

This is Beth Smith. I'm going to interview Bob Rush down here at his office at 124 W. 2nd Street, and he's going to tell us about his life in Salida and his job as an Attorney At Law. Hi Bob, how're you doing?

Bob Rush: I'm fine, thank you.

Beth Smith: What will you tell us today?

Bob Rush: Well, I think that the history of my family means something to me. My great grandfather and grandmother and grandfather came to this valley before Salida existed in 1880.

Beth Smith: And who were they?

BR: Mr. Patrick Rush was my [great] grandfather and his Anna was his wife. And my grandfather was Charles Rush. They had lived in St. Louis. And I don't know why they immigrated here, but they did. And, my grandparents lived here many years. , in about, when my grandfather was 16 years old in approximately 1885, his mother and father lived outside of town a few miles, working at a railroad camp and my great-grandfather was murdered by an insane person at that time. And my grandfather Rush, then he was on his own at age 16, cause we didn't have social security or anything like that. He got a job on a survey crew and he was in Leadville in the early days when Tabor was up there and the mining was active, and so forth. And he went on a survey crew to Aspen. And he was up in that area when Aspen was a small

mining town, and so forth. And then he, he married my, my grandmother, cause he was working for the railroad at that time, here in the St. Joseph's church.

BS: What was her name?

BR: Minnie. Crank was her, Crank was her maiden name. they were married in that little old wooden church that was there for many years, in 1896. My grandmother at that time was working at the old hotel down in the railroad yards, the Monte Christo. I was in that when I was a small boy, with my Dad, and it was quite a facility. But anyway, my grandfather Rush worked in this area. And he worked for the railroad a total of 51 years. And he was an engineer. But, he lived in Minturn for part of the time. And, my father was born in Leadville in 1898.

BS: What was father's name?

BR: William S. Rush. And he was, he, my grandfather was, he was president of the school board in Minturn, but he sent my Dad down here to live with my Dad's grandmother who lived at 541 "D" Street where my [great] grandparents lived until both of them were gone. And he, so my Dad graduated from Salida High School in 1916. And my, my mother's parents lived over in the Gunnison area. And they had come from the East Coast. They were the Van Alstine family. And my mother was born in Gunnison in 1905, on a farm outside of Gunnison. They moved over here in about, she was born in 1905 and they moved over here about 1911 or 12 or something like that. My parents were married in 1926 and I was born in 1929, February 21.

And I had a very close relationship concerning the school all the years because my grandfather had been on the school board and my father was on the school board 24 years here in Salida. I served on the board 12 years. But anyway, I was very fortunate to have 4 grandparents in Salida, which not everyone has. And I attended Long Fellow School, of course, for six years. We had some very fine teachers in those days.

BS: Can you give us the names of any of them?

BR: , Mrs. Coulter was our, the Principal. She was a widow, I believe and she had a son in school. And Victoria Binoski, who lived up on that street. Most people remember the Binoski family. And Miss Phelps, and Miss Newton, and Mrs. Holman, who just died a few years ago. And Miss Starbuck, who was married, who was Glen Starbuck's sister. She later married Al Geist, who some people would remember had a car repair shop out on Highway 50. And Miss Poe was there and, those were the main teachers I had, and there were, there were some others, but. We had a little discipline over there at Long Fellow school too. You didn't misbehave or you had to go to the office, which everybody was scared of.

BS: Of course.

BR: But then, of course, I went to Kestner Jr. High School. Mr. Eichman was our Principal. And we had Ruby McKenna, who is still living. I think she must be 90 years old. But she moved here when I was in the 8th grade because I remember she used to make us do long

division for punishment for those of us who got in trouble in school. And we had George Eichman then was the Principal, and he also was the basketball coach when I was in High School after Dan Meering left. And my school days were fun. We had, not all the things kids have today of course, but we had a summer softball program, starting in grade school. And we had a league for the young kids and a league in the afternoon for the older kids and in those days there were two softball leagues at nighttime. And so we, we enjoyed that. And I remember when the swimming pool was finished, I think in 1938. And boy, we were proud of that. Although my brother and I used to swim in the river sometimes. And the reason was, it was a bad thing, but the Mexican kids in Salida were not allowed in the Salida swimming pool. And that was, so our Mexican friends, of which we had many, we often would go out and swim in the river after we played softball, not telling Mom and Dad of course.

