it did then?

MILDRED GRAVES: Very much the same, very much the same

CLAYTON: You have a bay window!

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh, and it was painted gray with white trim --

CLAYTON: -- at that time --

MILDRED GRAVES: -- uh-huh, with two bay windows. And it had a nice wrought iron fence around and a big back yard with a place for chickens and ducks, we didn't have any big farm animals. And then that house was sold, my dad sold it while they built the little new house across from the school and in the mean time we lived in this little house across from what was the high school but it's gone now. But we just rented that for awhile.

CLAYTON: Do you remember who your father sold your house to?

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh, Lewis, Mr. Lewis, now I can't think of his name, but they bought it from us and then the Prescott's bought it from them. And this is across the street from the grade school and then we went to Fort Collins to visit my grandmother and mother's mother who still lived in Fort Collins in those years. And then this was our little third house, and that's right across the street from the grade school on Cantril Street, I think is the name of that street.

CLAYTON: Does it look like this now?

MILDRED GRAVES: Except it's almost orange color, it was white then and we had a wonderful porch swing, and we swang and swang.

CLAYTON: And the porch is open.

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh -- and this is the way my hair was done, it was parted on the side and long and two long braids turned up and with the big bows on either side, two big bows. *[laughter]* And then this Mary Clark who was Mary Briscoe and that was my good, good friend through all the years. And there is my brother's pony, Shorty, and I was riding it there and there. And see here's winter in Castle Rock and this was summer.

CLAYTON: Was that a lot of snow for Castle Rock, was that the worst you ever saw?

MILDRED GRAVES: No -- no, no, that's just normal. And then this another picnic and this lady's husband was a cousin and she became the Worthy Grand Matron of the Grand Chapter of Colorado for Eastern Star, Bernice Nickson, and very dear friends, and this was her daughter. And George Nickson was at the -- oh and the lady with the green and white dress on is the wife and very lovely person.

ELAINE GRAVES: They had a birthday reception for her and 150 people showed up.

MILDRED GRAVES: And then we moved to Colorado Springs. And here was our first little house in Colorado Springs.

CLAYTON: Where was that?

MILDRED GRAVES: That was on Palmer Avenue and --

CLAYTON: 1924, is it still there?

MILDRED GRAVES: I don't know.

CLAYTON: It's a wood frame house.

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh, and I went to North Junior School, and that's the school and that's Esther Timmons, who was my best friend.

CLAYTON: Is the school still there, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, uh-huh, it was brand new that year and it was November before we could start to school because it wasn't finished. But it was a wonderful

school. And then for a little while before we went to Steamboat Springs we moved back to Castle Rock to the Richie Ranch and we lived there for just a little while before we --

CLAYTON: Now where is that located?

MILDRED GRAVES: That's north and east of Castle Rock, up kind of behind the new high school and we were there. And one time, the little while we lived there before we went to Steamboat Springs, mother's family all came to visit. And this was her oldest brother and he had four sons and her next oldest, she had two brothers, and the other brother had two sons. And those are the ladies and, and then these are the beginning pictures of my little sister who was almost fifteen years younger than me and she was born when we lived in Colorado Springs. And then we moved the Steamboat Springs and here we are ready to go skiing [*laughter*] and then there is my little sister and this is Glen Morris and this is Gordon Wren and this boy's name was Atwood Harwig, and he was my boyfriend, my first real boyfriend.

CLAYTON: In 1927 --

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh, and this was the golf [*laughter*] where they played golf, they had a sand trap to tee off of.

CLAYTON: [*laughter*] It look's like a kid's sand pile, doesn't it and it's barren --

MILDRED GRAVES: Well -- it probably was and that's how they played golf in those years. And then this was when they shoveled the snow from the sidewalks --

CLAYTON: Look at that.

MILDRED GRAVES: -- and shoveled the snow from the streets and then they just had little, kind of tunnels to go through to get, well here you can see [*laughter*], this is what is was like in those years.

CLAYTON: That man has the snow above his head by about ten inches? Eight? Oh further than that?

MILDRED GRAVES: And that's downtown. Then when we moved to Pueblo, my grandmother came to live with us. And this is my sister and her little friend.

ELAINE GRAVES: This is your mother's mother?

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh -- and while we lived there she married late in life a nice, nice man who name was Mr. Sybral [sp?], she'd been a widow for probably twenty or thirty years. And they had some nice trips in a nice car --

CLAYTON: What kind of a car is that?

