

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

## Tape Interview Data Sheet

General Topic of Interview Life in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado

Date August 21, 1984 Place Meeker, Co.

Length (Time) 1 hr. 40 min. Speed \_\_\_\_\_ Side(s) 4

## Narrator:

Name Oma Graham

Address P.O. Box 34 Meeker, Colo. 81641

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace Jensen, Utah 1909

Occupation(s) Helped husband make living - feeding stock, raising garden.

All around hand, ranch cook, restaurant work, clerking, seamstress, motel work.

## Interviewer(s)

Name(s) Julie Jones-Eddy

Subjects covered, in approximate order (please spell out names of persons and places)

1. Mother's arrival in Northwestern Colo.
  - 1902 - Mother came as a young lady from Saratoga, Wy. with her parents in a wagon group of friends - Billy Hackett, Charlie Cunningham, Bill Sewell.
  - Moved to Blue Mountain. The Mobley family was already there.
  - There were cattle, antelope, wild horses, and wolves.
  - They caught wild horses in traps.
  - Traveled to Rifle for supplies. Trip took 9 - 10 days. Women stayed at home.
  - Indians killed a dog of hers.
  - Jensen, Utah was named after her grandfather.
  - The Indians went through the area for hunting.
  - They had a homestead at Connie Springs. The Indians gathered there one day at the reservoir.
- 40 2. Mother's memories of her childhood.
  - Brought boards in the wagon to build the cabin.
  - Father worked for big ranches rounding up wild cattle.
  - In 1909 for Oma's birth they went to Jensen in a spring wagon. The bridge was out so they crossed the river in a boat.
  - Oma Got pneumonia when they lived at Wolf Creek. Grandmother Hackett went to the neighbor's house. Mother remembered the flax seed poltice and it broke the congestion. She had flax seed in the house for eye problems (you put in eye to float a cinder out of the eye).

- 75 - Description of poltice.
- 80 3. Home remedies.
- No aspirin.
  - Free spirits of nitre for fever, used for diuretic.
  - Turpentine.
  - Epsom salts.
  - Caster oil.
  - They were rarely sick - perhaps because so isolated.
  - "Gathering of the ear" (ear infection) - salve made of menthol crystals, eucalyptus oil, vasoline. Hot water bottle.
  - She never saw doctor until she broke her leg. She fell off her horse when she was 4 years old. She was given riding clothes for Christmas and her parents bought a pony from Dick Wash, an Indian. She and her mother began galloping and the horses jumped a wash. She fell off and her mother's horse fell on her leg and broke it. Mother had to 'pack' her 6 miles for help.
  - Dr. Christie came from Vernal. Instead of cast, he put a weight on her leg - a rock and left it for 2 weeks. She was in bed 60 days.
- 137 4. First childhood memory.
- Her dog taught her to walk.
5. Chores she was responsible for.
- She had to take care of the 'Poddy' calves, the orphans. She fed them bottled milk 4 - 5 times a day. Started when she was 6 years old.
  - Rode with her dad and punched cows.
  - As a baby her dad and mother carried her in the saddle on a pillow and punched cows.
  - Brother and sister were much younger and she helped raise them.
  - Worked outside and inside.
  - Wore overalls.
  - Could make a dress for 15¢ (5¢ per yard).
  - She worked harder than brother and sister. They called her "Sargent Carter"
- 212 6. 1919 - hard winter - many ranchers went out of business.
- Then they had 3 years of Mormon crickets which ate everything.
  - In the fall of 1926 they sold cattle. Lee Fletcher took over homestead.
  - Moved to White River - Bell Ranch. Dad worked for George Thomas, foreman.
- 238 7. For high school she lived in Jensen and then in Meeker. Quit before graduation.
- 252 8. Not a Mormon, but raised in Mormon community. None of her family was.
- 264 9. Worked for Shehorns while she went to high school in Meeker, 1927.
- 280 10. Went back to Buford.
- Worked for Myrtle Thomas. Washed clothes, raised chickens. Together they hauled oats and coal in the truck.
- 298 11. Play as a child.
- Rode horseback.
  - Played like chasing cattle rustlers.
  - "Guys were always jawb'in me". They told her they were going to "bury the dead man". She went to see and found that the "dead man" was a rock put in a post hole.

- She had few friends her own age.
- One friend was Martin Evans. They went along on the round-up. They thought of pranks to pull on the cowboys. Dropped a cricket in Azar Johnson's mouth while he was sleeping.

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12. Didn't play with dolls much.
- Would rather walk on stilts. Difficult in mud.
  - The neighbor built stilts.
  - Learned to dance from the Mormons.
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13. Fun on the White River.
- Dances at Buford School.
  - Went to all school dances.
  - Didn't need a date.
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14. Cars.
- Grandfather had a Model T in Jensen. She drove it around for the first time when she was 11 years old.
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15. Buford, 1927.
- Carried mail on sled from Meeker to Sizemores.
  - Waited for mail at Buford store, run by L.L. Offerle.
  - Hugh Jones (Buford resident) was a character. Played trick on Guy Stealey.
  - Sat on salt blocks instead of chairs.
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16. Married in 1930 at 21 yrs.
- Before marrying she worked for Mrs. Walt Wyman at the Forest Inn "punch'in dudes", waitressing and cleaning.
  - In the evening they went out in motor boats and row boats to an island and listened to records.
  - Enjoy your work - philosophy. Today's young folks "need to quit wait'in for sundown and payday".
17. Usual age of marriage - none.
- 117
18. Husband came from Texas to put in the telephone line to the 101 Club.
- Description of the 101 Club, Bell Ranch.
  - Met husband at a dance. He was 37 yrs. old. People said it wouldn't last.
  - They eloped.
  - Lived at Schuta Gulch, worked for Paul Dunn. Made \$75 per month.
- 178
19. Husband skidded logs for the new clubhouse and she ran the cattle at the 101 Club.
- Lived there one winter with \$80 in a cabin 12' X 14'. Coal cook stove.
  - Went to town on Saturday night.
- 208
20. Worked at 101 Club in the summer as a waitress. Husband took care of horses.
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21. Moved to SC Bar above Buford. Ran the concession at Buford for horses and worked for Bell's.
- 233
22. Moved usually 3 times a year from ranch to ranch.
- Lived in "Bach hut" (Bachelor's hut).
  - Had few belongings - horse and milk cow.
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23. Life in winter.
- Worked outside all day.
  - Got mail every two weeks.

