

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Tape Interview Data Sheet

General Topic of Interview Life in Rio Blanco County

Date August 21, 1984 Place Meeker

Length (Time) 1 hour 5 min. Speed _____ Side(s) 3

Narrator: Audrey Oldland

Name

Address P.O. Box 152 Meeker

Telephone

Birthplace 9-30-1910 Powell Park at home. deceased Dec. 16,

Occupation(s) housewife

1993

Interviewer(s)

Name(s) Julie Jones-Eddy

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

1. Mother arrived in Meeker at age 14 or 15. She came from Mo. to see her brother, John Lough. He didn't meet her in Rifle, so she had to ride the stage to Rio Blanco, the halfway point. There she met Mrs. Schermerhorn who ran the eating house. She was hired to help Mrs. Schermerhorn (Eliza)
 - Worked there for several years.
 - Met Mr. Ruckman at the halfway house. He was acting as a guide for Teddy Roosevelt along with Homer Goff and Lee Davis.
- 26 2. Parents married and settled in Powell Park next to the Wear ranch. Fletch Hay lived nearby.
 - They started with a wagon, team of horses, four hens and a rooster.
- 37 3. Mother had 10 children.
 - They were 2 years apart.
 - Audrey is the 4th in line, 2nd girl.
 - Youngest child, Stubby, fell into the ditch and drowned.

- 56 4. Stories her mother told her about her life.
- Hard to learn to cook for groups of people at Schermerhorns. Mrs. Schermerhorn kept recipes secret.
- Learned how to cook and keep house.
- Made most of the girls clothes.
- 77 5. House.
- Big log house.
- Downstairs was one big room - kitchen, pantrys. Underground cellar.
- Moved to Wear place when they bought the ranch from Mr. Snyder. Wear ranch adjoined the Ruckman ranch.
- Wear house was two stories, had bedrooms.
- 97 6. First childhood memory.
- Loved to climb around.
- When she was punished, she climbed trees.
- Story about catching a horse (age 7) and riding it. She put Carrie (age 5) on behind. They went for a ride - which she wasn't supposed to do. Nor was she supposed to ride on the road, which she did. When her mother called her she ignored it.
- When she came home, she was spanked and tied to the foot of the bed and given no supper.
- 142 7. Childhood responsibilities.
- Chickens -(4-5 years old).
- All children had jobs.
- Saturday washing, clean lamps, change beds, help in the hay field, stacker boy, milking.
- Drove horse cart to town to school.
- 173 8. Trip to school - 5 miles.
- Very cold trip. Wind came down Lyon canyon.
- Had horse hide robes.
- Later Carrie stayed in town and Audrey rode her horse to school.
- Never had a car to drive. Herbert Anderson, a neighbor, had a car.
- 212 9. Chores were divided up by sex. Except Audrey did both. She worked in the hay field and in the house.
- She's glad she did those things. She learned a lot.
- 230 10. Clothing.
- Homemade dresses.
- Church and dress up clothes.
- Never wore overalls to school.
- Her aunt Allie Lough made her things.
- She inherited her brothers bib overalls.
- 251 11. Riding to school on the horse.
- Wore black satin bloomers.
- Black stockings.
- Legs got cold. Once she froze both heels.
- Had cloth overshoes.
- Pulled bloomers up and rolled black stockings down when she got to the stable in town. Didn't want her friends to see them.

