

STAN OLINER: Ah, first of all do you mind if I call you Bette? Uh -- Bette would you mind sharing with me, your present age, or the year you were born.

ELIZABETH SAUNDERS: I was born October 31st, 1914.

OLINER: Uh -- how long has your family been in Douglas County?

SAUNDERS: My grandmother came here in the -- 1880's. She was married in -- uh February of 1882. At the Old J.P. (James Patrick) McInroy ranch in Larkspur. She married a cowboy from the Greenland ranch.

OLINER: Now why did she come to Douglas County?

SAUNDERS: Uh -- her -- I don't know why, her sister, Mrs. Webster -- and uh her husband were living out there. I've thought about that and I don't remember why they came here. But grandma came out here from Pennsylvania. She was, I guess you'd call her a governess or a nanny, for a doctor's family in Germantown, Pennsylvania and she came out to visit. And met my grandfather -- who worked for the old Greenland ranch. Originally grandpa came out here, we found out later years, to work for the Union Pacific railroad when they were building the railroad, to chase the buffalo away from the tracks so they wouldn't tear up the tracks when they laid them. But -- as I say, she came out to visit Aunt Violet and Uncle Jim, and met grandpa and they got married. And then they went out to Crook, Colorado.

OLINER: Now you're saying Cook? or Crook?

SAUNDERS: Crook! Crook -- up in the northeastern part. And they were married in 1882 and I think there was a horrible blizzard in 1883 and that made them come back here. I don't know if they -- went bankrupt or, I have no idea, but they came back to Castle Rock and eventually my grandfather went into the cattle business with -- Sam Goodding over at Franktown. And Bud Dittmars father, Sam Dittmars. And they raised cattle and sold them. Fed them out in -- in the pastures. And sold them. And in there somewhere also my grandfather had a -- well, I can't even think. Well, they butchered 'em out here just on Alman Road and then they were sold at the meat market, downtown, some of 'em.

OLINER: Now, I don't know that we captured your grandfather's name.

SAUNDERS: Noyes, M.M. Noyes.

OLINER: N-O-Y-E-S?

SAUNDERS: Yes.

OLINER: And then your, mother and father, now --

SAUNDERS: My mother was born here.

OLINER: And her name?

SAUNDERS: Noyes, Theodora I. Noyes.

OLINER: And how did she meet your father then and his name.

SAUNDERS: Well -- my father's family came out to Wheatridge. Now, there again I'm not sure what year. And -- daddy was playing baseball with the Wheatridge baseball team and they traveled back and forth playing baseball games. And Wheatridge came out to play Castle Rock. I think they came out on the train. And daddy met a girl, and started datin' her. Florence Adams. And eventually he met momma. So he dropped Florence and he picked up Theo. And they finally got married. And he used to come out to see momma on a -- motorcycle and scare the horses and my grandfather would say "Come off that goddamn pht-pht-pht-pht machine!"
[laughter]

OLINER: Now you said something that just really intrigues me. You're saying your father was on the Wheatridge baseball team.

SAUNDERS: Yeah.

OLINER: Now, is this kinda semi-pro?

SAUNDERS: I think so. Because momma was so mad at him on their honeymoon. She wanted to stay at the Oxford hotel -- and I, he went somewhere else because that's where all the baseball teams stayed. [laughter] And he was hooked on baseball all his life.

OLINER: Well, and you're also telling us that Castle Rock had a team. And it sounds like there was a circuit.

SAUNDERS: There were but -- but those are the only two. I don't know where else they played.

OLINER: Kay now, I'd like to kinda put this in the context on when we're talking about. Let's kinda work backwards.

SAUNDERS: Okay.

OLINER: You're mother and father were married what year?

SAUNDERS: 1910, January -- 21st, 1910.

OLINER: Kay, and do you have a rough sense of -- er your father's birth date or how old he would have been?

SAUNDERS: My father's birthday was -- February the 28th, 1884. My mother's birthday was -- now there I've got to stop. I've got 'em straight because grandma and momma and Ben were all mixed up. I think it was September 24th, 18 -- 90. She was born here in Castle Rock.

OLINER: Okay, and so -- let's see. If they were married in 1910 and your father, he's already playing baseball so it's that early -- 1900 to 1910, possibly, that -- uh -- yeah, do you happen to have any photographs of him like in his baseball uniform?