MILDRED GRAVES: That's an Oldsmobile, I'll have you know --

CLAYTON: And the top comes up --

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, yes --

CLAYTON: -- and some writing on the side --

MILDRED GRAVES: -- uh-huh, yes, that was a very nice car. And that was when the men -- Mr. Sybral [sp?] died and my grandmother went to Sterling for awhile to live to mother's brother and there she is when she lived in Sterling. And then here's high school when I graduated, and this was for the graduation breakfast when we all wore hats. And there is my little sister.

CLAYTON: Now is your skirt a little short for those times? Or is that the modern lady?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, no -- that was, see, that was the way it was in those times. And there I am when I was in high school and there I am when I started to college.

ELAINE GRAVES: -- and the resemblance that goes through this family is incredible, pictures of her mother and her daughter --

MILDRED GRAVES: --and that was a terrible picture --

ELAINE GRAVES: -- and granddaughter, it's just incredible --

MILDRED GRAVES: And mother said that I could have my hair done for that and I went to have my hair done at a beauty shop and the lady didn't know how to do it and I was there for three hours and still didn't have it done, so that was the very nice picture. And, there is where I was ready to go to college, mother and Shirley and me. And, this

was my graduation picture from high school and this was Ed, when I first knew him when he went to -- he was in Fort Collins going to college. And that was in a -- thing, you know, and it sure got ruined when we took it out.

CLAYTON: So, and then you had children and your children's names were?

MILDRED GRAVES: Reed and Eleanor and Larry, Lawrence, Edward Reed, Jr., and Eleanor Mildred, and Lawrence Stewart Graves.

CLAYTON: And where do they live now?

MILDRED GRAVES: They, ah, Reed and Elaine live about eight minutes northeast and Larry and Marie, his new wife live about eight minutes northwest and Eleanor and Ken live in Highlands Ranch. And -- this was a birthday party for grandma Stewart at Uncle Herb's ranch. And all of the sons and all of their wives and all of the grandchildren who were available were there. So that was a very, very wonderful time.

CLAYTON: What year was that?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, golly, I would guess probably 1933, because we didn't have any children then. And -- then this was in March of 1943, this is Ed and me and Reed and Eleanor and Larry and this was the ninth of March and on the thirteenth of March he received his reclassification notice to go to the service [*phone rings*] and he had to go. And we had three little children, a first grader, and a third grader, and a fifth grader. That's when I went to work. And this is my parents at there house on South Downing Street in Denver. And my sister-in-law and this is my brother who uh -- was in the Army Medical Corps. And Ed came home on leave and we went up to Livermore, north of Fort Collins, to visit the Roberts who had been wonderful friends when we were in college. And here were the kids then, and this was all while Ed was in service. This was when he came home on leave on time and there he is at Fort Lewis and there he is in Ise-shima when he was over there. And when he sent this picture mother just cried and cried and cried. She just could hardly take that, that this is what had happened to him. And he had gone from 230 to 185 pounds.

ELAINE GRAVES: Which was a much better weight for him.

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah, uh-huh -- and there are Eleanor and Barry

CLAYTON: In Simla --

MILDRED GRAVES: In Simla, and this is me. And then these are family dinners at my parent's home in Denver, wonderful Thanksgiving, Christmas, Fourth of July times with family and friends. My grandmother --

ELAINE GRAVES: The house had, oh I don't know leaves and branches and stuff right in the plaster.

MILDRED GRAVES: Yeah -- it had been owned by an artist and the woodwork was very dark but the walls had stucco, had been stuccoed. There's one on my dresser, honey, of grandma and grandpa that shows --

CLAYTON: 907 S. Downing?

MILDRED GRAVES: 917, 9-1-7, just south of the Kentucky entrance into the park.

CLAYTON: Has that area changed a lot now?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, not very much at all. The house has a new roof and other than that it looks much the same, it was a brick two-story, uh -- bungalow-type but a nice, nice house. And uh -- the artist had painted on the walls after stuccoing and then colored and then varnished. So they were --

ELAINE GRAVES: There are a million pictures in one of these things I saw --

MILDRED GRAVES: And this was when Ed came home from the war with his mother and me. And then we moved to Monte Vista and this is a picture of the sand dunes and we took a summer drive up to Placida and this is watching the birds there. Then we moved to Glenwood Springs, and that's where we lived until we came to Denver.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2

CLAYTON: -- of the second tape and she is going through another album talking about her family, her grandparents and the Curtises and um -- it's about 6:15 in the evening so

she's briefly gonna to go through the decade of the 1870's from Colorado history of the family.