- 285 12. Started to school at 6. The school was close to the ranch house.
- 297 13. Play as a child.
- Pretended they were grown up women. She and Carrie took care of younger children, so they played as they did it.
- First doll was given to her by the school teacher, 4th or 5th grade.
- They made up plays, they were actresses. Gave the plays for community groups.
- Had group band.
- First doll had white coat. Story of brother who hid the doll in the barn. It was ruined.
- 390 14. Teenage activities.
- Very few.
- Liked athletics.
- Side
2
- 8 15. Dating in high school.
- John Oldland came to get her at the ranch - he was one of few with a car.
- 19 16. Worked as a teenager for Clara Pearson for 50¢ a day. She washed dishes, and made noon meal. She was 11-12 years old.
- She worked for Boyd Crawford. She cooked for 4 or 5 hired men. Age 13.
- Made enough money, \$1.00 per day, to pay for clothes and books.
- Also worked for Mrs. Howey.
- 43 17. Thoughts about life at 17 years.
- Wanted to be a nurse. Had friend who wanted to take her to Grand Jct. with her for nursing school. Father said he didn't want her waiting on sick people.
- Then she decided she wanted to be a beautician. She went to Grand Jct. to stay at Jim Goff's to attend beauty school. She got married before she finished.
- 61 18. Married at 18.
- Worked for Mrs. Romey in her Meeker beauty shop.
- They gave Marcells (a hot wave). They put waves in with a hot iron. It was hard on the hair.
- She describes curling iron. Some were hung over a kerosene lamp. In the shop she had two irons and a heater.
- Mrs. Woodard liked her Marcells.
- 100 19. John, her husband, worked in the Oldland store. He worked with Tom Cassidy.
- He also drove the stock truck.
- They lived in the Park Hotel.
- She thought she "idled a lot" after so much work on the ranch.
- She raised some chickens.
- 117 20. Pregnancy with first child.
- Didn't have much work to do.
- 122 21. Had three children - 2 boys and a girl.
- Last child, girl, was born 21 years after first child.
- Looked forward to having a girl.
- Her health was bad after first child. Delivery was difficult. Second baby was a dry birth.
- She had suspension surgery. Doctor wanted to do a hysterectomy, but she said she still wanted a girl.

- John's father wanted a girl with red hair and brown eyes.
- She had a doctor with first two deliveries at the ranch. First labor was 18 hours. Nurse and doctor had trouble getting there for second because there was a bad winter storm. Her hired girl and she moved beds while they waited.

- 198 22. Hobbies.
- Loves to sew - made all her clothes.
- 208 23. Her boys worked on the ranch.
- They took over the ranch eventually.
- 221 24. Hopes for her daughter.
- Wanted her to have what Audrey didn't have as a child - her own room.
- 238 25. Puberty.
- She was terrified.
- She cried for 3 days when it happened.
- Blames her mother for not preparing her.
- Story of Carrie's horse accident. Audrey started her period that day.
- Also had an appendix attack and her legs were paralyzed.
- She was ashamed.
- Doctor came to the house about her legs and discovered her menstruation.
- Her mother then told her about it by saying that she had now become a woman. Audrey thought she would be that way for the rest of her life.
- She decided she would tell her own daughter.
- She also prepared her younger sisters.
- She was oldest girl because her older sister died in crib death.
- 320 26. Home remedies.
- Croup - goose grease and turpentine.
- Pneumonia - mustard poltice and onion poltice.
- Flu - 1918 - whole family got it. Dr. Sopenheimer came to see them.
- He made them open all the windows in the middle of the winter. They stayed in bed so they wouldn't freeze.
- Alice Eliassen came to stay as did Aunt Allie.
- 375 27. People who most influenced her life.
- Teacher.
- Aunt Allie - gave her love and consideration she didn't get at home - too many children.
- Audrey went to stay with Aunt Allie sometimes. She made Audrey feel special.
- Side
3 28. Things from which she has derived the most satisfaction.
- Cooking, gardening.
- Doing things for other people.
- 17 29. Disappointments.
- She has had some.
- Tries not to dwell on them.
- 25 30. Saddest time.
- Losing mother and father.
- Death of baby brother - she found him in the field. Carried him back to the house - 12 years old.
- Death of in-laws.

- 40 31. Things she wishes she had done.
- More education.
 - Recites poem about cooking.
 - Would like to write about thoughts as a child.
 - Thought she could almost fly as a child.
 - She took flying lessons and learned to fly. Mr. Coudrey also took them. Their teacher was Happy Jack Turner. She soloed with 4 hours.
 - Only woman who learned to fly at that time. Jean Humbert flew later.
 - She flew to Grand Jct. and Craig alone.
 - Flew with Jack Hilkey to notify a relative about Fred Hauck's accident.