SAUNDERS: Well -- I found some old photographs the other day and I wanted to talk to my cousin, in Denver, about them, or in Lakewood. There -- it's a ball team of some kind and it's got a 'W' on the front. Now uh -- it could have been a high school team. I don't know. But I had

them and I was going to meet with my cousin Virginia on Wednesday and of course, it snowed and I chickened out and didn't go. But they were in some of momma's -- things.

OLINER: Uh-huh. Now the time you were born, which you said, 1914. The family was living here in Castle Rock?

SAUNDERS: Well uh -- no. When momma and daddy first got married they moved to western Kansas, near Monument. And they dried out. So of course, my mother was an only child and -- grandpa and grandma didn't like to think of momma out in western Kansas and a grandchild on the way. They want grand -- momma home. So momma and daddy came home to Castle Rock. And they lived somewhere here in town. The house is gone now but it's down there about where Russ's Drug used to be. They lived there a little while and then -- my grandfather and my father bought a ranch out on Cherry Creek -- in, let's see. I can't remember when my brother was born. -- That's one thing I'd have to go back and check on. They were married in 1910. Probably 1912 --

OLINER: Now when you use the term that "they dried-out", in Kansas, we're not talking about Prohibition here. But explain for the purposes of this tape.

SAUNDERS: No, the -- the drought. The drought. And there was no wheat crop. No wheat crop, hence no money. And uh -- I think daddy and his, one of his brothers, were in business together. Whether he rented or what, I know, that's not clear. But I do know they came back. And then my older brother was born here.

OLINER: Now is it about the same time period that your family would have acquired their first car? Any stories connected with that?

SAUNDERS: Oh uh -- no, they got their first car later. 'Cause I can remember going to visit neighbors in the horse and buggy. And the first car we got was a Model T. And I could remember coming to town to see grandma in that, and in the summer we came with the top down. But in the winter we came with the top up and the side curtains on. Covered up with the cow robe and hot bricks on our feet. Sometimes we didn't make it, we'd turned around and went home. The snow was too bad.

OLINER: Kay, with your birth date in 1914, uh in that time period, 1914 to 1918, any memories of World War One or soldiers. Talk about it a little.

SAUNDERS: Yes. My mother gathered up clothes one time to send to the little orphans in Belgium. And she gave 'em my favorite dress. [laughter] And one of daddy's friends, one of his best friends, -- his name is gone right now. Donald -- Stone -- was a soldier and I have postal cards that he sent me from Belgium, or probably Alsace-Lorraine region. And uh -- I can remember him coming home in his uniform.

OLINER: Any memories of reaction, either within your house or out on the streets on November 11th, 1918?

SAUNDERS: No.

OLINER: That followed, or that same year, 1918, 1919 -- any memories of the influenza epidemic?

SAUNDERS: Yes, very vivid. My brother was born in 1918. And that apparently must have been through some of the flu epidemic and we had a -- he was born at home and they had a nurse stay with momma. Miss Schiesser. And Miss Schiesser kept a can on the cold, cold stove boiling, or warming with Lysol in it. And to this day, the smell of Lysol nauseates me. *[laughter]* And she and my father, SHE decided that what I needed was a good dose of Castor Oil. *[laughter]* And it took she and my father both to give me a dose of Castor Oil. Daddy clamped me between his knees and he held my arms and Miss Schiesser held my nose and they rammed the Castor Oil down. *[laughter]*

OLINER: Any memories of uh -- either your family members or -- the public wearing masks, in, during the influenza.

SAUNDERS: Uh -- no.

OLINER: Cause, see I can't tell if that was --

SAUNDERS: Cause we didn't, see we're seventeen miles out in the country.

OLINER: See, I can't tell if that was more of a city situation, you know, public gatherings and that kind of thing.

SAUNDERS: I, cause I have no recollection of even coming to town -- my brother til he was a little older.

OLINER: In what year did you first start attending school?

SAUNDERS: Uh -- September, 1921. Um -- my grandparents celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, the Gilberts, in California in January of 1921. And my dad and a bunch a, well all the relatives were going but momma decided she had two small children and she didn't want to go on the train to California with two small children and stay a month. So she stayed home with my brother and I, and my daddy went. So she didn't want to have to worry about getting me back and forth to a country school so they kept me out of school for a whole year. Now do you want to know my first impressions of school?