But, I could say, in we had, in Salida, you know, there were a group of Greek people who had, who were merchants, we had the Austrian people that worked out at the Smelter. We had Italian families. Italian families owned most of the land between Poncha Springs and Maysville. The Posteraros, the Lionelles, the, oh.... I can't think of the other families, but. And, and we had the Mexican folks who worked here, who emigrated here from the San Louis Valley, most of them. And they had jobs around town. But we were very poor in those days, nobody had much, any money. And, but we, we enjoyed the sports. Big deal was when the coach came over to the grade school and, and we would play volley ball or soccer ball or something, and. So, I had, we enjoyed school.

Course Salida High School was was an excellent school. We had, I think, outstanding teachers. Mr. Custer was the most outstanding in my opinion. Of course he taught me Spanish. And he was an exceptionally great teacher. We had Miss Mossgrove and Miss Scott taught English. Loren King was the Principal, L.E. Berg was the Superintendent of schools at that time, and Mr. Hampshire, who passed away a few years ago, was teaching science. And Dean Rouse who died just a couple three years ago was teaching the girls, the bookkeeping and the typing and all of those things. And Mr. Rouse died at age 100 a couple years ago, three, I think it was. But anyway, the great impression we had in the early days when we were kids was the Salida football team. I can recall when we won three State Championships in a row.

BS: Did you play football?

BR: No, I didn't. But we had coach White. White field was named for him. But I remember the last game when Grand Junction finally beat us after three years, and Coach White always wore the same coat and he tore his coat up. But, I remember also we beat Canon City for like 25 years in a row. But then later we won the State Championship in football in 1941, December 6th in Fort Collins, the day before Pearl Harbor. The next year we got beat by Loveland, I think, and the 3rd year, 1942, we got beat by Boulder. But we were competing in those days with all the schools in the State, so. But we had the softball teams, and we, we weren't the greatest basketball players, because we didn't work as hard as people did on the football team. But, I played on the basketball team, with Leo Merring, who was our outstanding coach took the teams

to State Championship three times, from this little town. And he left here and went to LaJunta. And then, that was during a time when you couldn't hire a lot of people and George Eichman, who had been Principal became our basketball coach. But we went to the State Finals when I was a Junior. And we got beat the first day, which was unfortunate. But it was a big deal to go to the, a High School, we had a tournament over at Alamosa and the basketball. And Durango would come there and schools from that area would come and we, we managed to win the tournament a couple times. But, anyway I managed to graduate from Salida High School in 1947. One thing I was always proud of was that, I was President of the Student Body. I won by one vote. And my brother was President of the Student Body two years before. And I think Dr. Hutchinson and his brother had the same distinguished career, if you want to call it that. I was always proud of that.

BS: Well, you should be. Do you have just the one brother?

BR: Yes, that's all, my brother Bill, whose, he was born in 1927 and he lives out in Wichita, Kansas. And, he was a great older brother for me, I'll say that. Because we got to go to the Salida theater on Friday night, because they had a cowboy show. And then they had a serial, you know, an ongoing story, and it was usually cowboys and Indians and stuff. My Dad would give us a quarter, cause you could get in the show for 10 cents, I think. And then we'd go over to the Greeks, which is now a dentist office on "F" street, and we could get a coke for 5 cents and chocolate sundae for 10 cents or something. And once in awhile we'd go to Jennie's Lunch Shop by the ballpark, Marvin Field, and we could get, for 10 cents you could get a real nice

hamburger. And, and softball was a big thing in those days too. We had some very fine softball teams. The Zingone brothers and Albert Costello and the DeLeos. We had a lot of, lot of softball players that did very well. And it was fun, cause we played Canon City and all those teams.

So anyway, my, my brother was gone to the Merchant Marine after he graduated in 1945. So he was out in the fall of 1947 when we enrolled in Colorado University.

BS: Both of you?

BR: Yes. We both at the same time, because I caught I up with him since he was off in the Merchant Marine for two years, during World War II. So, they asked me a major and I, I, I had in mind that I would major in foreign language, because I had learned Spanish from Mr. Custer and from two summers in Mexico. So they thought I wanted to, I put down language, and I thought I was going to learn French and so forth. So they thought I was going to be an English Major, so I had to straighten that out. But, anyway I graduated with a degree, a B.A. degree in 1951. My major was International Relations. I had thoughts of living in South American or Central America, someplace where they spoke Spanish. And, so I was really interested in that part of the world and so forth. But, that was during the Korean business. So, I graduated in the Fall, umm, in the Spring, and then in the Fall I knew I was going to be drafted. And so, I didn't ask for any special treatment in those days. We just, we, we got drafted and we went to the Army, or the Navy or whatever. And, some of our local guys served with distinguished services