MILDRED GRAVES: And this is just a general history that kind of gives us a good background of what Colorado was like in the early, early days and uh -- Colorado was made a state in 1876, which was five years after my great-grandparents came. And it tells a little bit about this and you have that information, I think, in that that I've given you. Then a picture of my great-grandparents, Grandpa and Grandma Curtis, Henry Harper and Julia Curtis on their sixtieth wedding anniversary, then the news clippings that you have copies of, that you can add to your things and the invitation to the uh -- reunion that was held in 1971 at Oaklands where families from twenty-six states came and there is a picture of the original barn and the silo that was built at that time. And, also, a picture of the seven-room house that great-grandpa Curtis built and a commemorative marker that designates the ranch as a historic site that's along the road that you can see as you drive past the ranch. There's articles about my grandmother, Millie Stewart, and a short write-up of her life. And then, an article about the town of Castle Rock and it's beginning.

CLAYTON: That's by Virginia McConnell Simmons.

MILDRED GRAVES: And it's an interesting, interesting article.

CLAYTON: Ah, it was in "Denver Living".

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, at that time. And the picture shown of the train and the depot and the gypsies who camped there and the Catholic Church that was built in 1888 of this native stone. Ah, a picture of my grandparents on their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and of their headstone and marker at Bear Canyon Cemetery. And uh -- some clippings about my father and the statement of his work history for the State of Colorado.

ELAINE GRAVES: Why did you save this?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, this in an advertisement that was in the paper in the want-ad section that includes the house that my parents rented and later bought. And, ah, a house that was available for rent at that time and uh --

CLAYTON: Was this in the Castle Rock paper?

MILDRED GRAVES: No, in the Denver Post.

ELAINE GRAVES: That would be the South Downing Street house --

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh, the South Downing Street house. And, ah, they lived there from 1936 until 1973 when my mother died and then it was sold. So, ah, and this tells about --

CLAYTON: Seventy-four feet of snow in Wolf Creek Pass --

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh and they --

CLAYTON: 19 --

MILDRED GRAVES: -- I don't know, it doesn't have the year date --

ELAINE GRAVES: Wasn't it 1929? Roughly?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, uh-huh. And then the pass was kept open besides seventy-four feet of snow and the work that was done and the oiling crews worked in here and a picture of my parents on their fiftieth wedding anniversary. And uh -- this was taken by the lady who lived next door. And then clippings about when they were married and some of the entertainment's where my mother sang. And then -- Christmas pictures of them in their home, probably 1970-71, I would guess. That might have been [19]72.

ELAINE GRAVES: I couldn't tell you exactly when it was --

MILDRED GRAVES: -- but you weren't part of our family then.

ELAINE GRAVES: I knew the family but -- [*phone rings*]

MILDRED GRAVES: And interestingly, my father was one of men graduating from high school, the year that he graduated in 1907, I think, and he wrote an essay on Theodore Roosevelt

CLAYTON: Why did he do that, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: That he delivered at the graduation exercise.

CLAYTON: Oh.

MILDRED GRAVES: And this tells about the star on the rock at Castle Rock.

CLAYTON: And that's also in the Denver Post, was that the first time the star was lit?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh no, this was just an article lately. And then this is his younger brother. And this is the wife of his next older brother, Mary Stewart, was her name and she was one of a few people who sees Haley's Comet twice in her life.

CLAYTON: Oh, that's really unusual.

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh, huh, yeah, [*Elaine telling Mildred about phone calls*] Oh, okay. Oh, my goodness.

CLAYTON: It sounds like you are still a busy lady, what is it you do all of the time? [*laughter*] You are a retired school teacher but it seems like --

ELAINE GRAVES: And she retired early too – 1965.

CLAYTON: Now what is it you do to keep so busy?

MILDRED GRAVES: Well, I have a wonderful, wonderful family that's just incredibly wonderful, they like each other, and they like me, I think, and we have wonderful times together. And then I am active in my college sorority alumna group.

CLAYTON: Which is?

MILDRED GRAVES: Tri-Delta, Delta Delta Delta. And I belong to a philanthropic educational organization, PTO, and have lots of interesting uh -- social activities as well as uh -- money raising activities. Some place in here is a picture of the court house, I think, that's what I was, oh, I guess it's in the other book, must be.

CLAYTON: I take it you are still driving to get around to all these things.

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes.

CLAYTON: -- and your friends and you --

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh yes.

ELAINE GRAVES: -- and two bridge groups, where are they?

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh, one is the first Tuesday and the other the third Friday of the month.

ELAINE GRAVES: Is that the one in Simla?