OLINER: Absolutely.

SAUNDERS: I was never so homesick in my life! *[laughter]* I can remember, I'd sit at my desk with my head down and my hands like this looking at the primer, trying to keep from cryin' because I was so homesick. I wanted to go home to bed. I didn't know what to do. It took me about two months, I think to get used to going to school.

OLINER: Now, where was the school located.

SAUNDERS: About a mile and a half south of our ranch. It's just right on 83 and Pete Sanchez lives there now. He finally bought it and has a private residence there now.

OLINER: Now, take us on a kind of a mind's eye tour, take us on a walking tour through the school, how -- the school house, how was it laid out?

SAUNDERS: A one room school. And while my daddy was on the school board they did build the ante room on. But when I first started, you just went in the door, there was one room. To

the left, was a big old coal and wood stove. On the west side were blackboards and the teachers desk was up on a raised platform, about that high. And the piano was up, either sometimes on the north side, sometimes on the south side. And she sat us according to the first grade over here and the second grade, on up. And uh -- I went there eight years.

OLINER: Describe your school day. What time would you go to school?

SAUNDERS: You had to be at school at nine o'clock. And we were out at four.

OLINER: And from September to -- May?

SAUNDERS: Yeah, after Labor, after Labor Day 'till sometime around the first of May I'd say. And uh -- when we were little I think daddy took us a lot in the old Model T but then when we got a little older and the weather was good, they'd let us walk home. And then one year, my brother and I drove a horse and buggy to school. And we were late every morning because we couldn't get the horse to go. *[laughter]* And that was our excuse. We couldn't get our horse to go. But believe me, could he take us home in a hurry *[laughter]*. And we had some neighbors, we all started walking home from school together. And our neighbors had a donkey. So Em and I decided we weren't going to walk. We were going to ride the donkey. So we both climbed on the donkey. Donkey rear end went up in the air and him and I went in the dirt. We never rode the donkey again. *[laughter]*

OLINER: Was your father involved in local politics at all?

SAUNDERS: Oh yes, he was on the school board.

OLINER: Yeah.

SAUNDERS: He was precinct committee man.

OLINER: For which political party?

SAUNDERS: Democratic party. My mother was a precinct committee woman. The school house was the social center of the whole community. We had dances there, we had boxes suppers, we had church, we had Sunday school. -- We had funerals. I don't remember any weddings. I remember wedding showers.

OLINER: Was there quite a turnover in teachers? And how did the board find a new teacher?

SAUNDERS: Well, I don't know how -- I guess teachers sent the applications in. The first school teacher or so, we had were girls right out of high school.

OLINER: In high school, not college.

SAUNDERS: Yes! They never went to college. My first grade school teacher was Carrie Ingalls. Who was later married to Mallory Taylor. And her son Milton lived around here for a long time. In -- then I had Alice Klugey *[sp?]* in there somewhere. And Percy Crosswhite, the Crosswhite's were an old family. But then a little later on, we got teachers out of what they call Normal School. And I think the last teacher, last teacher I had in grade school taught two years and that was Louise Ehmman, who is Gert -- Ehmman Mikelson's older sister. And they taught all eight grades. And by the time I was in the eighth grade I was most generally the only one in my

class. But by the time I was in the eighth grade I think I was taking probably geography with the sixth and the seventh, and I was probably taking math with maybe another -- they just shoved me around from pillar to post. And I remember there was something came up in English one time -- What is it when you divide a sentence? Dic -- declare a sentence? Is that what they call it? [Audience mumbles] Oh we're gonna skip that, you won't ever need that. [laughter]

OLINER: Now before we leave the nineteen-teens, by any miracle or chance, any memories of, that would have been September, 1919. President Woodrow Wilson was in the west stumping on behalf of the League of Nations, was in Denver, and then took the train. It would have gone through Castle Rock down to Colorado Springs and Pueblo and then of course he suffered the stroke after leaving Pueblo. By any chance, -- any memories of that or coming into town?

SAUNDERS: No.