in World War II, that I knew. But, anyway, I was, I went to the Army on October 10th, 1951. By that time I was married to Lenora Brooks, who still lives here. And I had my basic training in Ft. Knox, Kentucky and then I had some advanced schooling in radio operations and so forth. And, I went to Korea, you know. I left in April, late April 1951. I remember my son was born while I was in San Francisco awaiting to be shipped overseas. But, I couldn't come home because everybody was fine. So shortly thereafter, they sent us overseas. First they sent us to Japan. And anyway, I went through some more very brief schooling and then I was sent to Korea where I served in the infantry. I wasn't on the front lines, but I was close enough to be scared all the time. But, anyway, I, I finished, my I, I returned to the United States in about June 1st of 1953. Of course the, the Korea matter was terminated in July of 1953. But,,I didn't have much rank. I had a job where I was supposed to have been a Sergeant, but I wasn't. I disliked being in the army and I disliked being in Korea, but that was what we were supposed to do. And it was a miserable existence, but never-the-less I got home, and by that time my, my son was born and I decided that my plans for international work in another country might not work so well. So when I was in Korea I wrote my Dad one time and said, "I think I'd like to go to law school." And, so he, he knew Dr. Thompson who was a famous local Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat doctor who knew the President of the University. So, I got an application and I enrolled in the Law School that Fall.

BS: Now, did your father have a law business going at that time?

BR: Yes, my father went to....my grandfather insisted my Dad have a college education, cause grandpa only went through the 8th grade or 9th grade when his father was murdered. So, my Dad enrolled, he graduated from Salida High School in 1916, he enrolled into, in Colorado University and he graduated from Colorado University in 1922. And he came to Salida, of course in those days he didn't have any money, and so he went to work at the railroad for a year, or almost a year to save up a little money, cause he didn't have a desk or a chair or a book. So he, he finally got enough money to open his own office, so he started practicing in 1923.

BS: Your father's name was what?

BR: William S.

BS: William S. Ok.

BR: And, but in those days, you know, it was during the depression. I was a child of the depression. And my father didn't make a lot of money, but I remember one of my friends said well his Dad got a better job now, he got \$30.00 a month. He'd been working for the WPA, and he got another job in a, in a restaurant for \$30.00. And so, we, we didn't have much, but we had a great time.

But, anyway, my Dad served as Assistant District Attorney, and then when I joined him in 19... 1956, because I want to summer schools to get out of school as early as possible, and so we

moved back to Salida. Everything I owned and my wife owned, at that time, went in the pick-up at that time except for the couch. We had to ship that. But anyway, I started practicing with my Dad and of course I didn't have much business for awhile. But, he was Assistant District Attorney at that time and he got the District Attorney to appoint me a Deputy District Attorney, without salary, so that I could get some experience in the courtroom. So I very soon started trying cases. And, anyway I continued to practice in this office where I'm sitting now since February of 1956. So I had, we had a general practice, and we've always represented Salida Building and Loan and the old First National Bank and Sangre De Cristo Electric. And we represented the School District, I did, for a number of years, and the Hospital District and so forth. And during that time, I spent twelve years as a member of the Salida School Board, which I enjoyed very much. And during our, my tenure on the Board, we did most of the building that was done up there. We converted the old gymnasium into the auditorium and built, built on some, all new buildings for the High School. Of course the interesting thing was, we had a bond issue pending to do all these constructions and it was going to be a hot, hotly contested bond issue, cause it was going to cost several hundred thousand dollars. Well, I was on the school board and before the election the old Salida High School building that was built in 1910 burned down. And, some people accused the school board of doing that so they'd pass the election. But, but really, we did not do that. But, anyway, that made us, made it easy for us to get the bond issue passed and so forth. , we had, course at that time Mr. Moline was a, he was a teacher when, when I was in High School. And he was an extraordinary teacher. He was, who taught us history. And we thought, "who's that little guy, come from Connecticut here". And he married Miss **Ingedoo**, whose still around. And he was just an excellent teacher. And Mr. King, course

he, he died. And then we had, I think, I believe Mr. Moline followed him and was, Principal and later of course was Superintendent for a brief time. Even then, I thought our schools had the best education you could get. And it was because we had good teachers. And the reason we had good teachers is that we, we attracted them and people like to live here and it wasn't that we paid them so much money, I think. But, when I was on the school board the first time we decided that we would, have, adopt a salary schedule. We never had one before, and if we thought we that we had an exceptionally good teacher we paid 'em more. Well, you can't, we couldn't do that with them with a salary schedule. I know Mr. Redmond got a little more money and Mr. Custer got a little more money, and so on, because they were outstanding teachers. But the other teachers were exceptionally good also. So, even when I was on the school board I thought we had exceptionally good teachers and a great educational system.