- Had enough food for 4 months.
- Visited Johnson's 4 miles away.
- Had to keep elk (1,000 in a bunch) away from the hay. They ate at the hay stacks and made them look like toad stools.
- Story about husband shaving beard and getting sunburned. She made him a mask to wear outside out of a flour sack. His mask scared the mules and they tore the fence down.

- 308 24. Travel away from Meeker.  
- trip to Texas, California, and Wyoming.
- 329 25. Leased the Charlie Marshall place. Always had a job.
- 349 26. Worked for the Morris Amicks for 11 years. 1950's .
27. Memories of life with husband.  
- Story of husband's escapade in Oma's car.
28. Worked for Elliot and Minnewa Roosevelt.
- Side  
3  
1 29. Eleanor Roosevelt came to visit at Buford. Community gave her a party at the school.
- 5 30. Minnewa was a native of California.  
-Elliot was her 5th marriage. He used up much of her money.  
- Clifford Bartlett place - Elliot bought. The bank had to take it back and the Clark Wicks bought it then.
- 20 31. Accident with a grubbing hoe resulted in the amputation of her leg.  
- Grubbed sage brush by hand with the hoe.  
- Filled gullies with sagebrush and rocks.  
- Didn't go to a doctor until it began to give her trouble. It wasn't diagnosed correctly.  
- Second doctor in Grand Junction found a rare form of tumor at the site of the injury.  
- A bone graft didn't completely heal.  
- She had to give up horseback riding, and dancing. (Mentions Link and Fannie Tagert)
- 76 32. Difference between ranch life today and the 1920's.  
- Your word used to be good. Had no locks on the doors.  
- Traded work - helped each other.  
- Rural schools were the center of rural community. When they closed them it greatly affected the community. Rural schools provided better education than town schools.  
- Beverly Gentry was a good rural school teacher.  
- Older children helped the younger children in school. They acted as role models.  
- Discipline was not a real problem.  
- In the school programs everyone had a chance, not just the very talented.
- 113 33. Hobbies.  
- Crochet, embroidery, knitting, tatting, sewing.  
- Made dresses, did alterations after she lost her leg.
34. Cooking on the wood or coal stove.  
- Banking the fire.

35. To determine the temperature of the stove, "you stick your hand in".

151 36. Work outside and inside the home.  
 - Raised garden.  
 - Fed the lambs.  
 - Cooked for 21 men.  
 - "Just worked it all in".  
 - Stoves had more controls than current ones.  
 Had Majestic or Universal stoves.  
 - Water reservoir kept the water hot.  
 - Heated the water in a boiler on the stove.

190 37. Typical day - winter.  
 - Get up at 6:30. Fix breakfast.  
 - 8 am - ride horses 6 - 7 miles to feed the cattle. Scare away elk.

Summer-

- Milked 16 cows. Cranked the separator.
- Did the dishes.
- Tended the garden.
- Went to the hay field during the haying season. Used the buck rake and sulky rake.
- In the evenings you didn't do much because you were tired. On Saturday nights you went dancing.
- Used coal oil lamps.
- No refridgerator. Used a screen box in the stream.
- Mostly ate chicken. Plucked it and soaked it overnight in the stream to cool it off.
- Hung buckskin up and wrapped and put in a cool place.
- Cleave Gentry was the game warden.

270 38. Puberty.  
 - She didn't know what was happening.  
 - Her mother explained.  
 - Didn't know her mother was pregnant and was surprised at brother's birth.  
 - Learned about sex at the Chew's in Brown's Park where she went to visit.  
 They had many children and had frank discussions around the dinner table.

321 39. Vacations at Chew's house - stayed about 10 days.  
 - Worked with all the children.  
 - Picniced at Echo Park.  
 - Made this trip while her family still lived in Brown's Park area. Lulu  
 Karen made the trip with her - about 20 miles. They were 14 yrs. old.

Side  
 4 40. Influential people.  
 28 - Grandfather taught her to mind.  
 - Mr. Caldwell, a teacher at Jensen, Utah.

43 41. Things from which she derived the most satisfaction.  
 - All of it.  
 - Enjoyed people.  
 - Loves to tell jokes - laughter is the best medicine.

42. Disappointments.  
 - Forget the bad times. Pull the fun times along with you.

56 43. Saddest time.  
 - Brother was in the army. Her mother kept his daughter.

- Oma took the child to the ranch to raise her for 3 years.
- It was an uncertain time.
- Description of D-Day.

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44. Depression of 1930's.
- Husband always had a job - \$5 per day. Graded roads.
  - Just adjusted.
45. Anything she wished she had done?
- Can't think of anything.
  - Had jobs, friends, food, and clothes.