OLINER: Ah -- now by, with living seventeen miles out of town -- how often did the family come in for provisions. Did you come into Castle Rock? Where were groceries bought?

SAUNDERS: Uh -- well at first, -- in the early days I guess they were bought in Castle Rock a lot. But we did our own canning. We did our own butchering. We had a dugout cellar. We had potatoes, we had carrots, we had pickles. You name it, we had it. And they, in the fall they would stock up on sugar and flour and staples. And we didn't come to town every week. Sometimes we didn't come to town for a month. And then later on when we got the -- Model T sedan. We would go to Colorado Springs in the fall and we would stock up and buy, oh sometimes momma would, we'd buy a can, cases of pork and beans and a hundred pounds of flour and a hundred pounds of sugar and things like that. And the first time that I had to go to a store and I only bought a cube of butter. I could hear my father lecturing me how stupid that was. Cause you, you just didn't buy things like that. And to this day I have a terrible time driving myself. I go and buy three or four cans of pork and beans. Old habits die hard.

OLINER: Now, to ask you -- about the 1920's then. Where, from the one room school house, that took you through how many grades?

SAUNDERS: Eighth, eight grades.

OLINER: And so then what happened?

SAUNDERS: Then I came into Castle Rock. I lived with my grandmother down on Main Street and went to the old high school which is now the, big school district building. The little old lava rock high school.

OLINER: And then graduating in what year?

SAUNDERS: 1933. Thirty-three in our class.

OLINER: Kay, back up a few years. Um -- Black Friday and the stock market crash. Any particular memories of either that day or the aftermath that you're able to --

SAUNDERS: Yeah vaguely the aftermath. We knew the banks were all closed. And uh -- one of my girlfriends and I kinda had a crush on one of the fellows in the bank. So we thought well this would be a good excuse to meet him. [laughter] So we would go ask him to explain it to us.

Well, we ended up we didn't get him at all. We didn't get any explanations. [laughter] But I can remember Black Friday and the banks all being closed.

OLINER: Did your family end up losing any money in a bank or?

SAUNDERS: No because we were closer to Elbert than we were to Castle Rock so we did our banking in Elbert. And to my knowledge, I don't think daddy had any money in the bank here. And I don't know, I don't know if grandma did or not. I can't remember. But we did most of our banking until either the bank closed or daddy retired and then came to Castle Rock. But there were years there was no bank in Castle Rock. People did their banking in Littleton. That was in, well after they closed 'em I think. Because where the bank is now there was a Colorado State Bank and that closed and never opened again. And there was the local library was in there for several years.

OLINER: Any memories of, in that period 1928 to [19]32, [19]33 -- with your father in politics on President Hoovers administration versus President Roosevelt. Was he a Roosevelt supporter?

SAUNDERS: Oh yes! And my dad had me out working for the Democrats before I was old enough to vote. Driving people to the polls to vote. Puttin' up posters. Anything I could do, to help. And it seems to me -- I don't know, dad ran for County Commissioner. He was County Commissioner later. But Hoover was a dirty word. [laughter] Al Smith was a dirty word too.

OLINER: Over the religious issue or -- politics or --?

SAUNDERS: No I -- that seemed to enter into it just a little bit. But I -- I can't remember why now.

OLINER: Now back to the Model T and the first automobile. Let's say more or less about 1920 then the family acquired an automobile. What --

SAUNDERS: I think we got that -- Donnie was born in 1918. I think we got the Model T touring car in 1917.

OLINER: Are you able to trace the changes that the coming of that automobile meant to your family.

SAUNDERS: Yeah, we went to Denver. In the car! Instead of on the train. We used to come in and stay with grandma and ride the train to Denver when we went to Denver to shop. Maybe once or twice a year.

OLINER: And when we talk about the train in Castle Rock. What lines are we talking about?

SAUNDERS: Well, we rode the Rio Grande because they had what they call number sixteen that came in through here about six thirty in the morning and we would ride that in and shop all day and then fifteen came back at night on the southbound track. And so we rode the Rio Grande. I think that was the only passenger train that ever stopped and picked up passengers.

OLINER: Do you happen to recall the, what the cost of the round-trip ticket was?

SAUNDERS: Not -- I think later on -- when I was a senior in high school, along in there it seemed it was a dollar and a half. But I can remember, we girls, there were three or four of us.