There were, as, as you know the Hospital was an important part of the Salida history. And I just looked it up the other day and the hospital building was completed November 10th, 1885. And it was just the one structure at that time.

BS: Now you're talking about the one down by the river?

BR: Yup, that's the only one we ever had. Well, not the only one, but that was, that was the Railroad Hospital. The Railroad bought the land, the Railroad, paid to construct the building. And I had pictures here in the office. It's quite an extraordinary building. And after, the hospital, there was a fire there in 1890 that burned some of it. But, it didn't hurt. You can still

go in the rafters and see where there were some burn spots. But anyway, there was another building out there where they kept people who had communicable diseases. They used to call it the “pest house”, I guess.

BS: Was that the one out on 160?

BR: No, it was right next to the hospital, where there’s a fountain out there now, but you can see it in some of the old pictures I have.

BS: I see. Well, there was a “pest house” out by the Poor farm.

BR: That was a Poor Farm and they had a “pest house” out there. And I remember going past there and I knew where it was and I knew why those poor people were there, which was barely in existence, I think. But, then the hospital was remodeled in 1920, I think, or 25, I’m not sure when they built that main extension. But when they did, they had a big sunroom at the end of the building, which would be on the West side. It was a great big room across the back, all windows and wicker chairs and things like that, very comfortable. Cause it was very, you know, very light there, and people could stay there. And even when I was a young man in Salida, in High School even, I knew that there were some railroaders who didn’t have families I guess, they just spent, they spent the winter in Salida in the Hospital. They let ‘em do that.

But we had some exceptional doctors. Dr. Fuller of course, he was a great friend of our, of my

family. He delivered me and my brother, and he was, he died about 1960 I think, but '61. But, you know when I was growing up, we had..... now we have like twenty-four doctors in Salida. And when I was first here in High School we had four or five. Dr. Larimer and Dr. Schaffer were two of the outstanding ones I recall. Dr. Schaffer used to live over on "G" street, I know. And, we always had very good service. And the docs did everything; they did the appendix operations, they delivered the babies and they took care of the old folks and everything else. We didn't have any specialists here until Dr. Thompson moved here, who was a friend of my father's. And he did the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat and he was above what was the old Woolworth building at that time. And he took tonsils out in the office as did Dr. Parker who was in the building where the Willow Bend is, the Willow Tree is now. They did stuff like that in their offices, and we wouldn't think of that today, I'm sure. But the hospital has always been very important, still is and fortunately we have excellent people here.

One time I was talking to my grandmother, VanAlstyne, about the hospital and she said that during the flu epidemic, in which one of my Uncles died from the flu, she worked at the hospital which was at First & "G" Street. And I said, "Well grandma, that's, that's the Sherman Hotel." And she said, "I know, it used to be the hospital before the Red Cross Hospital was built." And I didn't know that at the time, but that's, that's what it was, and I verified that later on with some of the stuff I have. Stuff being books and so forth, and pictures.

But, the other thing of course, was the railroad was a huge business here at that time. We had, we had sixteen trains coming through here every day. And of course the old Monte Cristo Hotel was there, and the old depot was there. And it was quite a place, the hotel was. I went down

there quite a few times with my Dad, and I remember about the dining area, and what was there and the chairs that sat around the, they had like a, not a bar because they didn't serve drinks, there was just a, where you could sit up at the with a group of people. But it was a very fine place. And the old depot was very interesting and it's too bad they tore it down years ago. But then, you know they, they had, I was down in the shops with my Dad, because he knew all the railroaders. And then they had, they had machinists down there that could do wonderful things. They could make parts for the engines and so forth. And we had the roundhouse down there. And we had the, of course the first rails coming into Salida were narrow gauge: went to Gunnison, went to the San Louis Valley, went to Canon City and so forth. And finally they got what they called the "3rd rail" which was standard gauge. We had a lot of railroaders, I don't know, several hundred, because they worked in the shops and then we had conductors the brakemen the engineers, the firemen and so forth. And we had people that traveled over Marshall Pass in the wintertime. And the winter was terrible. Some of 'em had cabins over in, on the other side of Monarch Pass. And, and a lot of the railroaders from here went to Minturn and back and some of them had cabins in Minturn because they had to stay overnight. But the railroad was the main industry in those days and a very good one. And you know, they, the guys that worked there, the men that worked there, they made a living. And, so that was a great industry. And you can see now, we don't, we don't have any railroaders and we don't have any trains going through Salida. But, we would go down sometimes, for recreation I guess, to see the trains come in and to see the people get off. And I recall going down there when President Roosevelt came through on a train and stopped at the depot and got out of the back of the caboose and made a speech. 'Course I was pretty young at the time. In 1948, Harry Truman,

Harry Truman came back, came through here on September 20th, 1948, and I remember then I was, I was down there at that time too.

But anyway, one thing we had that was very unusual was called the “barrel transfer”.

If you know about the railroad, they would fill the ore cars up in Monarch where they were doing mining of various things, and they would bring it down on the narrow gauge and they would do down towards where the old stock yards were, where the sale barn is now, and they had to, they would hook the, the narrow gauge cars onto what they called the barrel and they would tip them over and they would tip the ore into a standard gauge gondola. And somebody designed it and built it. It was unusual thing, one of the few maybe in the country. But that was kind of a famous thing that unfortunately was dismantled many years ago, because the narrow gauge tracks were taken up. I remember, in 1955 I think, they were, they started removing some of the narrow gauge things. But the railroad was the main thing.

Then of course we had what my grandma used to call “people that did fine sewing” down on West, what we called West Front Street, at that time. And Laura Evans was a famous lady, because of her so-called profession, I guess. But, and out at the smelter, during prohibition, that’s where you could buy bootleg whiskey, I was told, by people that, that knew.

But, and downtown Salida was an active place. We had numerous grocery stores. I suppose we had half a dozen. There were three or four on “F” Street and, and, Alexander’s Mercantile. And

over on 2nd and “G”, Long’s had a grocery store. And there was Billy Burns Meat Market and Sam Muto, over there on West 1st St. where’s there’s now a liquor store. And Mr. Calloway had a, no it wasn’t Mr Calloway, he was a barber. But, there’s a lot of history concerning those old buildings. Where Lallier’s Pharmacy is now that was an Opera House at one time. Mrs. Lallier verified that the other day. The old Opera House, that was a great Opera House, which is now the theater, of course. And when we were in High School why they had a balcony up there, and the balcony extended down each side of the building. It was quite a beautiful building and I think it still is. It’s maybe not as quite as elegant as it used to be. But that was the central place for entertainment and so forth. And of course the Elks Club, was always a, was built in 1905 or something, or 1908 or something like that and that was, very active fraternal organization in the.... there’s other organizations around town, the Masons. And then finally, when the Red Cross Hospital was closed, which was operated by some individuals, it was Dr. Cochem was the head of the D&RG Hospital, but there was another doctor, I can’t think of his name right now, and he had the Red Cross Hospital. But I was in the Red Cross Hospital when I was a little kid, cause Dr. Smith was on the staff there. Dr. Howard Smith who lived up across from the Courthouse, across from what used to be called Hal Guno Park and what is now called Thonoff Park.

BS: Well, now you’re talking about the Red Cross Hospital up on “G” Street by Safeway?

BR: Yeah. That was, I can’t remember when it was closed. But it, it was closed somewhere

between 1940 and 1950, someplace in there. But it was active and there was competition between the two hospitals as to who was on the staff of which one. And both of them had surgical suites and so forth. But, soon the Red Cross Hospital just couldn't, couldn't make money I guess. Mr. Kimball was the last administrator that I recall. And he, he was a famous golfer also.

And of course I was also interested in the Salida Golf Club. And it isn't generally known, but my father and Dr. Cochem started the Salida Gold Club in 1926. I had some articles about that. In fact there's a plaque up in the golf club house, which I gave them last year about the stories about when that golf club was started in 1926. And it's still in the same spot of course. And 1938 was one of the projects at the same time the Salida swimming pool was organized. And, the club house was built and it was a beautiful log building, which it still is. And, Salida, old Salida swimming pool was opened in that year. Before that time we could, we could swim down at Wellsville. When I was a little kid, we had "swim day" in the summer time. And the Dad's or Mother's would take a car load, or several car loads of kids down there to swim all day long. And, and that was a big, big event, cause my Dad took me and my brother and others down there many times, as did other parents.

BS: That was in the river?

BR: Humm?

BS: That was swimming in the river?

BR: No, there's a, there's remnants of the old Wellsville pool down there and I have several pictures in here of the old Wellsville Pool. And it was a big ride, hell, six miles down there or something. But also, you could go up to Poncha Springs, they had a little round pool. I was up there many times. And they had sweat baths up there because of a natural Poncha spring that still comes down today. And that was an exciting thing to do was to get to go swimming in a real swimming pool. But, at Wellsville you can still see the remnants of the pool down there in one spot, or two. And there was a hotel down at Wellsville, and there was a hotel I believe, up at Poncha Springs up on the mountain. So, but those things were a big, big deal for us to be able to participate in those things. And the, Salida pool was really first class at that time.

And the Golf Club got some grass in there, I think in the, oh, in the early 1940's or sometime, prior to that. I think maybe it was 1938. 'Cause I remember I went up there and caddied a couple times for 50 cents or a quarter or something and they had sand greens, which a lot of places had. And sand, they didn't have any tee boxes and no grass really. And there was a little old club house up there that, that was about 15 x 20 I guess, and unfortunately they tore it down and I think somebody bought it, I'm not sure.

But, the golf club prospered and grew and now we wish we had eighteen holes, but we don't, and we may never have it. But those were some of the activities that we had around here.

And, the, you look around some of these like where Gambles is now there was, Alexander's

Mercantile was on the corner and next to that was, a jewelry store in there. And, and that's where if you were a railroader you could have your watch checked there, 'cause they had to be exactly right. And next door was a bakery. And up the street on "F" Street was the meat market and a drugstore there. And there was a drugstore across the street. There was one of them on the alley in the 100 block on "F" Street. And, and at that time the Waggener's was on this corner where Lallier's is and Waggener's were later moved down to 1st and "F" Street. My Mother worked there for Mr. Conn Waggener. Mr. Waggener lived up on "F" Street in the 500 block, but the house was destroyed to make room for the telephone building. But we had the, always had at least three drugstores downtown. And there was a lot of business that was conducted here. I remember the Western Union Store was down on 1st and "F" where the Penny Pincher building is now. And there was a guy had a bicycle and a little cap and delivered telegrams to people. And we all had, not everybody had telephones in those days either. There was a lot of people didn't have telephones. A lot of people didn't have a lot of things, and including inside bathrooms. There were numerous outhouses all over town until the, oh in the 30's and 40's I guess, when they really clamped down on those sort of things. 'Cause I remember taking a bath in the bathtub, you know, in grandma's kitchen, because they didn't have a bathroom. But later they had one.

Course we talk about Smelter Town or Kortz, Colorado, which was named after Mr. Kortz who started that sometime prior to 1900. And it was laid out in blocks and so forth. We see the smelter smoke stack; well there was two smoke stacks at that time. And I have a photograph on

the wall here that shows there were like 20 railroad cars sitting around out there. And, and they did smelting from all kinds of ores all over the country. Unfortunately, you know, the big smelter was built, oh around 1915, or sometime prior to that. But then it, it closed down in 1921 or something like that because they didn't have enough business. Mining was carried on up in Monarch, and was carried on up there for a long time to furnish limestone or the CF&I down in Pueblo, until they closed that about 20 years ago. But mining was important, and the old smelter. And we always called it Smelertown, cause that's, and the people that lived out there mainly were the Austrian folks, and some of them still live there. But that was a big business also. And later Cotter's had a creosote plant up there in the same, same area. We had a lot of people worked up there in the 1940's, I remember, they did, you know, did the railroad ties and all those kind of things right here in Salida. Caused a lot of contamination too. You can ask one of our local contractors sometime. Because, they, they, you know, they had inches of creosoting and stuff all over the place up there. But that was a industry. But we didn't have many industries; it was mainly trading dollars around Salida, I guess, with many different kinds of merchants. But, Mr. Hodding had the Salida greenhouse at the time. When I was a little kid he used to ride around on a bicycle.

We had ditches running through Salida in the 1930's and early 40's. The ditch went by our house, across the street where Mr. Stewart lived and my Dad could irrigate our backyard with the city water from the ditch.

BS: Where were you living then? Where was the house?

BR: That was 1148 “F” Street. A lot of people irrigated their lawns from ditches. And we had a Mr. Turner I think his name was, he had a bicycle and he carried a shovel and he maintained all the ditches in town. But fortunately we had, the fathers, or early fathers preserved some nice parks in Salida. And I’m glad that we didn’t get rid of all the parks. Although one time the Mayor said “I’d sell it to Safeway, if they wanted to buy it”, because it was a maintenance problem and it cost money for us to have Alpine Park. But Alpine Park was the center of a lot of activity. Every Sunday night during the ‘30’s and ‘40’s they had a band concert. You’ve seen pictures of the old bandstand which unfortunately was torn down. And people would park all around and the kids would run all over the park. But they had the Salida band mainly, mainly from kids in high school, although there were a lot of adults played in the orchestra. That was a big social event on Sunday night cause you’d get out of the house and go down there instead of sitting home listening to the radio and trying to get “Gangbusters” or something.

BS: Was the Library there at that time?

BR: Yeah, the Library was built in 1908. And it was a fine library. And Mrs. Nederland was in charge of the library when I was in school. Her husband lived, and she lived there at 6th and “D” street. He was a Chiropractor. But, in where they had the fiction and so forth, she had a couple areas that were covered with a black cloth because she didn’t think they were good for children to read. And I wanted, I wanted a book “Of Mice and Men”, one time, which is a famous Steinbeck thing. And she said, “You can’t, you can’t read that, that’s not nice book.” I took it

anyway, and read it and it wasn't, wasn't obscene. But she took care of seeing to it that the kids didn't get any bad literature, which probably wouldn't work very good today, except for "Playboy Magazine" or something. But I don't know what other things I can tell you about, except.....

BS: Let's go back to the D&RG Hospital. How did the town get that?

BR: Well, as I understand it, they, this was kind of a central point for them, and, and they decided that they didn't want to have it in Denver. And, you know, there were people all over from Grand Junction to Northern Colorado, all of them worked for the Denver and Rio Grand Railroad. And, and they, as I understand the history of it, they just thought this would be a central place and a good place for, for them to have a hospital. And then later on, when they were not interested anymore, because you know, people could get hospital services other places, and so they the hospital was going to be sold by the D&RG people. But at that time the hospital was operated by the Union of the railroad people. And fortunately my father represented them, so through his efforts he got them to agree to sell the hospital to the people of Salida. So as you know, when you go in the hospital, you can see we, it was, it was after 1956, like 1958 or something when the community got together with a fund drive and I think it was, we paid like \$150,000 for that hospital and it was saved. Otherwise they were going to sell it so some private organization in California that had hospitals all over the country. So, through the efforts of some people at that time, including my father, we got the hospital for the people of this community.

And, one thing I want to remember that I was proud of was that back in about 1960 or so, it was a movement made through the City Council that that we want to sell, the swimming pool and sell everything up on the mountain that we owned where the Poncha Springs are. And my Dad said, "We can't let, we can't let that happen." So he said, "You're going to be a spokesman against selling the hospital." Cause our good friend Elmo Bevington was going to buy – I mean the hot springs, he was going to buy the swimming pool, all the property, there's 40 acres up on Poncha Pass and all the hot water and everything. He was going to buy it and put a motel there. So anyway, we had a pretty hot election here. And, by 17 votes, we kept the swimming pool. And, and I'm proud that I, if it wasn't for me and my father it would have been gone. But we worked very hard. And I remember I was on the radio and people were calling in questions, and people were criticizing us for not doing something and making, the Council said, "We'll build you a swimming pool sometime." But they didn't say where or when or how. And, if we, if we hadn't taken action we'd have lost the swimming pool and we wouldn't of had it today. We'd have a nice motel out there with lots of hot water and property on the mountain would be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. That was one activity that I was proud of.

BS: I'm glad you did it.

BR: But, other than that, I, you know, this, this office has been my place of business since 1956 in the same room. And I'll probably be here awhile longer.

BS: I hope so. Now you're on the hospital board still?

BR: Yes Maam, I've been on the hospital board about twelve years now. And I represented the hospital for twenty years before that. And I attended most of the meetings, because they thought I should be there because there were legal questions come up. And so, my term will be over in another year from next Spring, and of course, that will be the end of my service on the board. But, we've had, I think we have an excellent hospital. I don't think there's any small town in Colorado that has the facilities and the services that we have in the hospital. And we have some great physicians here. We've always had excellent medical care. I think the people realize what a gem that hospital is, and always has been. But the hospital board kinda takes some time to sit on that board and get things done. But it's, it's rewarding. And so the hospital will be here for a long time. We just, and one of these days, we're going to have some meetings today and tomorrow about what's going to happen, whether we can expand the, the old building one more time and buy some more land someplace, or buy a new site for a new hospital. Knowing that a new hospital would cost probably 25-35 million dollars. And we don't have that much money, of course. But we got to look in the future. Some of the people in this community looked in the future and that's why we have so many assets here that attract people. So, now we have people that move in, as we all know, from all over the country, and enjoy our climate and, and all the activities that go on in a small town, things that we still enjoy. I don't regret having lived here and raised my kids here. I think it was a great place.

We've had good law enforcement. We had the greatest Chief of Police, one of the greatest, Harry Cable and Leonard Post, and then Darwin Hibbs and, and Sheriff Thonoff and the

guys that followed him. So we've had law enforcement, I worked very closely with them for years because I was Assistant District Attorney for several, two different times. We've had, very good law enforcement and have very modern fire protection team and equipment. And so we're up-to-date in most ways.

BS: There was one thing more you started talking about your family; your first wife and you had one son. what else happened to your family since then?

BR: Well my son, he lives, he lives in Durango where he's employed. He married Kathy Osmond. Her did used to run what we called "The Spa", which is now the "Country Bounty" restaurant. And they have two boys, one of which is 32 and the other one's 26 or 27. And I have one great-granddaughter that lives in Phoenix right now. My daughter lives in Kremling where she's lived for I think it's about 15 years now.

BS: What's her name?

BR: Linda. And she has two sons who are in college. One is Stetson and the other one is Cody. By the first names you probably know they live on a ranch.

BS: It sounds like it.

BR: But she lives on a ranch with her husband who's been a rancher all his life. And Stetson is

about to graduate from the University of Wyoming, with a Masters degree soon. And my other son, grandson is in Western State where he, he's doing very well academically and he's also on the wrestling team. So, I get to see them, not often enough, but pretty often. So we didn't, we didn't have, there was just my brother and I, and I had two kids and that was it. My brother had four boys, and their scattered around the country a little bit. But, I've been very fortunate to have had my grandparents living here and having healthy parents. My Mom lived to be 91, my Dad lived to be 81.

So, they were great parents, and set a good example for me and my brother anyway.

BS: And where is your home now?

BR: I live at 119 Mesa Circle, right on the, that was developed some years ago. We built a house there about 21 years ago. By sheer accident, it's on #3 fairway at the golf club. So, if a guy was inclined, he'd just crawl over the fence and go hit a few golf balls. It's not always appreciated by everybody. But we like living there. We think Salida's a great place, and I don't want to live outside of town, I want to live in Salida, Colorado. And I probably won't ever leave now. It's too damn late now.

BS: Enjoy it now.

BR: Well, I've always enjoyed living here. A small town is different than any other place. You've lived here a long time too, haven't you? And you lived in Denver, so you know what

that's like.

BS: Yeah, and we came back here, you see.

BR: In Lafayette, or wherever it was. But, it's, it's just a great place to live. And I think people today are doing a lot more things in the community than we used to do. Like the Steam Plant and what's happened down at Riverside Park. We've really made some great changes around here.

BS: And you've watched them all.

BR: I've watched quite a few.

BS: Yes, that's great. Well, thank you Bob, you've really told us a lot about Salida history.

BR: Well, you know, I've tried to keep up, you know. I just found these things the other day. I have all of these old postcards that I created, created, bought someplace. This was taken in front of the fire department. Those were the Wicker brothers. And, and I had some of their pictures. Pictures of "F" Street, and, and here's a, here's an old picture in early 1890's and here's a picture of Marshall Pass. Here's a picture of the hospital years ago, which looks pretty much the same. And here's a picture of downtown when you can see the old Presbyterian church was up on the corner. I never quite for, forgave all the Presbyterians for tearing down that beautiful old church.

BS: They have a beautiful one now too.

BR: Yeah, it is. But that was just a beautiful old brick building, and they tore it down and put a service station there. But, anyway, that, that was progress at that time.

BS: Well, let's call it changes.

BR: But we also had many churches. You know the church area where St. Joseph's is, and the Episcopal church. I attended Episcopal church. But the Baptist church was on one corner, the Christian church was on the other corner, Methodist on the other corner and across the alley was the Episcopal. And the St. Joseph's was at one time a small building. But, I don't remember exactly when that church was building, but it.....

BS: Very early, about 1908.

BR: I think that's when it was, because, I remember when my grandparents got married in the church it was just that little building that was later the Catholic Church. Cause they had Catholic School, when we were in school, until just a few years ago. And it used to be one through eight and the Nuns were there and taught school. And they had a lot of kids, I don't remember how many, but they had a lot of kids that went to school over there. And we had two Priests and several Nuns were here all the time. But, churches have been a good part of the history of

Salida. I'm glad the Methodist did what they did on their building. It's very nice. So, I think there'll be some, we have more churches now than we've ever had, I think there's 20 of them or so. But it's been a very nice place to live, that's all I know.

BS: Very good.