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh no, and then I often go to Simla with friends who live here now who used to live in Simla, one of the ladies was one of my husband's students when he taught there when he first got out of college before we were married. And she is a very good friend and that's a fun thing to do. And I have just lots of friends.

ELAINE GRAVES: -- and she still sews beautifully, my sister was married last May and my mother was very ill and Mother Graves made my whole dress which was just incredible and made most of Sally's, her jacket?

MILDRED GRAVES: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

CLAYTON: It sounds like you are in very good health.

MILDRED GRAVES: I am, I don't have arthritis, I [*laughter*] have broken my back four times through the years so it's kind of -- doesn't let me stand up straight like I'd like to --

ELAINE GRAVES: She's much shorter than she used to be.

MILDRED GRAVES: But that's the only, only problem that I believe I have.

CLAYTON: And your skin is absolutely beautiful [*laughter*] and you have a lot of black in your hair yet that you had when you were growing up.

ELAINE GRAVES: You've always had a little bit of light hair, haven't you?

MILDRED GRAVES: Yes, well you saw the streak in my grandmother's hair, this was how mine started and so. And I am well and happy and have wonderful, wonderful kids and --

ELAINE GRAVES: They call her, what is it, Ted calls you the nerve center.

MILDRED GRAVES: Oh, of them says this is the anchor point and another says this is the communication hub of the family and they --

ELAINE GRAVES: She always knows what is going on before anybody else does.

MILDRED GRAVES: -- and our three have spouses so that's six and there are eleven grandchildren, and six of them are married and that's seventeen.

CLAYTON: Do they live in and around the area, Mildred?

MILDRED GRAVES: Two are in California and I just got back Sunday from seeing them.

ELAINE GRAVES: From one of the PhD in developmental psychology our oldest, well, Reed's oldest son --

MILDRED GRAVES: Your oldest son.

ELAINE GRAVES: Well -- I just can't take full credit for it.

MILDRED GRAVES: Well a lot of the credit though --

ELAINE GRAVES: -- but his wife anyway, just finished a PhD.

MILDRED GRAVES: And then there are ten little tiny great grandchildren and each one is a brand new thrill all over again because they are all normal and healthy and have all of their facilities and how it can keep on happening time and time again is just incredible. So, I am truly blessed.

ELAINE GRAVES: I have a feeling that you are worried about what's in the oven that might be burning.

MILDRED GRAVES: Now I tell you what, while I put it on, you take Marie, Marie?

CLAYTON: Yes!

MILDRED GRAVES: -- downstairs.

ELAINE GRAVES: --the football wall.

CLAYTON: -- the football wall --Do we have famous celebrities in the football wall?

MILDRED GRAVES: -- and the family rouge's gallery.

CLAYTON: Elaine Graves and I are down in the basement of Mildred's house and Mildred, I mean, Elaine would you just describe some of the things that are from the Castle Rock farm?

ELAINE GRAVES: These would be from the Stewart's house, her parent's house and they are very old Indian rugs and what can I say about them they are black bordered, kind of an ecru center with a tan and red and gray designs. Ah, it looks like that one is about three by five, this one is about two by three.

CLAYTON: And they are very old.

ELAINE GRAVES: They're very old, yes you can see that --

CLAYTON: They are beautiful, original Indian weaves.

ELAINE GRAVES: This couch is from when they were first married, Mother and Father Graves in their first house, was reupholstered God knows how many times --

CLAYTON: And this looks like an old cedar chest, beautiful carved cedar chest.

ELAINE GRAVES: Yes it is, that was probably hers as a young woman. And her sister, Shirley, is an artist and that's one of her paintings.

CLAYTON: And the piano?

ELAINE GRAVES: I don't remember the story of that but that clock has some history but I don't know it, that's somebody's wedding clock but I don't remember whose. Okay, then here, a big football family. Her mother [*probably means father*], Douglas N Stewart was on the first varsity squad at Colorado A and M at the time, now CSU and that's his picture there something like 1908 or 19--, I think he graduated in 1911. And then, this would be Father Graves, it's a cartoon, collage kind of newspaper photos of, I think --

CLAYTON: Black and white

ELAINE GRAVES: Does that look, here he is, here he is. Yes of football players, all conference from 1927 and that's Father Graves in his uniform, as a big football hero. And, I guess these are all pictures, I guess he played tackle and --

CLAYTON: This colored one is very interesting, look's like a bunch of dejected players at half-time, it says end of first half, no score, give-up dash, exclamation point.

ELAINE GRAVES: That is just a joke, cartoon. But here is a picture of Father Graves' high school, he went to North Denver High and one of his, not one of his classmates, Golda Mier, went there a couple of years earli --, later, I think, I'm not sure exactly when but this is the football team in 1924. -- Football is a very, very important part of this family.

CLAYTON: I see. Scores of pictures of their --

ELAINE GRAVES: Then these are all Father Graves, then let's see -- oh, this is Larry, Reed's younger brother, who's a guard at CS -- or tackle at CSU --

CLAYTON: In [19]66 U Ag's at that time.

ELAINE GRAVES: And here is Reed and Larry and they played, ah, they have a game, kind of a traditional kind of thing where the current football team plays the ones that have graduated and they played against each other there.

CLAYTON: And this is a CSU photo May, 1957.

ELAINE GRAVES: Uh-huh, and here's Larry in 1966, that would have been, no this is 1958 that was CU Ag's and 66th year, that was their score, I think, that was in 1958.

And here is Reed, who was, he was a super hot-shot football player, my husband, extremely handsome as you can see --

CLAYTON: Yes, I see he was very handsome.

ELAINE GRAVES: When he was thin and young. And --

CLAYTON: He looks like his father, too, doesn't he?

ELAINE GRAVES: Yeah, there is a lot of family resemblance. I am looking at Reed's baby pictures just now, I finally figured out who Adam, our grandson, our only grandson looks like, and that's Reed and Larry. Ah -- but anyway, Reed had established such a reputation as a football player at Monte Vista that when people heard that he was coming to Glenwood High everybody in the town was talking about the super hot-shot football player they were getting for their high school team, he was in junior high.

CLAYTON: Now this is Mildred's oldest son, is that right?

ELAINE GRAVES: Yes, you're right.

CLAYTON: Thank you.

ELAINE GRAVES: And then David is Reed's younger son, and that's him. David is six feet six and played high school football, didn't go to college, so, there is another picture, he was number eighty-one. And, I think these are pictures of Larry, basketball in college. And then I guess there are more family pictures around in the back of this wall. Yep, here we are, and God knows who all of these folks are [*laughter*].

CLAYTON: They go back, there are some very old pictures. There is a drafting table, I wonder if that is, could that be father Graves as she addresses him and his drafting --

ELAINE GRAVES: -- her --

CLAYTON: Her husband?

ELAINE GRAVES: I think her father or her grandfather --

CLAYTON: You've seen the drafting table at some kind of a room with some archeology --

ELAINE GRAVES: Survey.

CLAYTON: Yeah -- surveying --

ELAINE GRAVES: Her father, Douglas Stewart, was a surveyor.

CLAYTON: Okay.

ELAINE GRAVES: Okay, I couldn't tell you who this is. This is Eleanor when she was married --

CLAYTON: Eleanor is?

ELAINE GRAVES: -- her daughter. And here are the three of them; Reed, Eleanor, and Larry when they were little kids. And here is father Graves as a young man.

CLAYTON: And he looks very much like your husband, very much.

ELAINE GRAVES: Ah, I don't know whether that's mother Graves and her daughter, Pat. Here is a picture that was taken when father Graves died and all the grandchildren. Everybody came back for the funeral and this is at our house. And here's mother Graves with just a whole bunch of grandchildren and one, two -- spouses. This is mother Graves and her sisters. Now here is mother Graves, her sister and her mother. And here she is as a young woman, and this is Reed and Eleanor when they were little kids.

CLAYTON: Oh, and here's, isn't that lovely.

ELAINE GRAVES: Our wedding invitation and a picture of Reed and me when we were married.

CLAYTON: And that's at the --

ELAINE GRAVES: Christ Episcopal Church --

CLAYTON: Christ Episcopal Church in Castle Rock.

ELAINE GRAVES: Ah, I sure don't know who all of these, here's father Graves.

CLAYTON: This must be a prize-winning cow at the farm, somewhere, doesn't that look like the old farm.

ELAINE GRAVES: Yeah, that is the old farm.

CLAYTON: The old farm house in Oaklands.

ELAINE GRAVES: Yeah, that's not Oaklands, that would be the Stewart ranch.

CLAYTON: The Stewart ranch.

ELAINE GRAVES: The Oaklands is another ranch, that the Curtises and the McInroy, the Curtises settled. That must be grandmother Stewart, I would think, that picture. Oh, I can't tell you who these folks are.

CLAYTON: Thanks, Elaine, that was very nice. Ah, this is the completion of Mildred Graves tapes and this will go into the Castle Rock Library and become part of the Douglas County/Castle Rock Historical Society.

END OF TAPE