We'd go to Denver every now and then. This was after I was out of high school. And we would have fifty cents. So we would go to Denver and we would get our lunch and then if we got in the show before one o'clock it was only twenty-five cents. So we would hurry up, eat a fast lunch and then go to the show and fifty cents was all we had to spend. And we were lucky to have that.

OLINER: You brought up a good point. Again, with the twenties. Any memories of -- the coming of motion picture theaters to Douglas County.

SAUNDERS: Yes, they used to have them in the auditorium of the original old high school. A silent movie. I can remember Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton. Marion Davies. Mary Pickford. Douglas Fairbanks. -- and -- I don't think I ever saw "Birth of a Nation" but I can remember "Orphans of the Storm" and one reason I remember it so clearly it was -- on cable once in the past two years and I thought, I'm gonna watch that. Cause I can remember, I'd seen "Orphans of the Storm".

OLINER: Now did they --

SAUNDERS: Mrs. Reynolds played music while the silent movie was on and -- that was the thrilling part.

OLINER: Now were the silent movies. Did they tend to be in the auditorium, did they tend to be weekends only? Or was it a full week?

SAUNDERS: No, I think it was once a week and it seems to me -- it may have been twice I don't know. Cause when I was in high school they were Tuesday nights. But Ben said, he can remember going, that was the big thing. He and his mother and father and two older brothers would go to the silent movies and have a sack of popcorn and that was the highlight of the week.

OLINER: Now, with your graduation you said in 1933, how large was your graduating class?

SAUNDERS: Thirty-three. Thirty-three in the class of [19]33.

OLINER: Oh my goodness. All right. -- And let's see, that would have been like May or June of [19]33.

SAUNDERS: Yeah. May I think.

OLINER: Okay and so that's --

SAUNDERS: I've got it. I've got the record at home.

OLINER: That would only have been, let's see President Roosevelt would have been -- installed in office in March of [19]33 and then the bank holiday. I mean you're talking just like eight weeks after the bank holiday. Here you are, high school seniors. Was it a pretty frightening time? Or uncertain?

SAUNDERS: Yes, yes because -- there was no money. I -- had received, or could have received a scholarship. There was no money to help me go to college. So all I did was go back to the farm and help mom and daddy on the farm and I can remember we went to Denver to buy my graduation dress and we paid, exceedingly large sum of five dollars for my graduation dress.

And that was an expensive dress in those days. Most of the girls we could get our formals for \$2.98. [laughter]

OLINER: For, was there such a thing as a graduation party. Or what were the events connected with that high school graduation?

SAUNDERS: Well there was -- always a class day in there. And they had a play, -- I think the junior class put on a play. There again, if I would go, I've got a lot of those old programs that my grandmother saved. They put on a play and that would seem to me that was in April. And then there was graduation and the graduation ceremonies. After the class, to go back, after the class day play there was always a dance up at the hall. But I don't --

OLINER: Which hall?

SAUNDERS: Well, it's up over where Cousins Bar is. There used to be a dance hall up there.

OLINER: Were you ever involved, in your senior year, in any pranks? [laughter] Was there such a thing as high school pranks in 1933?

SAUNDERS: Yes. The only thing that I can remember that I was involved in was -- the boys would suck the matches you know and then strike 'em and then they'd smoke. So I thought that looked like good type fun so I would do it. And they would throw it over under somebody else's desk or seat. So I did it and where did the match land? Right under mine. And here I am with this smoke and the teacher -- I didn't know where it came from! I don't know who did it! And she believed me. And I never ditched school. I was sneaky. I would go and get excused.

OLINER: I've been told that you went to work for the railroad and is this in the 1930's or?

SAUNDERS: No, uh -- that was in 1940. -- about 1943. Cause I got married in nineteen, January of 1941. And uh -- lived in boulder. My husband and I lived in Boulder. He got drafted and so I moved back to Castle Rock. And uh -- came the war. And long in there, he got, he was discharged because he had hearing problems. I don't think he was in the service but about a year. He got discharged and we moved, we lived down there in grandma's house and one Sunday afternoon he just up and left. And that took care of that. So I got a divorce and here I am. No education, no training. Daddy is moving off the ranch. Daddy and momma moving in the house where Bill and I had been moving. And what I have got to get a job and go to work. And then my father said, my biggest mistake was not seeing that you had an education, had in college. So I said well I'm going to town. I'm going to Denver and I'm going to join the WAC's (Women's Army Corp) [unclear]. They wouldn't take me because they found out I had hay fever and asthma. So I went to the Denver Dry, to talk to 'em about being an alteration lady because I had sewed, done sewing all my life. And I went back and talked to the head gal and she said if you can find anything else to do, stay out of here! Don't ever get in here. So I came home and I didn't know what I was going to do and -- Charlie Landers that worked for the Santa Fe railroad came down and told me that they were wanting young women to go out, to work for the railroad as telegraph operators during the war. By then the war was on. Been on since [19]41 as we all know. And -- so I can't remember if I went, I guess I don't remember if I did go to the offices in Denver. I guess I did. I think I went to the WAC's (Women's Army Corp) first and they wouldn't take me. Then I went to the Denver Dry. Now it comes back. Then I went to the Rio Grande and they accepted me. And they would train me on the job, right here in the Depot in Castle Rock and Mr. Reslow was the operator. And Mr. Reslow, as I've told Starr was a sour, dour -- I was scared to death of him. And after I worked with him, I think I was on the job for

maybe four to six weeks. I learned to love the old guy. He had a wry sense of humor and he could tell you stories that you would fall off your chair laughing. He became one of my best friends. But anyway he trained me on the job.

OLINER: Now when you say he was an operator. You're talking telegraph operator on the key? Not Depot manager or --

SAUNDERS: Yes, yes. He was definitely a telegraph operator with the key. Well now they only left we girls in training long enough, as I say, to learn the engine from the caboose and take the train orders properly. And then they shoved us out on the road. Well I learned to go out and stand along the railroad track and hand up the train orders. 'Course the train crew was in, they knew I was in training and the dispatcher would just give orders so that I could get practice. And the first time that Mr. Reslow showed me how to do it. He went out and he missed the engine. Missed the engineer. Oh was he upset. And several weeks later I could kid him about it but right then I kept my face straight, didn't laugh. But I finally would learn how to go out and stand up there, see that behemoth coming down the road at me and hand up orders. And they would train, they had girls in the offices in Denver and then they would send them out to some little place out in Utah. And one girl was standing out there to hand up train orders and when she saw the train coming at her she'd never had that experience before. She threw the hoops and quit on the job. She wasn't going to do that. *[laughter]*

OLINER: Now, you're saying this started in 1943?

SAUNDERS: Yeah, it must have been about *[19]43* along in the fall sometime.

OLINER: Okay, now knowing that I wanted to talk with you about the Castle Rock Depot. I brought along a picture postcard. Now this is probably from about 1915. And what I'd like you to do is again, kind of how much had it changed between 1915 and 1923 and kind of walk us through the depot first of all so that we know how many people were working there and your kind of work schedule.

SAUNDERS: Well -- at one time there were three operators on duty at both the Rio Grande and the Santa Fe but then -- during the depression I think they cut it down to one on each side. But when I went to work for them there were two operators --

OLINER: Now your title was actually operator or ?

SAUNDERS: Well, I was a -- I guess you'd call me an operator. I only learned three things from the telegraph key. When they called the weather, when they called the little town of Slink and when they called Castle Rock but I couldn't have answered for the life of me. I would get on the phone when they would call Castle Rock and I could answer on the phone. But there used to be a lot of mail shipped. All our mail went out of here, northbound mail. Southbound mail went out over at the Santa Fe.

OLINER: So you're saying there were two depots.

SAUNDERS: Yes.

OLINER: Okay, and so which depot is shown here.

SAUNDERS: This is the Rio Grande.

OLINER: Okay, and so are both buildings yet standing?

SAUNDERS: I think Garcilaso's lived in what, don't they the original old Santa Fe. It is not the original. It's the second Santa Fe depot that's over there. Because I found some old pictures that show the first Santa Fe depot was on the north side of the street, or the road where there used to be the old Santa Fe bridge that washed out in [19]45.

OLINER: In 1943, do you recall what your first pay was? What was the rate of pay?

SAUNDERS: Well, I don't remember exactly but it seemed to me it was approximately twenty-five cents an hour. I can't remember and I never kept pay stubs or anything. I did for a while but finally I didn't, I got rid of em. But I worked seven days a week, eight hours a day.

OLINER: Wait a minute, seven days a week?

SAUNDERS: SEVEN days a week.

OLINER: We're not talking forty hours a week.

SAUNDERS: NO WAY are we talking and you didn't call up and say "I'm sorry, I can't come to work I just died". They say you come to work or else! [laughter] You went to work. And I worked, I trained here. And then the next job they sent me on was Houston and I worked from midnight 'til eight in the morning at Houston. And then -- then I stayed at Houston again on the four to midnight. No -- now that would be right four to midnight. And there was a little man, oh I can't remember his name now. Nash! Had the first, they called them tricks. The first trick, the second trick and the third trick. Mr. Nash had the third, first trick. I had the second trick and Pearl Orchard had the third trick. And I worked there for several months. And then I got bumped cause I was the low man on the totem pole and they sent me over to Texas Creek or over on the Arkansas River.

OLINER: Now that would be, Texas Creek would be near what present day town or -- ?

SAUNDERS: West of Cañon City. And -- east of Salida. It was about halfway down the Arkansas River valley.

OLINER: Now during this time period, are you observing -- much movement of troop trains.

SAUNDERS: Yes. Uh -- after I left Texas Creek I went to uh -- Butte which is south of Colorado Springs down at Fountain, beyond Fountain. And the -- I think the first troop trains I can remember were uh -- going through westbound, going through Texas Creek and they had to take the siding and I went by the kitchen car and the cooks made me a bologna sandwich on homemade bread. And I visited with 'em a little bit and then the next -- well I, no I did work with troop trains at Houston too because they were using old wooden passenger cars from the Canadian Pacific railroad and they had to put them on the siding to let the freight trains go by because they could only go, travel about thirty-five miles an hour with the old wooden coaches. And uh -- while the car, while the troops were sitting out there I went out and visited with some 'em and they asked me "Do you know where we're goin'?" They had no idea where they were going. And I told them. Well, I got a sneaking hunch you must be going to Fort Carson. Then uh, then when I worked at Fountain is when I said the night that they moved the eighth army into Fort Carson I never sat down all night long. It was just troop train, right after another.

OLINER: Now wait, describe -- now say again the event you're talking about.

SAUNDERS: When they moved the eighth army, came home from England and they moved them into Fort Carson.

OLINER: Do you recall, what month are we talking about or year? -- the war is still going on.

SAUNDERS: The invasion of Normandy was in June wasn't it?

OLINER: Yes.

SAUNDERS: And I can remember that, because you see we had a lot of these little stations had no radios. We had no electricity. We used coal-oil lights. I think -- I think they had electricity in the station at Fountain. -- but we had a kerosene lantern in the semaphore pole because I'd have to climb up there and take it down and uh -- I just can't remember when they moved those in -- I can remember Prisoner of War trains too going through. And the moment that train stopped, the M. P.'s were off with big flood lights going up and down that train. And I said, "When you pull that train out you be sure you got all your passengers on there!" And two of them got away from 'em in Wyoming some where.

OLINER: By any chance would these have been, well either both Italian or German prisoners of war.

SAUNDERS: German.

OLINER: Headed toward the prisoner of war camp at Pandel Camp Peyo [*sp?*].

SAUNDERS: I don't know, I don't remember if there were any up there.

OLINER: Well Trinidad, I think was both Italian and German prisoner of war.

SAUNDERS: And there was a prisoner of war camp at Fort Carson too. Cause I had a boyfriend who was, mess cook -- mess sergeant who spoke German and he would make deliveries to the prisoner of war camp and talk German to the prisoners. And I would go, when I'd go back and forth to pick him up and drop him off I'd wave to the German prisoners as I went by.

OLINER: Let's go back to the Rio Grande depot here at Castle Rock. Even though, as I say, may be 1910, 1915 -- let's recapture what it was like inside in 1943. About how large.

SAUNDERS: Well there was a little waiting room with wooden benches around on the -- part of the north and the west. Then the operator sat, there was a cage up there. Some of you'd seen the pictures of the inside, the little wire cage and you went up to the window when you bought your ticket you'd stayed on that side and you bought your ticket. And the operator was on the inside and your telephones were there. Your telegraph keys. All your order papers and your timetables and everything. And then, there was a door that went out into the baggage room and the baggage carts were out there and that's where they unloaded the baggage. I don't think I had, I think the baggage must have come in on sixteen in the morning before I came on duty.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

SAUNDERS: And they were at both depots. Because I remember getting a piece of furniture that came to the Santa Fe and we had to go over and get it.

OLINER: Now were you still with the railroad then at the end of the war?

SAUNDERS: Yes, I was working at Larkspur.

OLINER: Okay now, first of all, in May of 1945 with VE-Day. Any memories of VE-Day in Larkspur?

SAUNDERS: Yes. Well, I wasn't. I was at Fountain on VE-Day. No! That was the invasion of Normandy in June. I remember that. As I told you the dispatcher, told us, called us to get on the phone and he opened his phone and turned the radio on. So we could all hear it.

OLINER: That would have been June of [19]44. And so then May of [19]45. Any particular memories of VE-Day?

SAUNDERS: Yes, I was working at uh -- Larkspur and I'm -- and I got off at midnight and when I came home the star had been lit for a V for Victory. And everybody was out carousing but me and I'd been working. But they had a ball. They had, they got the fire truck out and raced back and forth up and down the streets with the siren screaming and everybody was out whooping and cheering and then they lit, as I say, they had formed the V in the star and they turned it on.

OLINER: Oh, that is a wonderful memory. And a few months later for VJ-Day. Something similar or more subdued or where were you then?

SAUNDERS: Maybe I'm confused. Maybe it was VJ-Day. It was when the whole thing ended that they lit the star. And that was in what? August?

OLINER: Right.

SAUNDERS: Yes, that was it. That was when they lit the star. And -- and I can remember the atomic bomb because I told my mother God isn't gonna destroy the world. Man's going to destroy it himself.

OLINER: Any memories then of, again, returning troops.

SAUNDERS: Well they, they seemed to dribble back in, little by little and we used to have to go to Fort Logan to pick them up. And of course, then I was working. I didn't have a boyfriend in the military right then.

OLINER: Did Castle Rock or yourself lose any -- close friends in World War Two that you would especially like to remember?

SAUNDERS: Freddie Angell. Was a pilot and he and my, one of my friends, my very close friend Jacqueline Moore, Jacqueline Moore Dylan. Her sister Helen married Freddie Angell and

I don't think -- I think he was killed within three months after they were married. Bernie Curtis that married Mary Van Lopik, was killed. And uh Jack Nipko. -- I ought to have that book, I can remember a lot of 'em. But I remember everybody was tickled to death to see them when they came home.

OLINER: Well can I pause our taping session at this point -- for purposes of this demonstration and again, thank you very, very much and can I ask if you would have any objection to any future researcher listening to or quoting from this Castle Rock Historical Society tape? Would you have any objections to that?

SAUNDERS: No, except for I get VE-Day and VJ-Day mixed up.

OLINER: No but you've given us and any future researcher a tremendous memory on that because maybe a photograph was taken. But uh -- it's kind of exciting to hear someone that was standing on the street. Have they done anything like that similar that you recall, you know, aside from of course the Christmas Star but --

SAUNDERS: Well -- it used to be the big thing. See when the firemen, any member of the fire department got married they had a shivaree and [*laughter*] my husband was the very shy, retiring type. He belonged to the fire department prior to the war but after he had been in the navy he said he couldn't take it. He wouldn't join, go back to the fire department. But anyway, they had a shivaree for us. And they caught us, you know, they always try and catch you when you're not expecting 'em and then they loaded us on the fire truck and drove up and down Main Street [*Wilcox Street*] blowing the sirens and people come out and clap and cheer. And then we ended up at the -- oh I can't remember the name of the place now. Anyway, it's where the Sportsmans bar is now. And Ben had to buy 'em all drinks and then they gave us a beautiful wedding present.

OLINER: What year are you describing now?

SAUNDERS: That was, Ben and I were married in 1945 so this would have been in, sometime in January of 1946.

OLINER: Sounds like a lot of fun.

SAUNDERS: It was.

OLINER: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW