

Recorded by Bonnie Lathrop

Transcribed by Jackie Powell and Dymond Hobson

BL: My name is Bonnie Lathrop, for the Salida Oral History Project. I am interviewing Dick Tuttle at his office, which is the senior center here in Salida, Colorado. We're conducting an unstructured narrative type of interview, and it's focusing on important events and people in an individual's life. So, you go ahead and tell me about your parents, you start.

DT: Well, excuse me, I'm not in very good voice today. [Phone rings.] And there we go.

BL: Okay, we'll go ahead. We were interrupted there for a little while, so you go ahead.

DT: Okay, well, as I was saying I'm Dick Tuttle but once you've heard my voice, I don't have to say who I am. When I say 'hello' they say 'Hello, Mr. Tuttle.' I've got one of those voices, I guess, and I'm not sure why they want to know all this about me but anyway I'll tell you what I know about it. My family roots are back in a little central Illinois town Atlanta, as in Georgia ... [paper crinkling]

BL: Now, they'll probably be able to pick up that crinkling noise.

Childhood

DT: My dad's name was Guy Harry Tuttle and my mother's name was Clara Campbell and they were all born and raised in the Atlanta, Illinois region. I wasn't born in Atlanta. My dad moved to Omaha, a little suburb of Benson, Omaha, and I was born there in Benson on May 3, 1914. I think Dad and Mom had made a trip to Colorado and they fell in love with the mountains and when they sold out and moved to Boulder, where my dad was a partner in an undertaking funeral and furniture establishment, Kelso and Tuttle. This was in Boulder.

Okay, well I went through the first four grades of school in Boulder. And I roamed the hills of Flagstaff and the Flatirons and all the Boulder campus and, I had a wonderful time. I loved the mountains and I pretty much had the little town of Boulder to roam around in. Well, you should see Boulder now, [laugh] I wouldn't be able to find my way around I'm sure.

So, anyway, after four years we were in Boulder the partnership Dad had kind of fell apart and he was at loose ends. But fortunately, back in Atlanta the lady whose husband ran the funeral parlor there died and she needed someone to carry on the business. So she sent for my dad and he moved, we moved back to Atlanta.

BL: Can I interrupt here now just a little bit? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

DT: Well, okay, yeah, to get back to the family. I have an older sister, Marian Rose Tuttle, and she ended up Marian Rose Irish. And I have a brother, a younger brother, three years younger, Thomas Harry Tuttle, and a much younger brother -- he was 14 years younger than I was -- James Marvin. Both Marian and Thomas are deceased and Jimmy is the only living relative, really, that I have.

So, okay, we're back in Atlanta now. Well, Atlanta, Illinois, is in the middle of the cornfields. I mean there's not a mountain in sight and to get to any kind of a hill and another kid we had to hike up to the Boy Scout camp where there was a hilly area. And a Boy Scout apparatus set up there, and I used to love to go out there. We'd hike out there about seven miles -- and play around in the hills and then hike seven miles back. I was much younger then, of course, I think I couldn't do it now.

5:00

But, anyway, I went through, I got, what education I got was the fifth grade, I started into the fifth grade and I got a teacher named Ella Businger and I went through the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades -- graduated, I even got a diploma, eighth grade graduation, and then I attended Atlanta Community High School. Okay, this was the upper portion of the school building. The grades were on the lower floor and the high school was up on top. So, I went through the four years of high school and I enjoyed it. We had a very small school. My class was about 15 people, so -- are we goin' now? Still goin'?

BL -- Yeah, we're goin'.

DT: Okay, real good. We had of course a typical small town. And back in those days we didn't have swimming pools, we didn't have ball parks, we did have athletics but when we went to play an out-of-town game we had to rely on the parents to load up their cars and take the team and take the spectators to the game. And, as I say, we made our own amusement as far as that goes. We had our typical high school plays and, with a class of 15 I turned out to be the big man on the campus. See, I was the president of the junior and senior class and had a usually a leading part in the plays, and graduated as valedictorian. I had a lot of competition there, of course (laugh) but anyway from high school I went on to Illinois State Normal University at Bloomington, which is about 25 miles away. Well, it isn't Bloomington, it's in Marvel which is a suburb of Bloomington. So, I didn't know what I was going there for. I didn't know anything but going to school and this was during the Depression. You just couldn't go out and get a job, there weren't any jobs. Believe it or not I went to college on five dollars a week. It took about two or three dollars for a room. And I did light housekeeping. I had the other two dollars to feed myself for the week. And this was from money I saved from carrying papers and mowing lawns and washing cars and that type of thing when I was a kid growing up.

So, anyway I started out as an art major in college because I liked to draw and doodle and so forth, but I got in there -- I'd never had an art lesson in my life, our school didn't have them -- but I went to college and I was in with a bunch of kids who had had art lessons for seven or eight years and I was hopelessly behind. I soon discovered that I wasn't meant out to be an artist. So, I had to get out of there and get to working because everything was tough -- you had to get out and start making money. So I transferred to the rural education course because you could get a two-year diploma in rural education, and you could get out and start earning a living. That was what I did -- I had to take extra credits, and so forth, to make up for what I lost, but anyway -- that's the way I met my wife, Ruth. It so happened that one of these make-up classes I was in was a bunch of freshmen and she was one of them and I kinda liked her looks and we got to going together and as the upshot of it was eventually we stayed together. It's been -- what is it -- sixty-nine years now, I think. So, -- I think I'm going to keep her, she's been on probation all this time but I think I'll keep her now.

Early Adulthood

9:20

Teaching

Anywhere, let's see now, where was I? Okay! I got through the rural education course and I was ready to face the world and my only recourse was to be a rural school teacher -- that's what I was trained for. Well, there weren't too many rural school jobs open. There were a lot of rural schools, but right outside of Atlanta about three miles was a little school called Walnut Grove, and they had a vacancy, and I had some friends on the school board and so forth -- everybody knows everybody -- anyway the upshot of it was I got the job. This is a country school. We only had eight months of school because the kids had to get out and help with the crops and so forth. So I started out, I earned seventy dollars a month for eight months -- that was five hundred and sixty dollars.

BL: Was this a one-room schoolhouse?

DT: This was a one-room schoolhouse. I was the only teacher. I was the janitor. I was the recreation director. I was everything. I had about thirteen or fourteen kids and believe it or not I had one kid at least in every grade one through eight. So -- [laugh] -- one thing -- I don't know, the little first graders, you give them something to do like coloring or something like that, to keep them busy and in two minutes they'd be up there, "What can I do now, Mr. Tuttle?" Well, anyway the eighth graders -- and the seventh and the eighth graders kinda helped take care of the little kids, you know. And in a rural school like that, when you're sitting there listening to all the recitations, by the time you get to the next grade you've heard it all, it's just a repeat, you see. So, it was great. I mean I had some real bright kids and I had some real dumb kids. And, -- in fact, I inherited a bunch of kids from another school who had been getting passing grades to, just to move them along, and by the scant standards I was going by they were earning thirties and forties and fifties. 'Cause I graded them according to, if they took a test and they only got four out of ten right, they got a forty. Well, I think they got held back. But, anyway, as I say, I did have kids that were really brilliant, and uh, it was an interesting experience.

Problem was, when summer came, there you were out of a job and you had four months to get by. Well, jobs were scarce. I started out that first summer working as a helper in my uncle's hardware store. And boy I'm tellin' you, they put me to work. They sold a little bit of everything. I helped put binders together, I drove tractors around, I didn't wait on the trade but I swept floors, I think I earned probably fifteen or twenty dollars a month on that, see.

Well, I was working there one day and an old farmer came in who lived two or three miles out in the country -- it was an old German family -- and he was looking for somebody to run a tractor, to plow some corn. Okay -- he wanted to know if I could drive a tractor and I says, "Yeah, I can" because I had there in my work there and I knew how to drive a tractor but I didn't know a darned thing about plowing corn, see. So anyway what this involved was getting out there at four o'clock and helping milk the cows and helping get everything ready for the day's work, then going in and, for breakfast, and there was this German housewife and her two daughters -- and they were both rather corpulent, I mean, they were well fed, see -- and I never sat down to any meal like that. We had pancakes, we had rolls, we had sausages... -- anything you can think for breakfast, we had it. And I had, I was a young guy, I had a pretty good appetite.

13:50

So, they took me out and they got me started plowing corn. Well, I plowed up a lot of corn! But I finally got onto it, where I could drive a the tractor through the rows and plow up the weeds instead of corn. Then we'd come in at noon and then we really had a meal, see! This was -- I just can't describe it. We just had loads and loads of food. Well, I was earning a dollar and a half a day, and I put in from four in the morning to about six o'clock at night and I could have had supper with them, too, but I had to go home to my fairly new wife, the lady I told you about that I met in class, and my.... While I was working on the farm she gave birth to our first daughter. And we named her Janet Lynn, Janet Lynn Tuttle, and I had worked all day on the farm and then when she was in the hospital I would go be with her and then I went back to work the next day and I don't think I went to bed that night at all. [Laugh]

Well, anyway, that job didn't last too long because a gentleman in town was interested in having somebody sell some gas stove appliances that some manufacturer had wanted done. Anyway, I was a little tired of farming by that time, was the hardest work I'd ever done in my life, and so I went to sales for this man as, on commission. Well, I beat the bushes around Atlanta, Illinois, in and out, and I demonstrated, and I cajoled and I - I tried my darnedest to get somebody to buy, to buy these wares. Well, finally somebody did -- my dad. [Laugh] Father was my best customer. When I was a kid selling magazine subscriptions, you'd sell them to your grandma and your aunts and your parents. Other than that, you didn't do too well, see.

So, anyway, I spent that first summer just doing what I could and we got by pretty well.

I forgot to mention that my first year of teaching I not only got married but I bought three cars in succession. I needed transportation to get out to Walnut Grove, you see, and the roads around Atlanta were mud roads unless they'd been graveled. Okay, the road out there, the first mile was gravel, the rest was mud. A friend of mine, a guy that worked for my dad, his father had an old Model T Ford sedan that had been in their garage, their barn, for several years because he couldn't drive it. And it only had, I don't think it had over five thousand miles on it, so he wanted to know if I wanted to buy it for thirty-five dollars. Well, it was just made to order for getting out in the country, and when you get rain you sink in about twelve inches you know but the old Ford would keep going. When you get snow the same way -- you'd go right through mud and snow. I didn't have thirty-five dollars, but anyway I had to pay him out of one of my first paychecks so I got this Model T Ford and I was dating my wife-to-be, and I was very self-conscious. I was a young buck here and I was a-driving a big old-fashioned car that -- I was embarrassed with it!

So anyway what I did I traded it off on a Chevy that was probably had a hundred thousand miles on it and but it looked better, you see. So anyway, the -- I never had to put a nickel on the Model T but on that Chevy I'm telling you, it nickeled and dimed me to death.

18:00

Okay,... that lasted for a while, but my uncle who was also in the hardware store, they had a car agency and he had taken in a beautiful Hupmobile roadster. It had, it didn't have a rumble seat. It had the trunk in the back. It had the tire set in the front fender, wow it was a beauty. And I think he wanted three hundred dollars for it. Well, I had to have that car. So, I approached him about trading off my Chevy on this Oldsmobile -- no -- Hupmobile, I got an Oldsmobile now -- anyway he didn't want to sell it to me because he knew I didn't have any money but he didn't have any other buyers and he was a good guy so he let me take the car. He took my old Chevy. Well, this had been driven by a little old lady who rode the clutch and the clutch was shot and the carburetor

needed changing, and once it was running it was beautiful. The Chevy nicked and dinged me to death, this one dollared me to death.

So anyway we had this car and when we were first married there, we found a little house – oh, I might as well digress here a little bit – my wife also, I was teach... my second year teaching, she had got a job teaching at an elementary school at a little town, Mechanicsburg. It was -- I thought Atlanta was a little town but Mechanicsburg was a real little town, see. Anyway, she got this job teaching one of the grades – I forget which. Well, that soon didn't work out because after about a month or two she found she was pregnant with our first child. [Laugh] So she had to give up her job. She came to live in Atlanta and we rented a little house for eight dollars a month, see. Well it had no insulation. Somebody donated us a kitchen stove, it was cracked and smoked up the place. Somebody else donated us a hard coal stove – one of these with an isinglass top you could look in and see these coals a-glowing. It was real nice, but it took about an hour or so to get it going, see.

That winter – I'm retrogressing here – that winter, 1935, this was 1936 – it was one of the coldest winters they'd ever had. One way-below-zero of storm after another and we were freezing to death in that little house. There was no insulation, and the pipes froze up, so we went and got a room at my parents' house which.... And we stayed with them for several months, and then finally as the baby was about due a lady had a real nice house and she was about to leave, all nicely furnished, that she rented to us for twelve dollars a month. Well, this was beautiful, and we lived there when our first daughter was born, you see.

Civil Service in Illinois

Well, this being summertime, no income coming in, and I wasn't doing too good at selling stoves and stuff, we had to sell our Hupmobile. We were out of transportation. Okay, well, the third year – I had the country school for two years – the third year the fifth grade in town became, needed a teacher. That's where I started school when I moved back to Atlanta in the fifth grade. Okay, I had a relative or two on the school board, so forth, anyway I got the job. And, I went to work as a fifth grade teacher. And, I'd only been there about a couple of months when I got a call from the Civil Service Commission – I had taken a civil service test just for the fun of it, as a clerk-typist, because in high school I was a good typist, I usually won the speed tests and all that, you see – I had to borrow a typewriter from one of the teachers to practice up for the test. Well, anyway I took this test and forgot all about it you might say because I figured you had to have an uncle who was a Senator or something to get a civil service job. Well, anyway here comes a letter, where they had a job up in the U.S. Engineer's office in Rock Island, Illinois, which is on the Mississippi River and right across the river from Davenport. Well, I had to decide did I want to teach school or did I want to get into civil service. Well, civil service sounded wonderful. Well, what we did, my wife, she wasn't teaching now, and I brought her in to substitute for me and I went up to Rock Island to look the job over. I signed on and spent a week. I decided that's what I wanted to do.

23:30

So, we moved to Rock Island, didn't have a car - my parents brought me up there with a trailer full of stuff -- and uh we had to live in a uh -- when we first got there, Ruth and I and little Janet Lynn, who was just a baby at the time of course, had a room in a boarding house. Okay, uh, uh this was fine. I had a job. It paid a hundred -- it paid twelve-sixty a year -- a hundred five dollars, whatever it was, yeah, a hundred and five dollars a month -- that was fine, that was a big improvement. I think I was making about eighty-seven dollars a month in the fifth grade. But, rents up there were, were terrible. There was even twenty-five dollars a month for a mediocre

apartment or maybe thirty-five for a pretty nice one, see. So, we were having problems. We, we had no car, we had to, I had to get to work. I either had to walk -- it was two or three miles to walk -- or take a taxi -- I couldn't afford a taxi.

So, anyway, uh what happened we got on in this boarding house and I went out prospecting for an apartment. Found a place, went out in the evening, when it was sorta dark, and I looked over this place. It was nicely set up, and uh there weren't any lights or anything in it, but the arrangement was fine, so I said I'd take it. I think it was something like eight dollars a week, or whatever, which would have kind of pressed my budget. But anyway we took it. So we moved down there with what few belongings we had, and first night out the baby was in her crib and I looked over and there was a rat on her uh the uh baby's bed. Well, that wasn't too encouraging. So, we moved out of there in a hurry.

We got a room with some elderly lady I think for a while. Anyway, this goes on and on. We finally moved into an apartment, an apartment to a house over in Davenport, across the river. And we had an upstairs apartment. We had a little furniture. We had a stove that we had had in Atlanta -- anyway, had a little bit of furniture but not much, we had this little upstairs apartment. And here I was about five miles away from...I was working in the U.S. Engineer's Office, which is at what they call the clock tower, on the island between Rock Island and Davenport. One thing I did I borrowed my brother's bicycle, I bicycled to work and back. Well, it cost a dime to ride the streetcar or the bus, but dimes were pretty scarce you see.

Well anyway my job there, I was a clerk-typist. I was a good typist, but I wasn't much of a clerk, and uh I thought I was doing really good, but uh the boss, uh the engineers, uh that were working on the Mississippi -- it's a lock and dam uh project -- nine-foot channel project, they called it -- Anyway, the big boss didn't like the way I kept the uh the records and all. But while I was there I had fun. I had to go out with a, with a road crew to take inventory. We had these work crews out on the river, uh, surveying, all that sort of stuff, and uh one of the employees was a, what they call a motor man, he drove a, was a boat operator, so he took me by boat up the Mississippi and down the Mississippi to all of these uh survey crews, see. This was, this was great. I had a heck of a good time on that. But anyway, uh...

BL: Was working for the Civil Service what brought you to Colorado, then?

DT: What was that? I...

BL: Was working for the Civil Service what brought you to Colorado?

DT: Uh, yes it was. I'll get around to that. It was what brought me to Colorado. In fact, if I hadn't taken that civil service test I probably -- well I might have ended up in Colorado but I probably would have been a schoolteacher all my life, you see.

So uh anyway the uh -- I said the boss didn't care for my bookkeeping but we had a typing, a correspondence section in the tower there, who their whole business was to do typing for all the other offices where they didn't have adequate typists. Well, I was a good typist, so I got along real fine there. And while I was at it, I had friends there -- see I was, I was a junior typist, twelve-sixty a year. A junior stenographer made fourteen- forty a year, and I had a friend who was a steno-typist -- machine shorthand, see. Well he had taken a correspondence course from LaSalle Extension University and, I though, well that's for me, so I signed up at five dollars a month or whatever it was for uh, uh -- course, I didn't have any money to buy this course. Everything --

you were expected to buy thing everything on payments back then, nobody had an cash, of course -- so I took this steno-type course and eventually took an exam and I qualified as a uh as a, well as a senior typist and as a uh junior stenographer, whatever.

So anyway, uh, while I was, uh I was still in the correspondence section, and I'd take more tests. I took tests for uh for uh stenographer and lo and behold I get an offer to, for a job uh at Chinook Field, Army, uh the Army Air Corps at Chinook Field at Rantoul, Illinois. Well, it didn't take much for me to decide this paid more -- it paid like fourteen- forty instead of what, I was makin' a little more there, but one thing was that I thought that the Air Corps was growing and growing -- and I thought, there's a growth industry there, it'd be good to get in. So, again, we stored our furniture, we took the job, stored our furniture in Rock Island, and there again we found ourselves in a boarding house down in Rantoul while I took my job, and I was a stenographer to the Assistant Commandant of the field. Uh we were right next door to the Commandant's office, but I was working for the Assistant Commandant.

Okay, uh, the pay was better. We eventually found an apartment here. In fact, we went through three or four apartments -- we were always on the move. One of em was an old lady that had spare bedrooms and so forth and uh, we, we lived there for a while, but it didn't work out. We went to another apartment where the baby cried so much that they ran, they ran us out. [Laugh] Finally we ended up, we had a nice apartment with a nice young couple, an upstairs apartment, and uh, it was the best, best situation we had. And I was only, I was within walking distance of, of the Chinook Field. Still didn't have a car, see.

So anyway, we had a little bit of furniture, and I went to Champaign-Urbana, which is the closest big town, and bought a refrigerator because the old ice-box that we were using leaked, and my landlord came up one day and said, hey, the dripping from your ice-box isn't doing our, our uh downstairs any good. The water was going right through the floor from the old ice-box. So we had to buy a refrigerator.

Well, okay, uh, uh, this went on. I took courses, did a little court reporting, did all kinds of typing work, and all that, for this office. While I was there, then -- leading up to getting back to Colorado -- a, uh, a memo came through from the uh, from Lowry Field, saying they needed instructors at the Department of Clerical Instruction at Lowry Field, the Army Air Corps. It wasn't the Air Force at that time, it was the Army Air Corps. Well, I was an instructor, and I was, uh, they taught, they taught uh Army clerks, they taught them typing and shorthand and uh, uh all the other Army record-keeping and all that, see.

Well, the thing of it is, this job was for teaching typing and shorthand, see. I was a machine shorthand operator, and I didn't know Gregg shorthand from anything. Well anyway, in the Army when you get a military letter, it goes to one person, he puts his endorsement on it, hands it right to the letter, it goes on to the next level, they put their endorsement on it, and it -- you might have fifteen endorsements to a letter which is a chronological record of where it's been, see.

Civil Service, Lowry Field, Colorado

Well, anyway, they were set to approve my, my request to, uh, my application for this job as an instructor in Lowry Field. Well, this uh master sergeant in the commandant's office, He put an endorsement on it stating that I was not a Gregg shorthand, that I didn't know Gregg shorthand. So, I put an endorsement on the letter saying I would endeavor to qualify myself as a Gregg instructor, see. I got myself a Gregg shorthand book, and I studied, and I made the little squiggles and dots, and I wasn't getting anywhere at all. And I finally just -- no way I could teach

shorthand, see. But anyway, they had me hired, in Denver, for Lowry Field, as instructor. I don't know to this day how it ever worked out, but anyway we loaded up.

I had a -- we, we got a hold of a Ford V-8 by this time, a '36 Ford V-8. And I -- first I had a, I bought a Model A Ford but that didn't last -- I traded it in on this Ford V-8. Okay, we had to get to Denver and this was right at the end of the year, with vacations and so forth. I loaded up an, my kid brother had an empty house trailer that he had used, I had used, my Dad had used, in demonstrating these bottled gas stoves and stuff, see. So I borrowed his trailer and put uh overload springs on my old Ford -- it was still a little car, it was a V-8, but it was a little car, and uh we had two GI's with us that were transferring to Lowry Field, we had two passengers, see, they helped a little paying the expense, see. And we took off for Denver right in the latter part of December. We fought headwinds all the way there and I couldn't get that V-8 Ford over 35, 40 miles an hour with that load. We'd stop at a motel. It'd cost us three or four dollars a night to stay in a motel, you see. Finally got to Denver right uh just before New Years Day.

Okay, we had to stay in a motel temporarily, we went looking for, I think we stayed in a motel for several days. When we got there the school was closed down for the holidays. I had to go back to Lowry Field to sign in, right after New Years Day. Well, I did have a car, I could get there. I had a date with the chief instructor, a Mr. Frank... See they had civilian instructors as well as GI instructors, and they were all on the same basis. You'd have a, you might have a staff sergeant for an instructor in one class and a civilian in another class.

So, I had ah, Mr Frank Fish was the chief instructor, and uh he was in charge of uh all of the, all of the, uh, well, the general instruction, see. So, I went in with fear and trembling because I didn't know if I had a job or not. I had gone on and taken a chance, and I said, Mr. Fish, I says, I've got a confession to make, I said, I wouldn't have any problem at all teaching your typing I'm a good typist, I've got a lot of experience. I says, I've tried to qualify myself for Gregg and there's no way I can. He says, Not to worry, I teach all the shorthand classes myself and we're going to eliminate shorthand from the curriculum, see.

So, I was put on as a typing instructor. And this was at Lowry Field. Uh, well, I did pretty good. I had my classes, uh, we had classes of the GIs come in and take this instruction where they go to other places and work in the uh, the military offices, you see. Well, we gave speed tests, we did this, that, and the other, you see, but anyway the old colonel who was in charge here was impressed by the progress my classes were making, so uh....

I had typing and military correspondence. This was a, a related subject. Well, in typing they were using the Gregg typing book that that used in the high school, see. Had nothing to do with military correspondence, see. Well, anyway, the uh colonel called me in one day and said, Dick, I want you, I want you to prepare a uh teaching guide, or a text, for military correspondence. We were using Army Regulation 340-15 which stipulated what you must do and all that, but it was not a teaching, uh, uh -- I don't know how they managed to teach military correspondence. Anyway, I took the, the uh AR 340-15, and then I reduced it to uh terms that er made it understandable, and uh made a progressive deal, and I did a good job of it, and the colonel was well-pleased, and not only that, uh, my classes were doing a little better than the other instructors' classes.

Civil Service, Fort Logan, Colorado

So, the war was coming, and that's why we were getting all this, see -- the war was on and it looked like we were headed for it so we were getting a lot of students coming in, and uh, first

thing we knew they decided to move, to move the clerical school to Fort Logan, which is the outskirts of Denver, at uh... So, anyway, by this time uh, uh, by this time, we had bought us a nice little brick house. Paid forty-five hundred dollars for it, I think. It was an English-type bungalow, um not a bungalow, it was an English-type brick house with double garage, basement, full basement. The only thing, it only had one bedroom. It was a beautiful little house. It had a great big front room and a little tiny uh, uh kitchen, and one bedroom, see. And then uh the garage was adjacent and the top of the garage was just outside the kitchen door and you could walk out on it and presumably they planned to build...

Well anyway, we had bought this house and we were living there when the order... No! We weren't either! We were, uh, when they decided to move to Fort Logan I was still living in Aurora. We had found us a place in Aurora and uh to backtrack a little bit, we were right on the outskirts of Aurora and to get... I could walk across the open fields from our house on Chester Street in Aurora to Lowry Field, right across the open field, see, a mile or so. And, uh, I did have a car but it was, but I would walk. So, anyway, uh, when we moved to Fort Logan I had to drive all the way from Aurora to Fort Logan every day and uh, shortly af...and, oh, when we finally decided, uh... What we did was there was a little village, it wasn't even a village, there were a few houses adjacent to Fort Logan that were uh dwelling places just outside the military complex there, and we found a vacant house there. It had outdoor plumbing, it needed a lot of work, but I was pretty good at fixing up houses uh, uh and apartments. I'd buy the, If they'd buy the paint I'd put it on, see. So, anyway we moved out to this little house and I was just about 4 or 5 blocks from the gate at Fort Logan.

Well, during this time, I say, the war hadn't started at this time, I don't believe, but we were ... One thing that happened, before we moved, the captain more or less in charge, we had this colonel but the captain was uh kind of taken charge, well, he called me over and said, "Dick, we're going to Fort Logan, we're going to run around the clock, eight hour shifts, three shifts a day, and uh, you're going to be division chief of the typing and military correspondence division. You won't have to teach but you'll have to manage it, see. Okay, that's a, that was a little bit of a promotion you see. Well, no, it wasn't either at the time, I didn't get any extra money right then.

Well, anyway, we moved out there and I settled down to my new job. One thing I did shortly after that we were using this Gregg typing book. Well it had nothing to do with military correspondence, so I uh I uh made up a military, a, a typing text for military correspondence. And I used... We still had to use the FR MJ UJ beginning exercises, as beginning exercises, but instead of "Dear Sir, Yours of the 15th, we cannot ship your kumquats today, " and so forth, we had military letters for them to type on instead of civilian letters, which was... So, they used my text. They mimeographed the thing and it was really hard to try to keep it open because it was all bound together with a staple

Anyway, it did the job. But anyway, we hadn't got to Fort Logan yet when my best friend there who was also a typing instructor confided in me that he was going to be division chief of the military correspondence division. I say, "Huh? Yeah?" Well they had, this captain that had told me was, uh, had moved and new captain had come in. And, and I think to this day that he thought that this other guy was me, you know. Anyway, I went in, uh, I went in... this was just right after we moved, I went in to see this captain, and said, before you came here I was told I was going to be division chief, and now you're telling me Floyd Hutch is? Well, anyway, he finally got it straight, but anyway it didn't help relations between me and my good friend there.

But anyway I was division chief. And we were on three schedules. And I had a nice new little house five miles away, and uh... Okay, we were expected to buy War Bonds. And about the minimum you could buy was thirty-five dollars a month. I was paying thirty-five dollars a month on my new house and I didn't have any thirty-five dollars a month to buy bonds. I had bought, the previous year I had bought a brand new 41 Ford, on a little down payment and a promise, you know. When I bought it I couldn't make any payments for three months, but they were desperate to sell anything to anybody. But anyway I had this nice 41 Ford that uh only had a few thousand miles on it. But you weren't going to be able to get tires, you weren't going to be able to get gas. What'd you need a car for, you can't buy anything for it, see? And I wasn't the only dumbbell at this time, a lot of our instructors had the same idea. I sold, I paid nine-fifty for this Ford, see, and the only thing it had, it had a radio, plus the four wheels and the steering wheel, you know. It didn't have any tape player or anything like that in those days. There was on little red light on the dashboard, that was the only light. But it was fine, Lord, you could drive all day at 70 miles an hour, it was a good old car. I sold that car for seven hundred and fifty dollars, and uh I had, I bought me a bicycle, see. Bicycled back and forth, five miles from my little house in uh, um... We were, see, we were the last house in uh Denver, 2695 South Grant. And we were the last house actually in Denver.

So, anyway, the bicycle thing you know didn't last, because cold weather came on and I got tired of it. Here I had sold my good car and I had, I had to get me a car. Well, I'm telling you, the, the, the cars I bought, I couldn't afford much. I bought an old Chrysler, a 1920 some-odd model and drove it for a while. I finally ended up with an old DeSoto that uh... I don't know, I had two or three in the meantime, but I ended up with this DeSoto, so, that uh, that's when I had, yeah, we uh had this little house on South, at 2695 South Grant. We had this big garage, we had this DeSoto wasn't much of a car but it was an improvement over what we'd been having.

Okay, back to, uh, Fort Logan. Uh, I say, we were on three shifts. I was a privileged character, I just usually went in on the regular shift, you know, but once in a while I had to go on the midnight shift just to supervise and see what was coming. And, uh, I uh, I had to, uh, Oh, Lord we had, we had classes of a hundred, believe it or not, teaching classes of a hundred. You had a big room here, you had desks and so forth for a hundred set up and here's the instructor standing up here with a microphone, with a typewriter, and "now, this is the way to get ribbon out of it" and so forth, okay, "and F bar F and J bar J" and so forth and then speed tests and all that, and then every now and then I would go and conduct a speed test. Our instructors gave speed tests but every once in a while I would go into their class and I would conduct a speed test.

Well, one thing I found out was that a lot of the instructors were fudging on it. But you, when you're grading a speed test any little error takes off, you know, so you lose so many words a minute if you make an error. One instructor we had was a uh world champion speed typist -- Norman Saxevig -- he was a... and they got him on just because he was a champion typist. Well, he was a champion typist because he could type one hundred words a minute, but as an instructor he was a wash-out! And so I would take, what I would do, I had the instructors turn their typing tests over to me and I would go through them to see just how legitimate they were. His students, they were full of errors! By the time I got through regrading them, he wasn't getting anywhere, see! But uh anyway he was a uh was a uh famous -- I mean up to a point -- well, who knows who the world's instructor is, uh, or I mean, who the world's fastest typist is.

Well, anyway, this went on, the war went on, the students kept coming in, the uh noncoms that were teaching, every month a uh promotion list would come through and if they didn't go from corporal to sergeant that month they were disappointed, if they didn't make uh, uh, sergeant --.

They were just upgrading these guys who were already on deck. A lot of the master sergeants went to OCS -- officers' training school -- and came back as second lieutenants, see, and uh so I mean this thing was just rising and rising and rising and we were getting busier and busier and busier.

So anyway, things went on like this until, all of a sudden out of the clear blue sky they decided to close the clerical school. Hot dog! So, I don't know just what the reason was, but one thing, one thing, before I closed the school, we had classes come in They used the clerical school as a dumping ground for people that had signed up and had no place to put em, so they sent em to clerical school just to warehouse em, see. We had classes of truck drivers with big thick stubby fingers that uh, and we had classes of, uh, uh, Georgia Negroes that uh were uh not necessarily the cream of the crop, you know, and some of them could, uh.... I mean, we had people that couldn't, couldn't do any.... What I did when they come in, a class come in, I give em all a speed test, whether they had typed or not, they could be, they could have made their living as a typer, with a typewriter, see. So we took the class average from anywhere from zero words a minute to 90 words a minute and I established a class average. Then when they graduated we had a class average to see how much -- Well, they'd go from an average of maybe 15 words a minute up to forty, fifty words a minute by the time we got through with them. So we had a good course going there.

Anyway, for whatever reason, the brass decided to close the school. And we had to let all the civilian instructors go. We were exempt from the draft, but eventually, they got around to us. I was called up twice to, uh, to report to the people that were --whatever they called it -- anyway, they turned me down on physical grounds. I had a perforated eardrum, and I had upset stomachs and stuff like that, so they didn't want me. But they took a lot of my civilian instructors who had been uh working as instructors at a pretty good civilian pay scale, to buck private [laugh] in the Army, at whatever they were paying then, it was quite a deal, see. And, I don't know how on earth I'd of done if I had got taken because my wife is not a kind, you know, an independent ... She was a housekeeper, and all that, but she had no business experience, she was.... We would have had a heck of a time getting by on military.... So, anyway, closed the school and uh we were laid off. Well, they had an agency that was specifically uh, uh to, to try to place people, because the men were all away and jobs were not hard to find at all.

Back to Lowry Field

They got me a job up in Cheyenne, Wyoming, modifying bombers for, uh This was long, late.... I forget how long I was at Fort Logan, a couple or three years or whatever it was, and uh they were, the war was beginning to wind down. Anyway, they had these bombers that they uh wanted modified for civilian use. I didn't know a darned thing about it, about modifying a bomber, but anyway they found me an apartment at uh at uh Cheyenne. We had to sell our little house, and I think we got forty-six hundred for it, I think I paid forty-five hundred for it. We had packed all our furniture. We had uh we were sitting there this evening with all our earthly goods packed in boxes and so forth, a job waiting for me next day in Cheyenne, an apartment in Cheyenne, when the phone rang. It was Lowry Field -- "We're going to reopen the clerical school. Do you want to come back?" [Laugh] I mean.... What! Of course I wanted to come back, I didn't know a darned thing about modifying bombers but I did know something about teaching, you see.

So [laugh], here we were, I had to, we were given a little grace time before we turned over. We had sold our house but the lady didn't have to have possession right away. So we went out and bought another house on Elizabeth Street over by City Park for about, I think it was seventy-five hundred dollars. We had sold for forty-six, see. Oh, boy!

Well, I was now a civilian, an unemployed civilian -- Well, uh, I was employed now at ... they took me out to Lowry Field and put me to work at whatever they could find for me. I would work in the uh military offices, or one thing they'd do, they had a lot of civilian secretaries, stenographers and so forth, so wouldn't it be a good idea to have this guy give them a refresher course, you know, to upgrade their skills. That's what it was all about. So, I would have classes of these young ladies, mostly young ladies, uh, and I would give em our standard course. And we'd improve their speed and their skill, and their knowledge of military correspondence cause that's what they were working on, you see. So uh anyway, I was just kind of at loose ends there. But I was uh, I was getting paid for what little I did, but one day I was having a class of uh of uh girls there, a typing class, and I noticed an Army colonel and a big important looking civilian at the back of the room, watching me. What's going on? Well, I just had to go on and teach my class, see. Well, they were observing me. And that was over, they came up to me, and uh this big important civilian was a uh he was the civilian training administrator for the Western Technical Training Command that uh, uh...The Western Technical Training Command included Lowry Field, Buckley Field, Shepherd Field -- it was a small command, but they had a number of bases. And they were putting on largely supervisor training courses, see. I was teaching elementary typing you see, but this was training for supervisors to increase their skills and to get better results from their workers and so forth. Well, this old boy had been a supervisor in a machine shop, see, I think was what it was, so they thought he'd be a natural. But his new job involved, it didn't involve working on machinery, it involved instructing, which he was not prepared to do.

But anyway, so they came up to me and said they needed an assistant uh, uh administrator uh, in this office. It was in the Central Savings Building in Denver, and uh, this guy had been back to Chicago and taken the standard course from an expert back there who put on this course. It was a well-thought-out course, they had uh... Well, back to movie reels, they didn't have tapes in those times, but they had movies and they had uh tests and they had a whole supervisor training course worked out, including time motion studies and all that, see. Okay, this guy had been back there and he'd picked up some information and learned some phrases that applied to this new job. Well, he didn't know how to use them, the heck of it is when uh... I don't know what this Army colonel did, he just went along for the ride anyway, but they were standing in the back of the room, there. Anyway, I get kind of mixed up here, I'm kind of digressing. Anyway, they wanted to know if I wanted to come and take this job. Well, school's not opening, I'm getting tired of this job here, so sure I'll come down. So I went in with the title of Assistant, uh, uh, Supervisor or Administrator for this project.

Okay, first thing they did uh, was to This was downtown Denver, see. We were right by the streetcar uh, uh yard, where the streetcars were all housed and all that, see. Okay, the first thing they did was send me back to Chicago to take this course. I went back on the train, and my wife was left at home to take care of the baby and all that. She didn't like this very much. But uh anyway I took the course and I came back and uh the first thing we had to do was to schedule a course. We had some people from I think Shepherd Field come up to Denver to take this course, instead of us going down there. So anyway, here, Mr. Bigshot here, was in charge. We went on this course and uh he taught some of them and I taught some of them, see. I had some of the people that were taking this course come to me and says "Mr. Tuttle," says, "We get along fine in your class, but that helper of yours, we don't know even what he's talking about and I don't think he knows what he's talking about." And he didn't! He had no idea what he was talking about, he was just parroting phrases he had heard. I thought he was the smartest man on earth because he was just talking way over my head. Turned out, it wasn't, I couldn't understand it because he didn't know what he was talking about. Anyway, it became obvious to the uh to the uh people running the uh personnel office there that this guy was uh just out over his head. So they called

me and said, look, we want you to be the civilian training administrator but we've got to get rid of this guy so we're going to close down, we're going to tell him we're closing this down, so he's out of a job. Well, he wasn't a dummy, he knew what was going on. Anyway, they let him go, and they made me the civilian training administrator. Okay, now, I was in charge, see, and uh I...

Bonnie: Was this a line of work that brought you to Salida?

Dick: Eventually. No, not really. No, no. It had nothing to do It had something to do with me coming to Salida, but not being that line of work.

So anyway, I was in charge, and uh I had an assistant uh, I had a secretary, boy, all the good stuff there, so I flew down to Amarillo Army Air Field I guess it was, and I put on a course down there, and uh I put on several of these courses. But uh they, they finally uh.... I did good. They had uh, we got pretty good pay by this time, you know. I had a CAF-9 -- clerical, administrative, and fiscal 9 -- rating. The job I had was rated for a CAF-11, which I should have gotten, see, and that's a pretty high rating. But our personnel officer, ours was the smallest command in the United States and they didn't think that uh that handling this small command was equivalent to handling one back east where they had a lot more work. So they, they kept me as a CAF-9 which I didn't think was right because the job was set up for the 11 rating and I should have got it but that's water under the bridge, see.

Starting a Business in Salida

Anyway, the war's coming to a close, the stenographers were coming in and uh filing their nails and going out for coffee and uh trying to find something to do and the whole thin was coming to a close and my wife was getting very unhappy about me running off to leaving her alone, see. She says, why don't we go into business for ourselves? I said, what business? Well, I don't know, but uh, I think we could do it.

So, uh, well, I didn't know what, wanted to stay with civil service, but I wanted to kinda keep her happy, see. So anyway, we started looking around with the idea of uh running a small business. Well, I'd never run a business, but I had worked in the store a little bit, see. So I started out looking for a store building. We kind of wanted a sporting goods store, and we went to Boulder, which was my first choice because I'd lived there, and we went to Loveland and Greeley and Longmont and all those little towns. There wasn't a vacant store building anywhere, see. One thing I did find, one place we went to, this guy had a store where.... You couldn't get civilian goods, you couldn't get anything. They were making war materials. You couldn't get roasters or toasters, you couldn't get any... You couldn't get rods or reels or guns or ammunition. Uh, so, he goes out and buy used furniture, take it back and refurbish it, make it look good, and sell it, and that was I said, I can do that! you know.

Then also down in Denver there were little souvenir shops, curio shops, Indian jewelry, beaded belts, uh, uh, uh, figurines, stuff like that, see. So we kind of got an idea of what we wanted to do, see. I did look at some businesses for sale in Denver -- including one where the guy went around and worked on these beer deals where you uh beer on tap. Well, I don't even drink beer. But anyway we didn't find anything so we're going to have to go buy, I had thought of buying a business but we were going to have to start one. Well, I remembered, we remembered ...

We couldn't find anything in these other towns. But the first year we were here we had gone on a fishing trip to Gunnison and we went through this little town of Salida, see. And, kind of, that was a nice little town. Okay, we're on gas ration stamps, I had just enough gas ration stamps to

get me to Salida and back. I'd like to have gone on to Gunnison and Montrose and so forth, but I didn't have, I couldn't get the gas to do it. So, uh, we came up to Salida and lo and behold there were six or seven vacant store fronts, ah, which should have been a tip-off, you know, that business wasn't all that good in Salida. But I talked to Mr. Koster, who is the insurance man and had this uh insurance company that is now the uh winery at the corner of Second and F Streets, and uh he had a vacant, what had been a vacant grocery store, Ben's Grocery, right next to his place, vacant. And in there, they'd used war bond rallies in there, there were all kinds of posters, buy war bonds and all that, and litter and clutter all over the place, but it was empty. Back in the back was a hand-operated elevator -- you pull on the rope and it would go down to the basement and up to the second floor, see, which was just a balcony, and uh well, we decided to take it. Rent was sixty dollars a month. Well, we was gonna have to...

Are you out of tape yet?

BL: No.

Okay, we were going to have to... Well, I have to back up, we had sold... In Denver we had sold our house and bought this house on Elizabeth Street, see. Well found out the guy next door had built the house, helped build the house, and they built it for four thousand dollars for it and I paid seventy-five hundred for it. And I thought, Oh, my gosh, when the war's over what am I going to do? So we decided to sell that house, see, which we did, and we were renting a place out at the edge of town, we had rabbits, we had chickens, we had all this good stuff. Clear out on the boondocks, there was pheasants around, so when we moved up to Salida we had been renting so we didn't have a house to sell, see -- I had to go back to that -- We came in our old DeSoto, which just barely made it over uh, over Kenosha Pass, you know. It didn't have much horsepower.

So, uh, when we came to Salida we found an apartment right across from the hospital, 433 East First Street I think it was. But it's the apartments right across from the hospital, sixty bucks a month. And sixty bucks a month for the uh, store! Well, uh, I had uh, I had a little money, I had sold our house and I had about five thousand dollars uh stashed away, and uh when, when we agreed to come up to Salida and start a store one thing I did was to, I bought out a guy's gun collection. And, uh, he had pistols and rifles and shotguns and all that stuff. There hadn't been a gun for sale in Salida since the start of the war, see. So I came up with, with a bunch of guns. We, we, I say, we bought Indian jewelry, we bought all these things, so we had some idea of what to stock with, and I was going to do this deal about buying.... I bought a trailer to go around and pick up used tables and chairs and so forth, and I advertised that I would buy it. We bought a lot of stuff. At our store, we had the, the front half was in what little merchandise we could get. Went out and bought showcases, ten dollars apiece. I bought a roll-top desk for ten dollars, which I eventually sold for five hundred dollars, and uh we, we, uh, we, I built....

What I did I went into this store and I built uh, uh fixtures, I built uh, display islands and shelving. One of the places in Denver that we had bought some of this stuff for had peeled slab decorations. And it was just real rustic looking, you know, and was just left kind of notched and blotchy you know, peeled slab, and I thought it was very attractive. So, I uh, first thing I did was I ordered....I didn't know where to go for peel, for slab to peel, and there was a lumber man I contacted, I told I need a load of slab. He brought me a load of stuff, some of it was a foot across and six inches deep, some of it was three inches across, anyway, I didn't have a power saw. I had a draw knife and a hand saw. And I cut these things down, I took a, I'd take these big pieces and I'd rule, I'd make a line on em, and I'd take a draw knife and cut the darned things down, and I built these uh, uh shelves and counters at the front of the store, and I did a real attractive job of it.

I had uh, and not only that I had the walls lined with knotty pine, and I had the wallpaper, a western motif wallpaper, with horses and cowboys and stuff like that. It was around for years and years and years, the wallpaper was,

So anyway, here we are in Salida, we got us a store, back in the back by the elevator, I had to take a scoop shovel to get some of the muck out back there. The basement was just a shambles. Uh, I had to spend probably two or three weeks just getting the place to where we could uh, where we could start to operate and then I had to build all these shelves and counters. It took me three months to get ready to open the store, see. I worked like a dog.

Civil service, I had what was it, 30, 26 days annual leave, 15 days sick leave, weekends off, regular paycheck coming in. Here, I had Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday work days, seven a.m. to six p.m., or whenever, not a day off, nothin'! I should have thought of some of that before I decided to be a storekeeper [laugh]. But, you know, hindsight is better than foresight. Anyway, I'd better take a sip of something....

BL: That building is gone now, isn't it? Isn't that building where Pueblo Bank is?

No, no, uh -- Where my store was? No, I'm this side of the street right next to the uh, 207 F Street, you know the uh the uh, uh corner building there with the rounded stone steps and it's a uh, it's a winery, so forth, you know? Well, my store was just this side of it, just one There's, well, there's a kind of a real estate office in there now, see, and then there's a couple of gift shops.

Before we were through -- well, I'll get to that later. Anyway, that's where we went in, it was an old grocery store, right next to a vacant, no, it wasn't ... yeah, there was, a vacant store next to, but I could hardly afford the one deal for sixty bucks a month, for crying out loud. So, anyway, uh, we had the apartment there, we had our store. We finally got ready for opening day, and uh, uh....

One thing, I did quite a lot of advertising, you know, and I remember one ad I put in the Mail -- I had seen somebody advertise what they called a losing out sale, and uh so I thought that was kind of cute, so I put in an ad "a losing out sale" and uh, the uh gal who took the ad thought I meant "closing out sale" [laugh] No, no, no! I'm not closing! This was after we got started a little bit.

Oh, okay.

Well, we opened the store, and we just barely had enough merchandise to uh make a start. And uh I probably mentioned before, there were no uh commercial goods available. We had to scrounge for what we had. So uh, started out uh part uh, uh used goods that we refurbished and sold because you couldn't buy anything. ... Anyway, we started out in the fall and spent about three months getting ready. We had a nice store. We had it decorated with peeled slab and so forth, very rustic looking. And it didn't take too long before uh, uh commercial goods became available again. And I had to decide whether to continue with the used furniture or just to go with the new. So we opted for the new because it was a lot less work in redoing some of the furniture as I was doing. Uh, so uh, we managed to hang on by our fingernails there for three or four years until we had uh time to work up a bit of business and as the time went on, we were heading for a sporting goods store. But uh, also we sold toys -- we sold a lot of toys at one time -- and jewelry and gifts and just a general, just a general variety store. But as time went on uh we moved out of our twenty-five ... we didn't move out, we expanded -- from our original twenty-five foot front into the next uh store, next to us, when it became available and finally into a third uh storefront, which

is the area right across from the uh Pueblo Bank parking lot. And, uh, we were there for, I was there for 33 years. As time went by, we established a good business. We, uh, in the latter years, why, we had a comfortable income. And we were able to buy a house and buy a car and things that we hadn't been able to do when we were first starting.

Uh, along with running this store -- I was never satisfied just to do one thing -- I uh at one time I established a wholesale fishing tackle route. I called on dealers within about a sixty, seventy mile radius and sold, sold fishing tackle. And another thing that I did just to keep busy uh was a little inventing. I invented and patented a uh, a -- what I called a reel lever. It was uh a uh an attachment to a fly rod with a trigger up by your trigger finger, because I always felt that reaching back to the strip lever of an automatic reel was pretty awkward. So with my reel lever you could just pull the trigger and I had a cable running through the handle down to the trip lever and uh it worked just swell. I got a patent on it, and uh I sold quite a few of them. In fact, eventually a Mr. Philipson of Philipson Rod Company bought out my patent and uh took over. And I got a few royalties until his plant burned down to the ground and he never got started again. [Laugh] So there went my chance to be a millionaire.

However, at that time, automatic reels weren't the thing. Spinning was coming on, spin fishing was coming on and there wasn't too much interest in fly fishing. I think now probably there's a lot more interest in fly fishing.

I had several other things that I, that I uh, uh worked. One was a real nice little deal. I made what I called a hook button, which was a uh cork, uh, an aluminum-backed cork with a slot in it you could slip over your treble hooks, and you could push the hooks through the cork and they wouldn't tangle any more. Sold a lot of those. Course, I had to do everything myself. I bought the presses, I bought the materials, I designed the packaging. You know, I couldn't turn this over to anybody else. So, anyway, that eventually died out because uh for one thing lack of interest and the fact that I was just overextended as far as time was concerned.

So, as I say, we were in the store for 33 years.

BL: Now, what year was this?

Well, uh, I can't tell you precisely. I don't remember exactly. It was right around the 50s or 60s that I was doing this. And uh, we, we continued to run the store and I say it continued to improve. We changed uh, uh, I built different counters and all as time went own. Uh, I'm getting ahead of myself here but as I say, on my 65th birthday in 1978 I retired from the County. I was a county commissioner for three, three terms. I uh turned 65 where I could take my Social Security and I had planned to just keep the store and, uh, I had a very good helper -- Charles Jay -- who I, we could always just take off and Charles would be there to run the store. But uh, uh, I was, I was thinking of keeping the store and we went traveling and so forth, and Chuck could always run the store.

Selling the Business

Anyway, Ed Tower [?] was the mayor -- he and I used to go to meetings together and so forth, and he said, Well, Dick, uh, why keep the store? Why don't you sell the store? You'll be free to do anything you... Well, that sounded good, so I sold the store to Chuck. And uh, Chuck was interested. And I said, Well, Chuck, there's no way you can buy the store with what I'm paying you, you know. Huh! He got the bank to back him and so forth, and at that time the uranium exploration was going on and we were looking for a big expansion. We were wondering where

we were going to find enough schools and all that uh to handle all the influx we expected.
[Telephone rings; interview pauses]

Well, anyway, I sold the store to Chuck and uh the first year he ran it he had the best year we'd ever had. We had, every year had been a little better than the last year, and uh Chuck was uh no different. But, after that first year, about that time, the Climax Molybdenum [says the word correctly and then pretends to stumble over it] went out, and we lost our biggest payroll and Gibson's came in and eventually Wal-Mart. And, uh, Chuck just didn't have the resources to keep it up so he had to close the store. It was there for about 40 years. And uh it is, it is no more. So, that's about enough about the business.

Salida City Council

Uh, going back in time then again to uh the early years, uh, we'll get into politics a little bit here. Uh, I didn't have enough to do keeping up the store so they talked me into running for City Councilman. And I don't remember -- it was in 46, 47, 48 somewhere in there -- I don't remember the year -- anyway, I was elected to, as, as a city councilman and uh at that time the uh, the Council met in a downstairs room with the jail right in the back of the meeting room. I can remember the police bringing people they'd collared in and they'd have to elbow their way past the council members to get to the jail. It was quite a little different from now. Anyway, I had never had any political aspirations as far as that goes but apparently uh somehow or other why people figured I was available for political purposes.

Uh, one thing that happened was that uh the uh the, the postmaster had resigned and uh back in those days it was up to the Republican party to uh propose a, uh, an acting postmaster. And they picked on me to, to uh take the job as acting postmaster. A lot different now, of course, But anyway, was having a tough time at the store and the pay was pretty good as far as that goes, so I took on the Assistant Postmaster job in the old post office.

Okay, the elections came up with uh, uh, Nixon, and uh Kennedy -- was it? -- Anyway -- Who was it Nixon ran against? -- Anyway, uh, after the election -- Now, had Nixon won I would probably have been postmaster, but the minute the uh Democratic candidate won I got a notice that uh Mr. Burt Mitchell was uh, was uh postmaster. Strictly political at that time. Well, Burt deserved it. He had been a Assistant Postmaster, he knew a lot more about running a post office than I did. But, nevertheless I had had ten years of civil service, and not only that but as I say I was having a tough time making a living back in those days. So, that was one thing that happened there with a political type of thing.

County Commissioner

Well, then a little later on they needed, the Republicans needed somebody to run for county commissioner, and for some reason or other they came to me again. Uh, Jimmy Sheehan had been the commissioner I think for four terms and was running for I think it was his fifth term. And he was a meter reader and he had the opportunity to go around and meet folks and talk politics and so forth. And uh however, I had a group of the, some of the younger citizens who wanted to see some changes made and so they got together and supported my candidacy. And we had parades and we had speeches and I wrote articles for the paper and I put up posters and did all that kind of stuff, went around and knocked on doors -- I hated it -- and uh, uh the uh time for elections came. We were up just about all night because they had to count the votes by hand. And I won by a landslide of maybe 35 or 36 votes or something like that [laugh]. Just barely squeaked in.

Okay, that was uh, that was in 67, that uh, the elections, and I took office in 68. Well, at that time I think the county had been, the uh, under control of the Democratic Party for years and years. Uh, all three of the current commissioners were Democrats. I don't think there was a single Republican in the Courthouse in those days. Uh, I'm pretty sure there wasn't. I was, uh, I was the uh [chuckle] new kid on the block, you might say. Well, oh, they were just finishing the uh construction of the courthouse annex, the old building. Had a new jail, a, a new courtroom and so forth. And when I entered on my duties as, as a county commissioner -- The commissioners had no meeting room at all. They kicked Mary Bratton out of her place at the Welfare Office and we held our meetings in there. You go in, you close the door, nobody gets in or out. We sit around and chew the fat for a while and Gino Conner calls his uh filling stations he was servicing and gets his business taken care of. Then we talk about the roads for a while, and then we go out to Al's out on King's Corners there and have lunch, you know. Just like it had been for years and years and years.

And, uh, I was, uh [huh] I didn't have much influence, I tell you, because I had the two incumbents, the Democrats against one lone Republican. But I do remember one incident when I kinda cost uh, uh, anyway I was telling about this little incident when I was a new commissioner I was going down the highway 285 and I noticed Gino Conner's uh crew over in private property grading a road. And I went over and asked the guys, Uh, what county road are you guys working on here? Oh, we're just working where we were told. And I went down to every crew and, Oh, we're just working where we're told, see. So Gene kindly called me and said, I understand you've been harassing my crew here, see. And I said, Gene, they were, you had your road crew working on private property and I don't think that's a legitimate use for a county road crew. So, that was just a little incident, see.

But uh, anyway, another little incident there, too -- before I even took office Jimmy Sheehan's old road crew, they didn't know what to think. They had been, they were all Democrats, too, they'd been hired by Jimmy, wondered what I was going to do, they were fearful for their jobs. And Joe Reno was uh their foreman. And I said, Joe, as long as they do their job why they've still got a job, they don't have anything to worry about. But one thing the uh, the uh, Gene and Art Weber, who was the other commissioner, Joe Reno told me, says, they're taking all the best equipment out of here and they're moving it all to Poncha Springs. Which, they were just going to leave me high dry, which is exactly what they did.

But anyway as time went on, we got along, we got along pretty well, and I learned a little bit about what it took to be a county commissioner. Oh, uh. It took quite a while.

Roads

Anyway, let's see, there are so many things that have... Uh I think that, I don't believe that either Gene or Art ran for office the next uh year and so uh, uh I was uh, well, I was the incumbent but then two Republicans were elected to serve with me, see. And uh I was elected Chairman of the Board because I had had some experience. There was George Dominick the Third, and um -- errr - - I know what, I'm trying to think -- George Dominick and uh -- oh, names don't come to me, I'll think of it after a while -- anyway they were two Republicans. So, about this time, uh, things were happening. Uh, the county had gone along for years just like it was in the 1890s, but the state and the feds started uh imposing a lot of things on the county. You had to have subdivision regulations, you had to have a master plan, you had to have all this, and so from what had been a sleepy little situation, we were just dumped right into all this uh, this new, new order, you see. And uh so we were kept busy.

When they had finished the uh the courthouse addition, we eventually, we got the old county courtroom for a commissioners' room. So we stocked it with old tables and chairs and uh second-hand typewriter and so forth and uh Joe McDonough [?] who had been county clerk was our clerk for the board of commissioners. Uh, a lot of things happened. Uh, one being at the time I took office, county roads, were uh there was no order to them at all. I think the roads were numbered as they came into the county. You could have county road one here in Salida, county road number two would be up in Buena Vista somewhere, number three somewhere they had happened to put a new road in. So what we did, we renumbered the county roads -- the one hundred series, the two hundred series, the three hundred series -- uh, from the three uh commissioner districts, see.

Another thing, up to this time there had been no rural addresses. If you had to find somebody out on the farm, you, you went down to the red barn and turned right and you'd see a group of cottonwood trees and he'd be sittin' back there -- and you just had to describe. So we got together with the post office and uh by this time Bob Stotler and uh had come on as an administrator, and uh, a county administrator, and also uh --oh, it was -- Donna Nevins, she came on as a clerk. And those two, those were the best employees anyone would ever want to have. And uh, Bob worked with me on this road numbering situation and all and he was just wonderful, and so was Donna. Uh, I often thought if I just had those two as co-commissioners I could have, we could, we could have done a lot. But they helped educate me. Donna particularly. She was pretty sharp, she was a historian and, and she got me out of trouble a lot of times. [19:37]

So, uh, let's see, where do we go next? Uh, we, oh, one thing we did, uh, the county had its own hot-mix plant, we made our own paving. We had the hot-mix plant, the rock crusher, the lay-down machines and all that to, to make our asphalt, and uh we paved a lot of roads with good.... When I first came in, the county roads, they had used what they called pentaprime, which was a uh, something to hold the dust down. It also made a thin crust, just looked like paving but it would break through. So the county roads were gravel roads with this thin crust and all these potholes where you'd broken through the crust, see. So paving the roads helped with that situation quite a lot, as well as the numbering and so forth. Uh, we did, we paved uh a good many miles of roads. And we had our new road numbering system.

Waste Management

Another thing that required our attention, uh, was the waste disposal situation. Uh, when I first took office and for many years before then, uh what you did if you had uh, your, your garbage or your waste and so forth you took it out to the alley and burnt what you could in your backyard incinerator. And if you couldn't do that you took it out to the dump out the edge of town, and you burnt what was left of it if you could. We had a hollow there, out the edge of town that was, they'd been filling for years, and it just went up a little bit of a time, layer after layer, because there wasn't a whole lot went in there. But, here they come with this edict about no burning. You couldn't anything -- you couldn't burn leaves, you couldn't burn tree branches, you couldn't burn anything -- so you were expected to uh cover each day's deposits with I think six inches of soil, or something like that, at the end of each day, you see. Well, it didn't take but just a very short time for what had been building up, this hollow had been building up and still had a lot of room out there, it was full to overflowing. I mean when you started uh, uh compacting and burying everything that you had been burning, I mean, you got a problem. So we had a problem. You had dumps all over the county. Poncha Springs had a dump. Buena Vista had a dump. Uh, the farmers all had their private dumps and uh trash was everywhere. Oh, uh, anyway, it seemed to me that that was something that should be a county-wide deal, so I talked Mayor Tauber into uh conceding control over the dumps to the county, so we took over from the towns. And we established a county-wide waste disposal situation.

Uh, problem there was, of course, that uh, the people were so used to having a dump close to them, when we went to look for a place to put a, to put a dump, not in my back yard, a nimby situation. But we finally got in a deal with the BLM to but the dump out there where it is halfway between Buena Vista and Salida. And of course one problem there was that uh the people were not used to going 10 or 12 miles to dump, or to pay somebody else. They were used to taking it out to the And, uh, anyway, we made a deal with the BLM. And uh one thing that we did which was rather revolutionary, I think it was Alamosa that had a system where they uh, uh compacted their trash. They had the uh, they had the machinery to kind of make a mulch out of the uh, uh waste material, and it came out kind of like paper mache. And it didn't smell, it didn't breed rats, it was uh, you didn't have to cover it, uh, it was a wonderful deal. But it did have some drawbacks. Well, anyway, we decided after, after looking into all this to install this hammer mill. It's a whole bunch of hammers that beat this stuff to death, you see. And we built a shed out here halfway between Buena Vista and Salida, and installed this thing.

One problem that we had there was that you fed, you fed all this uh the boxes and the garbage and whatever, into this big bin and then there was a uh, a lift that carried it up and it had to make a right-angle turn. We could back the trucks in and uh this stuff that had been pounded would be dumped right into the back end of a truck, you see. The only problem was that uh that, uh, we took it as far as we could until we hit the end of a building and then we had to make a right angle turn and stuff would pile up there and uh it would cause things to kind of break down. What we should have done was to knock a piece of the wall out and run it straight on out, but we didn't do that. And uh so while for the time that we were using it this pulverized material took up, oh, maybe a tenth of the area that the uh unprocessed stuff would, and it was clean, it wouldn't burn, it didn't attract flies, or anything. But there were problems, that these hammers that they hammered with had to be uh always the same. So about once a week they had to take them into the shop and weld em up and they had a scale there that they had to weigh each hammer to make sure they were all the same weights, you see. That, and that right-angle deal.

So anyway -- course, you couldn't run a stove or refrigerator through there, it was just for the softer stuff, so we still had to use a cat or other tractor, and we uh we did, we got, we bought a John Deere uh, uh -- well, it was a, uh, it was actually made for compacting trash and it worked so well that we were having problems with the hammer mill and we just ended up going to the, uh, to processing this stuff with the tractors, you see. And I think, [laugh] one thing that was a problem I can remember, we had a whole bunch of brush loaded on us and uh I went by and saw it and I -- he was expected to compact all that darned brush and cover it with dirt, and I told my foreman Joe, Boy it would sure be tough if that stuff would catch fire, wouldn't it be? And lo and behold, next morning it HAD caught fire, and [laugh] it was all burnt up. Fortunately, none of the EPA guys happened to be going by at that time. I didn't tell him to burn it, but somehow or other it caught fire. An act of God, I called it. [laugh]

Anyway, it had its problems. But the building is still there, the uh, the uh, in the same location. They've taken on more land from the BLM. One thing, though, that we did differently, we reasoned that everybody that used the landfill, that everybody in the county produces trash and everybody pays taxes, so we just figured that we would make it free to everybody except out-of-county people, no charge. They'd just go dump, see. And we'd take care of it. Well, this had, one thing, you didn't have to have somebody there weighing your trash, you didn't have to hire somebody to collect the fees, and it worked just fine. It so happened that after I left office the commissioners eventually put on a, a uh, fee and the weigh stations and all and the charges, and uh that was their -- I had my way, they had their way, and uh --

Anyway, while this was going on, well, Buena Vista -- you know, I was talking about Salida all this time, and Poncha Springs had one. Buena Vista's dump was right at the end of Main Street, I mean just a block or so from the last store. And at that time Main Street was a gravel road. It had been, I don't remember when they finally got it paved but I'm pretty sure at that time it was still a gravel road. And, uh, though, they had of course, uh, they had to come in the county system, too. And now, I don't know -- it was a terrible thing to have that right next to town. But uh I'm sure that when they started hauling their stuff to the central dump why, it was a big improvement.

Holman Avenue

Uh, one thing that I think I'm as proud of as anything I might have done was uh constructing Holman Avenue. Uh, getting from Highway 50 up to the Mesa involved going to almost downtown and then back up to the Mesa, and I'd had it on my mind for some time and I just didn't get on it until finally I said, well, boy, I found out somebody was getting ready to build on at the top there right where the road would go. And uh I thought well I'd better get on it. Well, Joe McDonough, who was working for, was a surveyor, so he surveyed the road that now goes, that now is Holman Avenue. Back in those days we called it Tuttle's Turnpike [laugh]. But anyway we got the road through and off highway 50 and right by the swimming pool and up on the Mesa and I think that was, that was uh something that really needed to be done and uh, it was paved and all. They had to put a little crook in it to make it come our right. Harry Witter was going to build a home right there where we came out, see, and I hated to do it to Harry but we said, Harry, that's where the road's going to come out, and he still had a large patch that he could have built on, but he had his heart set on this bigger plat, see, but he gave up on that and built his place on two or three blocks on down the, down the road. But, uh.

Oh, let's see, where are we?

BL: When did you uh get involved with the Senior Center?

Oh, that comes, that comes later, quite a little later. I'll get to that.

BL: I was just worried about the time.

Okay, well, we've got a lot to talk about here!

Plane Crash

Let's see. Oh! Uh, what was I...? Uh.... Okay, we had uh this Board, George Dominick and uh myself and uh -- why can't I think uh of the other -- I have an awful time with names! Bruce Davidson, for heaven sake. Uh, anyway, uh another election and we got two Democrats. We got Eddy ... what was it ... from up at Buena Vista, oh... I wish I could think of... Anyway, I had two Democrats to work with, see, and uh they uh they hadn't been in office a very long time when uh, uh, ... they were getting, well, they elected me chairman of the board because I had the experience, see, and I had been chairman most of the time. Uh, Eddy Holman and Eddy Kruscynski, that was it. Okay, about that time there was a uh a uh commercial flyer that was starting a little airline here. He had taken some of the dignitaries on some introductory flights and Eddy Kruscynski anyway, he was on all these flights. Now, the board chartered his plane to take us to Denver for some kind of a meeting. And we had a full load. I think the plane held seven, something like that, and uh it was a windy day when we went to Denver and coming back leaving Denver I didn't think we were ever going to get enough altitude to get over the mountains but we

finally did. Came into Salida airport and we couldn't land straight in, we came kind of sloughing in just an at angle. And, cause the wind was just terrific.

Well we were scheduled to go to a water meeting the next day down in Durango area, and uh we had the, the uh, president of the lower Arkansas -- well, their water district -- and he, he had to go attend this meeting, and I should have gone as chairman of the board but I was getting too far behind in my work. My wife didn't want me to go. And I asked Eddy Kruscynski, do you really want to go, Eddy? You've been on too.... Yeah, he wanted to go. And I think if he hadn't said that, no he'd stay home, I'd have gone. Anyway, the morning they were take off, early in the morning, why Ken Baker our attorney called and said, Dick there's a plane down up over Poncha Pass and I think it may be ours. And it was. They had taken off in this terrible wind. They had the weight of a whole load of fuel and a full planeload, and they crashed and I mean everybody was immediately incinerated.

And then, they uh, well, I lost my board. I couldn't do a thing as a single citizen, so we had to uh, we had to get two more commissioners then, real quick like. Well, the governor was up, Governor Love, and he, uh -- I talked with him and I said, I'm going to need some help. We've got George Dominick here who's already been a commissioner, he could help, but he's a Republican. And the Gov... said, Well, if you can keep your people happy I think I can keep the Democrats happy. He was a Democrat, of course. So, anyway, uh, that didn't work out. Some, some busy body had to tell him that he thought George Dominick was practically senile and that did it. The Governor said, Well, if you can't keep your party together why I'll have to, uh, I'll have to appoint two Democrats, which he did.

This gets uh [laugh]... We had Mark Vanderpool, and we had Pat uh uh --oh, oh, what's -- Pat Slaughter. Well, how much time do you got left here?

BL: I'm not sure. ... But I think we've been going for 45 minutes. Before, I think it was an hour and 15 minutes, and we were told we have to do 2 hours. But go ahead -- if we have to do another one, we have to do another one.

DT: Well, okay. So here I was, again, I was in the minority. I was the one Republican with two Democrats and uh Mark Vanderpool had been a County Assessor and he was was a real nice guy. Pat Slaughter was George's wife and she was elec-- appointed, they were both appointed, they weren't elected -- but uh Pat came in there uh, uh, she was one of these uh gung-ho ladies that uh -- I don't know, what do they call, woman's lib types -- and she was going to straighten that courthouse out and get rid of the good ole boys and all that. So she proceeded to make herself just about as unpopular as she could be. She tried to run the Sheriff's office, she tried to run the Commissioner's office, she.... When she came aboard, Mark Vanderpool told me, you're the only one with experience, we've got to elect a chairman, he says, I'll vote for you. So uh it came time to uh, to uh, conduct our business and to elect our officers, Mark, "I nominate Dick Tuttle." Pat just like to hit the ceiling. She was sure if there was two Democrats we'd have a Democrat. She, "I nominate myself!" She actually did! So we took a vote and I was elected chairman again, two to one. Well, anyway, Pat was just a kind of thorn in my side all the rest of my time there. And uh I eventually, my third term was coming to a close and uh I pretty well decided not to run again.

So, anyway, that was the end of uh of my career. I would like to say -- away from the county, but in county business -- one thing that we accomplished uh was the creation of the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. The uh state had been divided into twelve planning and management regions, and uh Chaffee County was under Pueblo in Region 12. Well, we were up

in the Lake or Chaffee or Fremont or Custer county, we knew we'd be the tail of the dog, that uh Pueblo would get everything, so we petitioned for a thirteenth district, and we got it. So uh we had to form a new council of governments and uh several of us commissioners, we got together and uh we created the uh, a board. I was the original chairman of the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. And uh Frank Cervi was the uh, the uh executive officer. So, we had our own, our own, uh, uh, planning and management region, which we have to this day, and uh I was actually the guy that, that named it, cause we were trying to think of names for it. Well, it was the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. That name stuck and uh it is continuing of course.

During my term of commissioner, let's see, I had several honors that uh I can mention. I had, uh, oh -- [rustling papers] Just a few of the honors that I accumulated, had to climb up on the steps to look at my plaque because I can't read them from down below. Anyway, in 1966 I was Chairman of the Chaff-- Chamber of Commerce. And, uh, in 73 and 74 I was the uh, uh, Chairman of the Council of Governments. And uh also the chairman of the Southern Colorado Economic Development District. And in 78 I was uh voted Man of the Year, and 99 uh I got the Cornerstone Award, so that's my braggin' --- HA! -- I got these plaques lined up on the wall and you can't even see them. I had to get up on the steps to see what they were for!

Okay, that just about covers it. There's a lot more I could throw in, but...

Senior Center

BL: Yes, we're just about out of time. But, what year did you take over as the head of the Senior Center?

DT: Oh, the Senior Center, yes, this is another thing I was gonna ... I went, I retired in 78. When I came back in 79 I was urged to join, to run for a seat on the board, on the Senior Center Board. And uh I was elected to the board and immediately elected chairman, with all my "vast experience" and all that stuff, and I've been chairman of the board ever since for something like 25 years. They can't find anybody else to put enough, to or whatever, to qualify -- yeah. So, I uh I've been uh more or less managing the senior center ever since then.

Uh, I finally got, I just did it voluntarily for a few years before we even moved in the building. We got this building built. I was eventually, my job was recognized as Director of the center. And then uh they came on with this rummage deal which was just a part time little deal for some of the ladies but it held on and held on, and uh once a week the ladies get together to sell the rummage, and they tried to make maybe thirty-five dollars on it. However, during the week this stuff comes in and the little ladies were not here so I inherited the task of taking care of everything that came in. And eventually when the last little lady resigned I said, This is foolish. Because I was doing 99 percent of the work, well maybe only 95 percent, and I'd have to go to the lady who had been the "manager" see, and so I appointed myself manager. And I was the only one who had any business experience and so forth, so uh I built the shelves and the counters and the this and that and the other. And uh more or less on the basis of my experience as a storekeeper, uh converted a little kind of a hobby into a, into a fulltime business. And now, right now we're enjoying the best sales that we've ever had. We're, we're looking at -- sometimes we take in a couple of thousand dollars in one month, or five, six hundred dollars instead of thirty-five dollars, and it pays probably at least two thirds at least of the expense of operating this place. So, uh, right now I don't know how we got along without it because, uh, uh, uh we, I also rent out the center -- we get a few thousand dollars that way -- and then we have some money invested. Those two don't quite cover the, the entire costs, so we've got some money invested the interest on which takes care of

our needs, and we uh have substantial investments, and uh I think we're very fortunate. We don't get any tax money at all. At one time we did get a little from the city and the county, but we don't get anything from anybody. We're strictly on our own, and we built this building. We've kept this up. And we don't owe anybody and we don't have to have pancake breakfasts or anything to pay our bills, see. But we do have to sell a lot of rummage.

BL: So this has always been the Senior Center.

DT: Well, yes. It was built specifically as a Senior Center with, uh, in my view I wanted it to be a community center as well. I mean, it's basically a senior center, but I like it to be a community center. When they have some events that really effects everybody, I do charge for it but I don't charge for these, for public interest deals. I say, I want it to be a, a hub of activity for the community. The community supported us -- why, when we were building this building we got gifts, we got all kinds of help, so we owe the community and the community has really helped the senior center and I think we've helped the community.

BL: Well, listen, like I say, uh -- I think we could just go ahead and run this out, and I thank you very much, Mr. Dick Tuttle, for these two interviews. It's been very interesting, and I'm sure that as it will be into the Archives at the Library, that it will be history.

DT: [Laugh] If anybody ever thinks to turn it on!

[End]

TRANSCRIPTION, ORAL HISTORY -- Dick Tuttle 09/10/2003 and 09/24/2003

Recorded by Bonnie Lathrop

Transcribed by Jackie Powell and Dymond Hobson

BL: I am Bonnie Lathrop, for the Salida Oral History Project. I am interviewing Dick Tuttle at his office, which is the senior center here at Salida, Colorado. We're conducting an unstructured narrative type of interview, and it's focusing on important events and people in an individual's life. So, you go ahead and tell me about your parents, you start.

DT: Well, 'scuse me, I'm not in very good voice today. [Phone rings.] And there we go.

BL: Okay, we'll go ahead. We were interrupted there for a little while, so you go ahead.

DT: Okay, Well, as I was saying I'm Dick Tuttle but once you've heard my voice you know who I am and say, Hello, Mr. Tuttle. I've got one of those voices, I guess, and uh I'm not sure why they want to know all this about me but anyway I'll tell you what I know about it. The family roots are back in a little town in Illinois, Atlanta, just like Georgia ... [paper crinkling]

BL: Now, they'll probably be able to pick up that crinkling noise.

Childhood

DT: Oh, okay. All right. Uh - My dad's name was Guy Harry Tuttle and my mother's name was Clara Campbell and they were born and raised in the Atlanta, Illinois region. I wasn't born in Atlanta. My dad uh moved to uh Omaha, a little suburb of Benson, Omaha, and I was born there in Benson on May 3, 1914. Uh, I think uh Dad and Mom had made a trip to Colorado and they fell in love with the uh mountains and uh when they uh they sold out and moved to Boulder, where my dad was a partner in a uh undertaking funeral and furniture establishment, Kelso and Tuttle. This was in Boulder.

Okay, well I went through the first four grades of school in Boulder. And I roamed the hills of Flagstaff and uh the Flatirons and uh all the uh the uh Boulder campus and uh, I had a wonderful time. I loved the mountains and I pretty much had the little town of Boulder to uh roam around in. Well, you should see Boulder now, [laugh] I wouldn't be able to find my way around I'm sure.

So, anyway, uh after uh four years we were in Boulder the partnership Dad had kind of fell apart and he was at loose ends. But fortunately, back in Atlanta the lady whose husband ran the funeral parlor there died and she needed someone to carry on the business. So she sent for my dad and he moved, we moved back to run the funeral parlor in Atlanta.

BL: Can I interrupt here now just a little bit? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

DT: Well, okay, yeah, to get back to the family. I had an older sister, Marian Rose Tuttle, and uh she ended up Marian Rose Irish. And I have a uh, a uh brother, a younger brother, three years younger, Thomas Harry Tuttle, and a uh much younger brother -- he was 14 years younger than I was -- James Marvin. Both Marian and Thomas are deceased and Jimmy is the only living relative, really, that I have.

So, uh, okay, we're back in Atlanta now. Well, Atlanta, Illinois, is in the middle of the cornfields. I mean there's not a mountain in sight and to get to any kind of a hill and other kid we had to hike out to the Boy Scout camp where there was a hilly area. And a Boy Scout apparatus set up there, and uh I used to love to go out there. We'd hike out there about seven miles -- and play around in the hills and then hike seven miles back. I was much younger then, of course, I think I couldn't do it now.

But, uh, anyway, I went through, I got an education. I got the fifth grade, I started into the fifth grade and I got a teacher named Ella Businger and uh I went through the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades -- graduated, I even got a diploma, eighth grade graduation, and then I attended Atlanta Community High School. Okay, this was uh the upper portion of the school building. The grades were on the lower floor and the high school was up on top. So, uh, I went through the, the four years of high school and uh I enjoyed it. We, we had a very small school. My class was about 15 people, so uh -- are we goin' now? Still goin'?

BL -- Yeah, we're goin'.

DT: Okay, real good. We had uh of course a typical small town. And back in those days we didn't have swimming pools, we didn't have ball parks, uh, we did have athletics but uh when we went to play an out of town game we had to rely on the parents to load up their cars and take the team and take the spectators to the, to the game. And, as I say, we made our own amusement as far as that goes. We had our typical high school plays and, uh, with a class of 15 I turned out to be the uh big man on the campus. Yeah, I was the president of the junior and senior class, and had a usually a leading part in the plays, and graduated as valedictorian. I had a lot of competition there, of course (laugh) but uh anyway from high school I went on to Illinois Normal State University at Bloomington, which is about 25 miles away. Well, it isn't actually Bloomington, it's in Marvel which is a suburb of Bloomington. So uh I didn't know what I was going there for. I didn't know anything but going to school and this was during the Depression. You just couldn't go out and get a job, there weren't any jobs. Believe it or not I went to college on about five dollars a week. It took about two or three dollars for a room. And I did light housekeeping. I had the other two dollars to feed myself for the week. And this was from money I saved from carrying papers and mowing lawns and washing cars and that type of thing when I was a kid growing up.

So, anyway I started out as an art major in college because I liked to draw and doodle and so forth, but uh I got in there -- I'd never had an art lesson in my life, our school didn't have them -- but I went to college and I was in with kids who had had art lessons for seven or eight years and I was hopelessly behind. I soon discovered that I wasn't uh I wasn't meant out to be an artist. So, um, I had to get out of there and get to working because everything was tough -- you had to get out and start making money. So I uh I transferred to the rural education course because you could get a two-year diploma in rural education, and you could get out and uh, uh start earning a living. That 'uz what I did -- I had to take extra credits, 'n so forth, to make up for what I lost, but anyway -- well, that's the way I met my wife, Ruth. It so happened that one of these make-up classes I was in was a bunch of freshmen and she was one of them and I kinda liked her looks and we got to going together and uh the upshot of it was eventually we stayed together. It's been now -- what is it -- sixty-nine years now, I think. So, uh, uh -- I think I'm going to keep her, she's been on probation all this time but I think I'll keep her now.

Early Adulthood

Teaching

Anywhere, let's see now, where was I? Okay! I got through the rural education course and I was ready to face the world and uh my only recourse was to be a rural school teacher -- that's what I was trained for. Well, there weren't too many rural school jobs open. There were a lot of rural schools, but right outside of Atlanta about three miles was a little school called Walnut Grove, and uh they had a vacancy and I had some friends on the school board 'n' so forth -- everybody knows everybody -- anyway the upshot of it was I got the job. This is a country school. We only had eight months of school because the kids had to get out and help with the crops and so forth. So uh I started out, I earned seventy dollars a month for eight months -- that was five hundred and sixty dollars.

BL: Was this a one-room schoolhouse?

DT: This was a one-room schoolhouse. I was the only teacher. I was the janitor. I was the recreation director. I was everything. I had about thirteen or fourteen kids, and believe it or not I

had one kid at least in every grade one through eight. So -- [laugh] -- one thing -- I don't know, the little first graders, you give them something to do like coloring or something like that, to keep them busy and in two minutes they'd up there, 'What can I do now, Mr. Tuttle? Well, anyway the eighth graders -- and the seventh and the eighth graders kinda helped take care of the little kids, you know. And uh in a rural school like that, when you're sitting there listening to all the recitations, by the time you get to the next grade you've heard it all, it's just a repeat, you see. So, it, uh, it was great. I mean I had some real bright kids and I had some real dumb kids. And, uh -- in fact, I inherited a bunch of kids from another school who had been getting passing grades to uh just to move them along, and by the scant standards I was going by they were earning thirties and forties and fifties. 'Cause I graded them according to, if they took a test and they only got four out of ten right, they got a forty. Well, I think they got held back. But, anyway, as I say, I did have kids that were really brilliant, and uh, it was an interesting experience.

Uh, problem was, when summer came, there you were out of a job and you had four months to get by. Well, jobs were scarce. I started out that uh that first summer working as a helper at my uncle's hardware store. And, uh, boy I'm tellin' you, they put me to work. They, they sold a little bit of everything. I helped put binders together, I drove tractors around, I didn't wait on the trade but I swept the floors, I think I earned probably fifteen or twenty dollars a month on that, see.

Well, I was working there one day and an old farmer came in who lived two or three miles out in the uh country -- it was an old German family -- and uh he was looking for somebody to run a tractor, to plow some corn. Okay -- uh he wanted to know, he wanted to know if I could drive a tractor and I says, "Yeah, I can" because I had there in my work there [unintelligible] I knew how to drive a tractor but I didn't know a darned thing about plowing corn, see. So anyway what this involved see was getting out there at four o'clock and uh helping milk the cows and helping get everything ready for the day's work, then going in and, for breakfast, and there was this German housewife and her two daughters -- and they were both rather, rather corpulent, I mean, uh, they were well fed, I'll say -- and I never sat down to any meal like that. We had pancakes, we had rolls, we had s... -- anything you can think for breakfast, we had it. And I had, I was a young guy, I had a uh, a uh pretty good appetite.

So, they took me out and they got me started plowing corn. Well, I plowed up a lot of corn! {Laugh} But I finally go onto it, where I could drive a the tractor through the rows and plow up the weeds instead of corn. Then we'd come in at noon and then we really had a meal, you see! This was -- uh -- I just can't describe it. We just had just loads and loads of food. Well, I was earning a dollar and a half a day, and I put in from four in the morning to about six o'clock at night and I coulda had supper with 'em, too, but I had to go home to my fairly new wife, the lady I told you about that I met in class, and my - uh... While I was working on the farm she gave birth to our first daughter. And uh, we named her Janet Lynn, Janet Lynn Tuttle, and uh I, uh, I had worked all day on the farm and then when she was in the hospital I would go be with her and then I went back to work the next day and I don't think I went to bed that night at all. [Laugh]

Well, anyway, uh that job didn't last too long because a gentleman in town was uh interested in having somebody uh sell some uh gas stove appliances that um some manufacturer had wanted done. Anyway, I was a little tired of farming by that time, was the hardest work I'd ever done in my life, and so I went to sales for this man as, on commission. Well, I beat the bushes around Atlanta, Illinois, in and out, and uh I demonstrated and I cajoled and I - I tried my darnedest to get somebody to uh buy, to buy these wares. Well, finally somebody did -- my dad. [Laugh] Father was my best customer. When I was a kid selling magazine subscriptions, you'd sell em to your grandma and your aunts and your parents. Other than that you didn't do too well, see.

So, anyway, I spent that first summer just uh doing what I could and we uh we got by pretty well.

I forgot to mention that my first year of teaching I not only got married but I bought three cars in succession. I needed transportation to get out to Walnut Grove, you see, and the roads around Atlanta were mud roads unless they'd been graveled. Okay, the road out there, the first mile was gravel, the rest was mud. A friend of mine, a guy that worked for my dad, had an old Model T Ford sedan that had been in their garage for several years because he couldn't drive it. And it only had, I don't think it had over five thousand miles on it, so he wanted to know if I wanted to buy it for thirty-five dollars. Well, it was just made to order for getting out in the country, and uh when you get rain you uh sink in about twelve inches you know but the old Ford'd keep going. When you get snow the same way -- you'd go right through mud 'n' snow. I didn't have thirty-five dollars, but I had to pay him out of one of my first paychecks so I got this uh this Model T Ford and I was dating my uh wife-to-be, and I was very self-conscious. I was a young buck here and I was a-driving a big old-fashioned car that -- I was embarrassed with it!

So anyway what I did I traded it off on a Chevy that was uh probably had a hundred thousand miles on it and uh but it looked better, you see. So anyway, the uh -- I never had to put a nickel on the Model T but on that Chevy I'm telling you, it nickeled and dimed me to death.

Okay, um... that lasted for a while, but my uncle who was also in the uh hardware store, they had a car agency and he had taken in a beautiful Hupmobile uh roadster. It had, uh, it didn't have a rumble seat. It had the trunk in the back. It had the tire set in the front fender, wow it was a beauty. And I think he wanted three hundred dollars for it. Well, I had to have that car. So, uh, I approached him about trading off my Chevy on this Oldsmobile -- uh, no -- Hupmobile, I got an Oldsmobile now -- anyway he didn't want to sell it to me because he knew I didn't have any money but uh he didn't have any other buyers and he was a good guy so he let me take the car. He took my old Chevy. Well, this had been driven by a little old lady who rode the clutch and uh the clutch was shot and the carburetor needed changing, and once it was running it was beautiful. The Chevy nickeled and dimed me to death, this car dollared me to death.

So anyway we had this car and uh when we were first married there, we uh found a little house -- oh, I might as well digress here a little bit -- my wife also, I was teach... my second year teaching, she had got a job teaching at an elementary school at a little town, Mechanicsburg. It was -- I thought Atlanta was a little town but Mechanicsburg was a real little town, see. Anyway, she uh got this job teaching one of the grades -- I forget which. Well, that soon uh, uh, that soon didn't work out because after about a month or two she found she was pregnant with our first child. [Laugh] So she had to give up her job. She came to live in Atlanta and we rented a little house for eight dollars, eight dollars a month, see. Well it had no, it, it had no insulation. Somebody donated us a kitchen stove, it was cracked and smoked up the place. Somebody else donated us a hard coal stove -- one of these with an isinglass top you could look in and see these coals a-glowing. It was real nice, but it took about an hour or so to get it going, see.

That winter -- I'm retrogressing here -- that winter, 19 uh 35, this was 1936 -- it was one of the coldest winters they'd ever had. One way-below-zero of storm after another and we were freezing to death in that little house. There was no insulation, and the pipes froze up, so we went a got a room at my parents' house which.... And we stayed with them for several months, and then as finally the baby was about due a lady had a real nice house and she had to leave, all nicely furnished, that she rented us for twelve dollars a month. Well, this was beautiful, and we lived there when our first daughter was born, you see.

Civil Service in Illinois

Well, this being summertime, no uh, no income coming in, and I wasn't doing too good at selling stoves and stuff, we had to sell our Hupmobile. We were out of, out of transportation. Okay, well, the third year – I had the country school for two years – the third year the fifth grade in town became, needed a teacher. That's where I started school when I moved back to Atlanta in the fifth grade. Okay, well I had a relative or two on the school board, so forth, anyway I got the job. And, uh, I went to work as a fifth grade teacher. And, I'd only been there about a couple of months when I got a call from the Civil Service Commission – I had taken a civil service test just for the fun of it, as a clerk-typist, cause in high school I was, I was a good typist, won the speed test and all that, you see – I had to borrow a typewriter from one of the teachers to practice up for the test. Well, anyway I took this test and forgot all about it you might say because I figured you had to have an uncle who was a Senator or something to get a civil service job. Well, anyway here comes a letter, uh, where they say they have a job up in the U.S. Engineer's office in Rock Island, Illinois, which is on the Mississippi River and right across the river from Davenport. Well, I had to decide did I want to teach school or did I want to get into civil service. Well, civil service sounded, sounded wonderful.

Well, what we did, my wife, she wasn't teaching now and I brought her in to substitute for me and I went up to Rock Island to look the job over. I signed on and spent a week. I decided that's what I wanted to do.

So, we moved to Rock Island, didn't have a car - my parents brought me up there with a trailer full of stuff -- and uh we had to live in a uh -- when we first got there, Ruth and I and little Janet Lynn, who was just a baby at the time of course, had a room in a boarding house. Okay, uh, uh this was fine. I had a job. It paid a hundred -- it paid twelve-sixty a year -- a hundred five dollars, whatever it was, yeah, a hundred and five dollars a month -- that was fine, that was a big improvement. I think I was making about eighty-seven dollars a month in the fifth grade. But, rents up there were, were terrible. There was even twenty-five dollars a month for a mediocre apartment or maybe thirty-five for a pretty nice one, see. So, we were having problems. We, we had no car, we had to, I had to get to work. I either had to walk -- it was two or three miles to walk -- or take a taxi -- I couldn't afford a taxi.

So, anyway, uh what happened we got on in this boarding house and I went out prospecting for an apartment. Found a place, went out in the evening, when it was sorta dark, and I looked over this place. It was nicely set up, and uh there weren't any lights or anything in it, but the arrangement was fine, so I said I'd take it. I think it was something like eight dollars a week, or whatever, which would have kind of pressed my budget. But anyway we took it. So we moved down there with what few belongings we had, and first night out the baby was in her crib and I looked over and there was a rat on her uh the uh baby's bed. Well, that wasn't too encouraging. So, we moved out of there in a hurry.

We got a room with some elderly lady I think for a while. Anyway, this goes on and on. We finally moved into an apartment, an apartment to a house over in Davenport, across the river. And we had an upstairs apartment. We had a little furniture. We had a stove that we had had in Atlanta -- anyway, had a little bit of furniture but not much, we had this little upstairs apartment. And here I was about five miles away from... I was working in the U.S. Engineer's Office, which is at what they call the clock tower, on the island between Rock Island and Davenport. One thing I did I borrowed my brother's bicycle, I bicycled to work and back. Well, it cost a dime to ride the streetcar or the bus, but dimes were pretty scarce you see.

Well anyway my job there, I was a clerk-typist. I was a good typist, but I wasn't much of a clerk, and uh I thought I was doing really good, but uh the boss, uh the engineers, uh that were working on the Mississippi -- it's a lock and dam uh project -- nine-foot channel project, they called it -- Anyway, the big boss didn't like the way I kept the uh the records and all. But while I was there I had fun. I had to go out with a, with a road crew to take inventory. We had these work crews out on the river, uh, surveying, all that sort of stuff, and uh one of the employees was a, what they call a motor man, he drove a, was a boat operator, so he took me by boat up the Mississippi and down the Mississippi to all of these uh survey crews, see. This was, this was great. I had a heck of a good time on that. But anyway, uh....

BL: Was working for the Civil Service what brought you to Colorado, then?

DT: What was that? I...

BL: Was working for the Civil Service what brought you to Colorado?

DT: Uh, yes it was. I'll get around to that. It was what brought me to Colorado. In fact, if I hadn't taken that civil service test I probably -- well I might have ended up in Colorado but I probably would have been a schoolteacher all my life, you see.

So uh anyway the uh -- I said the boss didn't care for my bookkeeping but we had a typing, a correspondence section in the tower there, who their whole business was to do typing for all the other offices where they didn't have adequate typists. Well, I was a good typist, so I got along real fine there. And while I was at it, I had friends there -- see I was, I was a junior typist, twelve-sixty a year. A junior stenographer made fourteen- forty a year, and I had a friend who was a steno-typist -- machine shorthand, see. Well he had taken a correspondence course from LaSalle Extension University and, I thought, well that's for me, so I signed up at five dollars a month or whatever it was for uh, uh -- course, I didn't have any money to buy this course. Everything -- you were expected to buy thing everything on payments back then, nobody had an cash, of course -- so I took this steno-type course and eventually took an exam and I qualified as a uh as a, well as a senior typist and as a uh junior stenographer, whatever.

So anyway, uh, while I was, uh I was still in the correspondence section, and I'd take more tests. I took tests for uh for uh stenographer and lo and behold I get an offer to, for a job uh at Chinook Field, Army, uh the Army Air Corps at Chinook Field at Rantoul, Illinois. Well, it didn't take much for me to decide this paid more -- it paid like fourteen- forty instead of what, I was makin' a little more there, but one thing was that I thought that the Air Corps was growing and growing -- and I thought, there's a growth industry there, it'd be good to get in. So, again, we stored our furniture, we took the job, stored our furniture in Rock Island, and there again we found ourselves in a boarding house down in Rantoul while I took my job, and I was a stenographer to the Assistant Commandant of the field. Uh we were right next door to the Commandant's office, but I was working for the Assistant Commandant.

Okay, uh, the pay was better. We eventually found an apartment here. In fact, we went through three or four apartments -- we were always on the move. One of em was an old lady that had spare bedrooms and so forth and uh, we, we lived there for a while, but it didn't work out. We went to another apartment where the baby cried so much that they ran, they ran us out. [Laugh] Finally we ended up, we had a nice apartment with a nice young couple, an upstairs apartment, and uh, it was the best, best situation we had. And I was only, I was within walking distance of, of the Chinook Field. Still didn't have a car, see.

So anyway, we had a little bit of furniture, and I went to Champaign-Urbana, which is the closest big town, and bought a refrigerator because the old ice-box that we were using leaked, and my landlord came up one day and said, hey, the dripping from your ice-box isn't doing our, our uh downstairs any good. The water was going right through the floor from the old ice-box. So we had to buy a refrigerator.

Well, okay, uh, uh, this went on. I took courses, did a little court reporting, did all kinds of typing work, and all that, for this office. While I was there, then -- leading up to getting back to Colorado -- a, uh, a memo came through from the uh, from Lowry Field, saying they needed instructors at the Department of Clerical Instruction at Lowry Field, the Army Air Corps. It wasn't the Air Force at that time, it was the Army Air Corps. Well, I was an instructor, and I was, uh, they taught, they taught uh Army clerks, they taught them typing and shorthand and uh, uh all the other Army record-keeping and all that, see.

Well, the thing of it is, this job was for teaching typing and shorthand, see. I was a machine shorthand operator, and I didn't know Gregg shorthand from anything. Well anyway, in the Army when you get a military letter, it goes to one person, he puts his endorsement on it, hands it right to the letter, it goes on to the next level, they put their endorsement on it, and it -- you might have fifteen endorsements to a letter which is a chronological record of where it's been, see.

Civil Service, Lowry Field, Colorado

Well, anyway, they were set to approve my, my request to, uh, my application for this job as an instructor in Lowry Field. Well, this uh master sergeant in the commandant's office, He put an endorsement on it stating that I was not a Gregg shorthand, that I didn't know Gregg shorthand. So, I put an endorsement on the letter saying I would endeavor to qualify myself as a Gregg instructor, see. I got myself a Gregg shorthand book, and I studied, and I made the little squiggles and dots, and I wasn't getting anywhere at all. And I finally just -- no way I could teach shorthand, see. But anyway, they had me hired, in Denver, for Lowry Field, as instructor. I don't know to this day how it ever worked out, but anyway we loaded up.

I had a -- we, we got a hold of a Ford V-8 by this time, a '36 Ford V-8. And I -- first I had a, I bought a Model A Ford but that didn't last -- I traded it in on this Ford V-8. Okay, we had to get to Denver and this was right at the end of the year, with vacations and so forth. I loaded up an, my kid brother had an empty house trailer that he had used, I had used, my Dad had used, in demonstrating these bottled gas stoves and stuff, see. So I borrowed his trailer and put uh overload springs on my old Ford -- it was still a little car, it was a V-8, but it was a little car, and uh we had two GI's with us that were transferring to Lowry Field, we had two passengers, see, they helped a little paying the expense, see. And we took off for Denver right in the latter part of December. We fought headwinds all the way there and I couldn't get that V-8 Ford over 35, 40 miles an hour with that load. We'd stop at a motel. It'd cost us three or four dollars a night to stay in a motel, you see. Finally got to Denver right uh just before New Years Day.

Okay, we had to stay in a motel temporarily, we went looking for, I think we stayed in a motel for several days. When we got there the school was closed down for the holidays. I had to go back to Lowry Field to sign in, right after New Years Day. Well, I did have a car, I could get there. I had a date with the chief instructor, a Mr. Frank... See they had civilian instructors as well as GI instructors, and they were all on the same basis. You'd have a, you might have a staff sergeant for an instructor in one class and a civilian in another class.

So, I had ah, Mr Frank Fish was the chief instructor, and uh he was in charge of uh all of the, all of the, uh, well, the general instruction, see. So, I went in with fear and trembling because I didn't know if I had a job or not. I had gone on and taken a chance, and I said, Mr. Fish, I says, I've got a confession to make, I said, I wouldn't have any problem at all teaching your typing I'm a good typist, I've got a lot of experience. I says, I've tried to qualify myself for Gregg and there's no way I can. He says, Not to worry, I teach all the shorthand classes myself and we're going to eliminate shorthand from the curriculum, see.

So, I was put on as a typing instructor. And this was at Lowry Field. Uh, well, I did pretty good. I had my classes, uh, we had classes of the GIs come in and take this instruction where they go to other places and work in the uh, the military offices, you see. Well, we gave speed tests, we did this, that, and the other, you see, but anyway the old colonel who was in charge here was impressed by the progress my classes were making, so uh....

I had typing and military correspondence. This was a, a related subject. Well, in typing they were using the Gregg typing book that that used in the high school, see. Had nothing to do with military correspondence, see. Well, anyway, the uh colonel called me in one day and said, Dick, I want you, I want you to prepare a uh teaching guide, or a text, for military correspondence. We were using Army Regulation 340-15 which stipulated what you must do and all that, but it was not a teaching, uh, uh -- I don't know how they managed to teach military correspondence. Anyway, I took the, the uh AR 340-15, and then I reduced it to uh terms that er made it understandable, and uh made a progressive deal, and I did a good job of it, and the colonel was well-pleased, and not only that, uh, my classes were doing a little better than the other instructors' classes.

Civil Service, Fort Logan, Colorado

So, the war was coming, and that's why we were getting all this, see -- the war was on and it looked like we were headed for it so we were getting a lot of students coming in, and uh, first thing we knew they decided to move, to move the clerical school to Fort Logan, which is the outskirts of Denver, at uh.... So, anyway, by this time uh, uh, by this time, we had bought us a nice little brick house. Paid forty-five hundred dollars for it, I think. It was an English-type bungalow, um not a bungalow, it was an English-type brick house with double garage, basement, full basement. The only thing, it only had one bedroom. It was a beautiful little house. It had a great big front room and a little tiny uh, uh kitchen, and one bedroom, see. And then uh the garage was adjacent and the top of the garage was just outside the kitchen door and you could walk out on it and presumably they planned to build...

Well anyway, we had bought this house and we were living there when the order... No! We weren't either! We were, uh, when they decided to move to Fort Logan I was still living in Aurora. We had found us a place in Aurora and uh to backtrack a little bit, we were right on the outskirts of Aurora and to get... I could walk across the open fields from our house on Chester Street in Aurora to Lowry Field, right across the open field, see, a mile or so. And, uh, I did have a car but it was, but I would walk. So, anyway, uh, when we moved to Fort Logan I had to drive all the way from Aurora to Fort Logan every day and uh, shortly af...and, oh, when we finally decided, uh... What we did was there was a little village, it wasn't even a village, there were a few houses adjacent to Fort Logan that were uh dwelling places just outside the military complex there, and we found a vacant house there. It had outdoor plumbing, it needed a lot of work, but I was pretty good at fixing up houses uh, uh and apartments. I'd buy the, If they'd buy the paint I'd put it on, see. So, anyway we moved out to this little house and I was just about 4 or 5 blocks from the gate at Fort Logan.

Well, during this time, I say, the war hadn't started at this time, I don't believe, but we were ... One thing that happened, before we moved, the captain more or less in charge, we had this colonel but the captain was uh kind of taken charge, well, he called me over and said, "Dick, we're going to Fort Logan, we're going to run around the clock, eight hour shifts, three shifts a day, and uh, you're going to be division chief of the typing and military correspondence division. You won't have to teach but you'll have to manage it, see. Okay, that's a, that was a little bit of a promotion you see. Well, no, it wasn't either at the time, I didn't get any extra money right then.

Well, anyway, we moved out there and I settled down to my new job. One thing I did shortly after that we were using this Gregg typing book. Well it had nothing to do with military correspondence, so I uh I uh made up a military, a, a typing text for military correspondence. And I used... We still had to use the FR MJ UJ beginning exercises, as beginning exercises, but instead of "Dear Sir, Yours of the 15th, we cannot ship your kumquats today, " and so forth, we had military letters for them to type on instead of civilian letters, which was... So, they used my text. They mimeographed the thing and it was really hard to try to keep it open because it was all bound together with a staple

Anyway, it did the job. But anyway, we hadn't got to Fort Logan yet when my best friend there who was also a typing instructor confided in me that he was going to be division chief of the military correspondence division. I say, "Huh? Yeah?" Well they had, this captain that had told me was, uh, had moved and new captain had come in. And, and I think to this day that he thought that this other guy was me, you know. Anyway, I went in, uh, I went in... this was just right after we moved, I went in to see this captain, and said, before you came here I was told I was going to be division chief, and now you're telling me Floyd Hutch is? Well, anyway, he finally got it straight, but anyway it didn't help relations between me and my good friend there.

But anyway I was division chief. And we were on three schedules. And I had a nice new little house five miles away, and uh... Okay, we were expected to buy War Bonds. And about the minimum you could buy was thirty-five dollars a month. I was paying thirty-five dollars a month on my new house and I didn't have any thirty-five dollars a month to buy bonds. I had bought, the previous year I had bought a brand new 41 Ford, on a little down payment and a promise, you know. When I bought it I couldn't make any payments for three months, but they were desperate to sell anything to anybody. But anyway I had this nice 41 Ford that uh only had a few thousand miles on it. But you weren't going to be able to get tires, you weren't going to be able to get gas. What'd you need a car for, you can't buy anything for it, see? And I wasn't the only dumbbell at this time, a lot of our instructors had the same idea. I sold, I paid nine-fifty for this Ford, see, and the only thing it had, it had a radio, plus the four wheels and the steering wheel, you know. It didn't have any tape player or anything like that in those days. There was on little red light on the dashboard, that was the only light. But it was fine, Lord, you could drive all day at 70 miles an hour, it was a good old car. I sold that car for seven hundred and fifty dollars, and uh I had, I bought me a bicycle, see. Bicycled back and forth, five miles from my little house in uh, um... We were, see, we were the last house in uh Denver, 2695 South Grant. And we were the last house actually in Denver.

So, anyway, the bicycle thing you know didn't last, because cold weather came on and I got tired of it. Here I had sold my good car and I had, I had to get me a car. Well, I'm telling you, the, the, the cars I bought, I couldn't afford much. I bought an old Chrysler, a 1920 some-odd model and drove it for a while. I finally ended up with an old DeSoto that uh... I don't know, I had two or three in the meantime, but I ended up with this DeSoto, so, that uh, that's when I had, yeah, we uh

had this little house on South, at 2695 South Grant. We had this big garage, we had this DeSoto wasn't much of a car but it was an improvement over what we'd been having.

Okay, back to, uh, Fort Logan. Uh, I say, we were on three shifts. I was a privileged character, I just usually went in on the regular shift, you know, but once in a while I had to go on the midnight shift just to supervise and see what was coming. And, uh, I uh, I had to, uh, Oh, Lord we had, we had classes of a hundred, believe it or not, teaching classes of a hundred. You had a big room here, you had desks and so forth for a hundred set up and here's the instructor standing up here with a microphone, with a typewriter, and "now, this is the way to get ribbon out of it" and so forth, okay, "and F bar F and J bar J" and so forth and then speed tests and all that, and then every now and then I would go and conduct a speed test. Our instructors gave speed tests but every once in a while I would go into their class and I would conduct a speed test.

Well, one thing I found out was that a lot of the instructors were fudging on it. But you, when you're grading a speed test any little error takes off, you know, so you lose so many words a minute if you make an error. One instructor we had was a uh world champion speed typist -- Norman Saxevig -- he was a... and they got him on just because he was a champion typist. Well, he was a champion typist because he could type one hundred words a minute, but as an instructor he was a wash-out! And so I would take, what I would do, I had the instructors turn their typing tests over to me and I would go through them to see just how legitimate they were. His students, they were full of errors! By the time I got through regrading them, he wasn't getting anywhere, see! But uh anyway he was a uh was a uh famous -- I mean up to a point -- well, who knows who the world's instructor is, uh, or I mean, who the world's fastest typist is.

Well, anyway, this went on, the war went on, the students kept coming in, the uh noncoms that were teaching, every month a uh promotion list would come through and if they didn't go from corporal to sergeant that month they were disappointed, if they didn't make uh, uh, sergeant --. They were just upgrading these guys who were already on deck. A lot of the master sergeants went to OCS -- officers' training school -- and came back as second lieutenants, see, and uh so I mean this thing was just rising and rising and rising and we were getting busier and busier and busier.

So anyway, things went on like this until, all of a sudden out of the clear blue sky they decided to close the clerical school. Hot dog! So, I don't know just what the reason was, but one thing, one thing, before I closed the school, we had classes come in They used the clerical school as a dumping ground for people that had signed up and had no place to put em, so they sent em to clerical school just to warehouse em, see. We had classes of truck drivers with big thick stubby fingers that uh, and we had classes of, uh, uh, Georgia Negroes that uh were uh not necessarily the cream of the crop, you know, and some of them could, uh.... I mean, we had people that couldn't, couldn't do any.... What I did when they come in, a class come in, I give em all a speed test, whether they had typed or not, they could be, they could have made their living as a typer, with a typewriter, see, So we took the class average from anywhere from zero words a minute to 90 words a minute and I established a class average. Then when they graduated we had a class average to see how much -- Well, they'd go from an average of maybe 15 words a minute up to forty, fifty words a minute by the time we got through with them. So we had a good course going there.

Anyway, for whatever reason, the brass decided to close the school. And we had to let all the civilian instructors go. We were exempt from the draft, but eventually, they got around to us. I was called up twice to, uh, to report to the people that were --whatever they called it -- anyway, they turned me down on physical grounds. I had a perforated eardrum, and I had upset stomachs

and stuff like that, so they didn't want me. But they took a lot of my civilian instructors who had been uh working as instructors at a pretty good civilian pay scale, to buck private [laugh] in the Army, at whatever they were paying then, it was quite a deal, see. And, I don't know how on earth I'd of done if I had got taken because my wife is not a kind, you know, an independent ... She was a housekeeper, and all that, but she had no business experience, she was.... We would have had a heck of a time getting by on military.... So, anyway, closed the school and uh we were laid off. Well, they had an agency that was specifically uh, uh to, to try to place people, because the men were all away and jobs were not hard to find at all.

Back to Lowry Field

They got me a job up in Cheyenne, Wyoming, modifying bombers for, uh This was long, late.... I forget how long I was at Fort Logan, a couple or three years or whatever it was, and uh they were, the war was beginning to wind down. Anyway, they had these bombers that they uh wanted modified for civilian use. I didn't know a darned thing about it, about modifying a bomber, but anyway they found me an apartment at uh at uh Cheyenne. We had to sell our little house, and I think we got forty-six hundred for it, I think I paid forty-five hundred for it. We had packed all our furniture. We had uh we were sitting there this evening with all our earthly goods packed in boxes and so forth, a job waiting for me next day in Cheyenne, an apartment in Cheyenne, when the phone rang. It was Lowry Field -- "We're going to reopen the clerical school. Do you want to come back?" [Laugh] I mean.... What! Of course I wanted to come back, I didn't know a darned thing about modifying bombers but I did know something about teaching, you see.

So [laugh], here we were, I had to, we were given a little grace time before we turned over. We had sold our house but the lady didn't have to have possession right away. So we went out and bought another house on Elizabeth Street over by City Park for about, I think it was seventy-five hundred dollars. We had sold for forty-six, see. Oh, boy!

Well, I was now a civilian, an unemployed civilian -- Well, uh, I was employed now at ... they took me out to Lowry Field and put me to work at whatever they could find for me. I would work in the uh military offices, or one thing they'd do, they had a lot of civilian secretaries, stenographers and so forth, so wouldn't it be a good idea to have this guy give them a refresher course, you know, to upgrade their skills. That's what it was all about. So, I would have classes of these young ladies, mostly young ladies, uh, and I would give em our standard course. And we'd improve their speed and their skill, and their knowledge of military correspondence cause that's what they were working on, you see. So uh anyway, I was just kind of at loose ends there. But I was uh, I was getting paid for what little I did, but one day I was having a class of uh of uh girls there, a typing class, and I noticed an Army colonel and a big important looking civilian at the back of the room, watching me. What's going on? Well, I just had to go on and teach my class, see. Well, they were observing me. And that was over, they came up to me, and uh this big important civilian was a uh he was the civilian training administrator for the Western Technical Training Command that uh, uh....The Western Technical Training Command included Lowry Field, Buckley Field, Shepherd Field -- it was a small command, but they had a number of bases. And they were putting on largely supervisor training courses, see. I was teaching elementary typing you see, but this was training for supervisors to increase their skills and to get better results from their workers and so forth. Well, this old boy had been a supervisor in a machine shop, see, I think was what it was, so they thought he'd be a natural. But his new job involved, it didn't involve working on machinery, it involved instructing, which he was not prepared to do.

But anyway, so they came up to me and said they needed an assistant uh, uh administrator uh, in this office. It was in the Central Savings Building in Denver, and uh, this guy had been back to

Chicago and taken the standard course from an expert back there who put on this course. It was a well-thought-out course, they had uh... Well, back to movie reels, they didn't have tapes in those times, but they had movies and they had uh tests and they had a whole supervisor training course worked out, including time motion studies and all that, see. Okay, this guy had been back there and he'd picked up some information and learned some phrases that applied to this new job. Well, he didn't know how to use them, the heck of it is when uh... I don't know what this Army colonel did, he just went along for the ride anyway, but they were standing in the back of the room, there. Anyway, I get kind of mixed up here, I'm kind of digressing. Anyway, they wanted to know if I wanted to come and take this job. Well, school's not opening, I'm getting tired of this job here, so sure I'll come down. So I went in with the title of Assistant, uh, uh, Supervisor or Administrator for this project.

Okay, first thing they did uh, was to This was downtown Denver, see. We were right by the streetcar uh, uh yard, where the streetcars were all housed and all that, see. Okay, the first thing they did was send me back to Chicago to take this course. I went back on the train, and my wife was left at home to take care of the baby and all that. She didn't like this very much. But uh anyway I took the course and I came back and uh the first thing we had to do was to schedule a course. We had some people from I think Shepherd Field come up to Denver to take this course, instead of us going down there. So anyway, here, Mr. Bigshot here, was in charge. We went on this course and uh he taught some of them and I taught some of them, see. I had some of the people that were taking this course come to me and says "Mr. Tuttle," says, "We get along fine in your class, but that helper of yours, we don't know even what he's talking about and I don't think he knows what he's talking about." And he didn't! He had no idea what he was talking about, he was just parroting phrases he had heard. I thought he was the smartest man on earth because he was just talking way over my head. Turned out, it wasn't, I couldn't understand it because he didn't know what he was talking about. Anyway, it became obvious to the uh to the uh people running the uh personnel office there that this guy was uh just out over his head. So they called me and said, look, we want you to be the civilian training administrator but we've got to get rid of this guy so we're going to close down, we're going to tell him we're closing this down, so he's out of a job. Well, he wasn't a dummy, he knew what was going on. Anyway, they let him go, and they made me the civilian training administrator. Okay, now, I was in charge, see, and uh I...

Bonnie: Was this a line of work that brought you to Salida?

Dick: Eventually. No, not really. No, no. It had nothing to do It had something to do with me coming to Salida, but not being that line of work.

So anyway, I was in charge, and uh I had an assistant uh, I had a secretary, boy, all the good stuff there, so I flew down to Amarillo Army Air Field I guess it was, and I put on a course down there, and uh I put on several of these courses. But uh they, they finally uh... I did good. They had uh, we got pretty good pay by this time, you know. I had a CAF-9 -- clerical, administrative, and fiscal 9 -- rating. The job I had was rated for a CAF-11, which I should have gotten, see, and that's a pretty high rating. But our personnel officer, ours was the smallest command in the United States and they didn't think that uh that handling this small command was equivalent to handling one back east where they had a lot more work. So they, they kept me as a CAF-9 which I didn't think was right because the job was set up for the 11 rating and I should have got it but that's water under the bridge, see.

Starting a Business in Salida

Anyway, the war's coming to a close, the stenographers were coming in and uh filing their nails and going out for coffee and uh trying to find something to do and the whole thin was coming to a close and my wife was getting very unhappy about me running off to leaving her alone, see. She says, why don't we go into business for ourselves? I said, what business? Well, I don't know, but uh, I think we could do it.

So, uh, well, I didn't know what, wanted to stay with civil service, but I wanted to kinda keep her happy, see. So anyway, we started looking around with the idea of uh running a small business. Well, I'd never run a business, but I had worked in the store a little bit, see. So I started out looking for a store building. We kind of wanted a sporting goods store, and we went to Boulder, which was my first choice because I'd lived there, and we went to Loveland and Greeley and Longmont and all those little towns. There wasn't a vacant store building anywhere, see. One thing I did find, one place we went to, this guy had a store where... You couldn't get civilian goods, you couldn't get anything. They were making war materials. You couldn't get roasters or toasters, you couldn't get any... You couldn't get rods or reels or guns or ammunition. Uh, so, he goes out and buy used furniture, take it back and refurbish it, make it look good, and sell it, and that was I said, I can do that! you know.

Then also down in Denver there were little souvenir shops, curio shops, Indian jewelry, beaded belts, uh, uh, uh, figurines, stuff like that, see. So we kind of got an idea of what we wanted to do, see. I did look at some businesses for sale in Denver -- including one where the guy went around and worked on these beer deals where you uh beer on tap. Well, I don't even drink beer. But anyway we didn't find anything so we're going to have to go buy, I had thought of buying a business but we were going to have to start one. Well, I remembered, we remembered ...

We couldn't find anything in these other towns. But the first year we were here we had gone on a fishing trip to Gunnison and we went through this little town of Salida, see. And, kind of, that was a nice little town. Okay, we're on gas ration stamps, I had just enough gas ration stamps to get me to Salida and back. I'd like to have gone on to Gunnison and Montrose and so forth, but I didn't have, I couldn't get the gas to do it. So, uh, we came up to Salida and lo and behold there were six or seven vacant store fronts, ah, which should have been a tip-off, you know, that business wasn't all that good in Salida. But I talked to Mr. Koster, who is the insurance man and had this uh insurance company that is now the uh winery at the corner of Second and F Streets, and uh he had a vacant, what had been a vacant grocery store, Ben's Grocery, right next to his place, vacant. And in there, they'd used war bond rallies in there, there were all kinds of posters, buy war bonds and all that, and litter and clutter all over the place, but it was empty. Back in the back was a hand-operated elevator -- you pull on the rope and it would go down to the basement and up to the second floor, see, which was just a balcony, and uh well, we decided to take it. Rent was sixty dollars a month. Well, we was gonna have to...

Are you out of tape yet?

BL: No.

Okay, we were going to have to... Well, I have to back up, we had sold... In Denver we had sold our house and bought this house on Elizabeth Street, see. Well found out the guy next door had built the house, helped build the house, and they built it for four thousand dollars for it and I paid seventy-five hundred for it. And I thought, Oh, my gosh, when the war's over what am I going to do? So we decided to sell that house, see, which we did, and we were renting a place out at the edge of town, we had rabbits, we had chickens, we had all this good stuff. Clear out on the

boondocks, there was pheasants around, so when we moved up to Salida we had been renting so we didn't have a house to sell, see -- I had to go back to that -- We came in our old DeSoto, which just barely made it over uh, over Kenosha Pass, you know. It didn't have much horsepower.

So, uh, when we came to Salida we found an apartment right across from the hospital, 433 East First Street I think it was. But it's the apartments right across from the hospital, sixty bucks a month. And sixty bucks a month for the uh, store! Well, uh, I had uh, I had a little money, I had sold our house and I had about five thousand dollars uh stashed away, and uh when, when we agreed to come up to Salida and start a store one thing I did was to, I bought out a guy's gun collection. And, uh, he had pistols and rifles and shotguns and all that stuff. There hadn't been a gun for sale in Salida since the start of the war, see. So I came up with, with a bunch of guns. We, we, I say, we bought Indian jewelry, we bought all these things, so we had some idea of what to stock with, and I was going to do this deal about buying.... I bought a trailer to go around and pick up used tables and chairs and so forth, and I advertised that I would buy it. We bought a lot of stuff. At our store, we had the, the front half was in what little merchandise we could get. Went out and bought showcases, ten dollars apiece. I bought a roll-top desk for ten dollars, which I eventually sold for five hundred dollars, and uh we, we, uh, we, I built....

What I did I went into this store and I built uh, uh fixtures, I built uh, display islands and shelving. One of the places in Denver that we had bought some of this stuff for had peeled slab decorations. And it was just real rustic looking, you know, and was just left kind of notched and blotchy you know, peeled slab, and I thought it was very attractive. So, I uh, first thing I did was I ordered....I didn't know where to go for peel, for slab to peel, and there was a lumber man I contacted, I told I need a load of slab. He brought me a load of stuff, some of it was a foot across and six inches deep, some of it was three inches across, anyway, I didn't have a power saw. I had a draw knife and a hand saw. And I cut these things down, I took a, I'd take these big pieces and I'd rule, I'd make a line on em, and I'd take a draw knife and cut the darned things down, and I built these uh, uh shelves and counters at the front of the store, and I did a real attractive job of it. I had uh, and not only that I had the walls lined with knotty pine, and I had the wallpaper, a western motif wallpaper, with horses and cowboys and stuff like that. It was around for years and years and years, the wallpaper was,

So anyway, here we are in Salida, we got us a store, back in the back by the elevator, I had to take a scoop shovel to get some of the muck out back there. The basement was just a shambles. Uh, I had to spend probably two or three weeks just getting the place to where we could uh, where we could start to operate and then I had to build all these shelves and counters. It took me three months to get ready to open the store, see. I worked like a dog.

Civil service, I had what was it, 30, 26 days annual leave, 15 days sick leave, weekends off, regular paycheck coming in. Here, I had Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday work days, seven a.m. to six p.m., or whenever, not a day off, nothin'! I should have thought of some of that before I decided to be a storekeeper [laugh]. But, you know, hindsight is better than foresight. Anyway, I'd better take a sip of something....

BL: That building is gone now, isn't it? Isn't that building where Pueblo Bank is?

No, no, uh -- Where my store was? No, I'm this side of the street right next to the uh, 207 F Street, you know the uh the uh, uh corner building there with the rounded stone steps and it's a uh, it's a winery, so forth, you know? Well, my store was just this side of it, just one There's, well, there's a kind of a real estate office in there now, see, and then there's a couple of gift shops.

Before we were through -- well, I'll get to that later. Anyway, that's where we went in, it was an old grocery store, right next to a vacant, no, it wasn't ... yeah, there was, a vacant store next to, but I could hardly afford the one deal for sixty bucks a month, for crying out loud. So, anyway, uh, we had the apartment there, we had our store. We finally got ready for opening day, and uh, uh....

One thing, I did quite a lot of advertising, you know, and I remember one ad I put in the Mail -- I had seen somebody advertise what they called a losing out sale, and uh so I thought that was kind of cute, so I put in an ad "a losing out sale" and uh, the uh gal who took the ad thought I meant "closing out sale" [laugh] No, no, no! I'm not closing! This was after we got started a little bit.

Oh, okay.

Well, we opened the store, and we just barely had enough merchandise to uh make a start. And uh I probably mentioned before, there were no uh commercial goods available. We had to scrounge for what we had. So uh, started out uh part uh, uh used goods that we refurbished and sold because you couldn't buy anything. ... Anyway, we started out in the fall and spent about three months getting ready. We had a nice store. We had it decorated with peeled slab and so forth, very rustic looking. And it didn't take too long before uh, uh commercial goods became available again. And I had to decide whether to continue with the used furniture or just to go with the new. So we opted for the new because it was a lot less work in redoing some of the furniture as I was doing. Uh, so uh, we managed to hang on by our fingernails there for three or four years until we had uh time to work up a bit of business and as the time went on, we were heading for a sporting goods store. But uh, also we sold toys -- we sold a lot of toys at one time -- and jewelry and gifts and just a general, just a general variety store. But as time went on uh we moved out of our twenty-five ... we didn't move out, we expanded -- from our original twenty-five foot front into the next uh store, next to us, when it became available and finally into a third uh storefront, which is the area right across from the uh Pueblo Bank parking lot. And, uh, we were there for, I was there for 33 years. As time went by, we established a good business. We, uh, in the latter years, why, we had a comfortable income. And we were able to buy a house and buy a car and things that we hadn't been able to do when we were first starting.

Uh, along with running this store -- I was never satisfied just to do one thing -- I uh at one time I established a wholesale fishing tackle route. I called on dealers within about a sixty, seventy mile radius and sold, sold fishing tackle. And another thing that I did just to keep busy uh was a little inventing. I invented and patented a uh, a -- what I called a reel lever. It was uh a uh an attachment to a fly rod with a trigger up by your trigger finger, because I always felt that reaching back to the strip lever of an automatic reel was pretty awkward. So with my reel lever you could just pull the trigger and I had a cable running through the handle down to the trip lever and uh it worked just swell. I got a patent on it, and uh I sold quite a few of them. In fact, eventually a Mr. Philipson of Philipson Rod Company bought out my patent and uh took over. And I got a few royalties until his plant burned down to the ground and he never got started again. [Laugh] So there went my chance to be a millionaire.

However, at that time, automatic reels weren't the thing. Spinning was coming on, spin fishing was coming on and there wasn't too much interest in fly fishing. I think now probably there's a lot more interest in fly fishing.

I had several other things that I, that I uh, uh worked. One was a real nice little deal. I made what I called a hook button, which was a uh cork, uh, an aluminum-backed cork with a slot in it you could slip over your treble hooks, and you could push the hooks through the cork and they wouldn't tangle any more. Sold a lot of those. Course, I had to do everything myself. I bought the presses, I bought the materials, I designed the packaging. You know, I couldn't turn this over to anybody else. So, anyway, that eventually died out because uh for one thing lack of interest and the fact that I was just overextended as far as time was concerned.

So, as I say, we were in the store for 33 years.

BL: Now, what year was this?

Well, uh, I can't tell you precisely. I don't remember exactly. It was right around the 50s or 60s that I was doing this. And uh, we, we continued to run the store and I say it continued to improve. We changed uh, uh, I built different counters and all as time went on. Uh, I'm getting ahead of myself here but as I say, on my 65th birthday in 1978 I retired from the County. I was a county commissioner for three, three terms. I uh turned 65 where I could take my Social Security and I had planned to just keep the store and, uh, I had a very good helper -- Charles Jay -- who I, we could always just take off and Charles would be there to run the store. But uh, uh, I was, I was thinking of keeping the store and we went traveling and so forth, and Chuck could always run the store.

Selling the Business

Anyway, Ed Tower [?] was the mayor -- he and I used to go to meetings together and so forth, and he said, Well, Dick, uh, why keep the store? Why don't you sell the store? You'll be free to do anything you.... Well, that sounded good, so I sold the store to Chuck. And uh, Chuck was interested. And I said, Well, Chuck, there's no way you can buy the store with what I'm paying you, you know. Huh! He got the bank to back him and so forth, and at that time the uranium exploration was going on and we were looking for a big expansion. We were wondering where we were going to find enough schools and all that uh to handle all the influx we expected. [Telephone rings; interview pauses]

Well, anyway, I sold the store to Chuck and uh the first year he ran it he had the best year we'd ever had. We had, every year had been a little better than the last year, and uh Chuck was uh no different. But, after that first year, about that time, the Climax Molybdenum [says the word correctly and then pretends to stumble over it] went out, and we lost our biggest payroll and Gibson's came in and eventually Wal-Mart. And, uh, Chuck just didn't have the resources to keep it up so he had to close the store. It was there for about 40 years. And uh it is, it is no more. So, that's about enough about the business.

Salida City Council

Uh, going back in time then again to uh the early years, uh, we'll get into politics a little bit here. Uh, I didn't have enough to do keeping up the store so they talked me into running for City Councilman. And I don't remember -- it was in 46, 47, 48 somewhere in there -- I don't remember the year -- anyway, I was elected to, as, as a city councilman and uh at that time the uh, the Council met in a downstairs room with the jail right in the back of the meeting room. I can remember the police bringing people they'd collared in and they'd have to elbow their way past the council members to get to the jail. It was quite a little different from now. Anyway, I had never had any political aspirations as far as that

goes but apparently uh somehow or other why people figured I was available for political purposes.

Uh, one thing that happened was that uh the uh the, the postmaster had resigned and uh back in those days it was up to the Republican party to uh propose a, uh, an acting postmaster. And they picked on me to, to uh take the job as acting postmaster. A lot different now, of course, But anyway, was having a tough time at the store and the pay was pretty good as far as that goes, so I took on the Assistant Postmaster job in the old post office.

Okay, the elections came up with uh, uh, Nixon, and uh Kennedy -- was It? -- Anyway -- Who was it Nixon ran against? -- Anyway, uh, after the election -- Now, had Nixon won I would probably have been postmaster, but the minute the uh Democratic candidate won I got a notice that uh Mr. Burt Mitchell was uh, was uh postmaster. Strictly political at that time. Well, Burt deserved it. He had been a Assistant Postmaster, he knew a lot more about running a post office than I did. But, nevertheless I had had ten years of civil service, and not only that but as I say I was having a tough time making a living back in those days. So, that was one thing that happened there with a political type of thing.

County Commissioner

Well, then a little later on they needed, the Republicans needed somebody to run for county commissioner, and for some reason or other they came to me again. Uh, Jimmy Sheehan had been the commissioner I think for four terms and was running for I think it was his fifth term. And he was a meter reader and he had the opportunity to go around and meet folks and talk politics and so forth. And uh however, I had a group of the, some of the younger citizens who wanted to see some changes made and so they got together and supported my candidacy. And we had parades and we had speeches and I wrote articles for the paper and I put up posters and did all that kind of stuff, went around and knocked on doors -- I hated it -- and uh, uh the uh time for elections came. We were up just about all night because they had to count the votes by hand. And I won by a landslide of maybe 35 or 36 votes or something like that [laugh]. Just barely squeaked in.

Okay, that was uh, that was in 67, that uh, the elections, and I took office in 68. Well, at that time I think the county had been, the uh, under control of the Democratic Party for years and years. Uh, all three of the current commissioners were Democrats. I don't think there was a single Republican in the Courthouse in those days. Uh, I'm pretty sure there wasn't. I was, uh, I was the uh [chuckle] new kid on the block, you might say. Well, oh, they were just finishing the uh construction of the courthouse annex, the old building. Had a new jail, a, a new courtroom and so forth. And when I entered on my duties as, as a county commissioner -- The commissioners had no meeting room at all. They kicked Mary Bratton out of her place at the Welfare Office and we held our meetings in there. You go in, you close the door, nobody gets in or out. We sit around and chew the fat for a while and Gino Conner calls his uh filling stations he was servicing and gets his business taken care of. Then we talk about the roads for a while, and then we go out to Al's out on King's Corners there and have lunch, you know. Just like it had been for years and years.

And, uh, I was, uh [huh] I didn't have much influence, I tell you, because I had the two incumbents, the Democrats against one lone Republican. But I do remember one incident when I kinda cost uh, uh, anyway I was telling about this little incident when I was a new commissioner I was going down the highway 285 and I noticed Gino Conner's uh crew over in private property grading a road. And I went over and asked the guys, Uh, what county road are you guys working on here? Oh, we're just working where we were told. And I went down to every crew and, Oh,

we're just working where we're told, see. So Gene kindly called me and said, I understand you've been harassing my crew here, see. And I said, Gene, they were, you had your road crew working on private property and I don't think that's a legitimate use for a county road crew. So, that was just a little incident, see.

But uh, anyway, another little incident there, too -- before I even took office Jimmy Sheehan's old road crew, they didn't know what to think. They had been, they were all Democrats, too, they'd been hired by Jimmy, wondered what I was going to do, they were fearful for their jobs. And Joe Reno was uh their foreman. And I said, Joe, as long as they do their job why they've still got a job, they don't have anything to worry about. But one thing the uh, the uh, Gene and Art Weber, who was the other commissioner, Joe Reno told me, says, they're taking all the best equipment out of here and they're moving it all to Poncha Springs. Which, they were just going to leave me high dry, which is exactly what they did.

But anyway as time went on, we got along, we got along pretty well, and I learned a little bit about what it took to be a county commissioner. Oh, uh. It took quite a while.

Roads

Anyway, let's see, there are so many things that have.... Uh I think that, I don't believe that either Gene or Art ran for office the next uh year and so uh, uh I was uh, well, I was the incumbent but then two Republicans were elected to serve with me, see. And uh I was elected Chairman of the Board because I had had some experience. There was George Dominick the Third, and um -- errr - - I know what, I'm trying to think -- George Dominick and uh -- oh, names don't come to me, I'll think of it after a while -- anyway they were two Republicans. So, about this time, uh, things were happening. Uh, the county had gone along for years just like it was in the 1890s, but the state and the feds started uh imposing a lot of things on the county. You had to have subdivision regulations, you had to have a master plan, you had to have all this, and so from what had been a sleepy little situation, we were just dumped right into all this uh, this new, new order, you see. And uh so we were kept busy.

When they had finished the uh the courthouse addition, we eventually, we got the old county courtroom for a commissioners' room. So we stocked it with old tables and chairs and uh second-hand typewriter and so forth and uh Joe McDonough [?] who had been county clerk was our clerk for the board of commissioners. Uh, a lot of things happened. Uh, one being at the time I took office, county roads, were uh there was no order to them at all. I think the roads were numbered as they came into the county. You could have county road one here in Salida, county road number two would be up in Buena Vista somewhere, number three somewhere they had happened to put a new road in. So what we did, we renumbered the county roads -- the one hundred series, the two hundred series, the three hundred series -- uh, from the three uh commissioner districts, see.

Another thing, up to this time there had been no rural addresses. If you had to find somebody out on the farm, you went down to the red barn and turned right and you'd see a group of cottonwood trees and he'd be sittin' back there -- and you just had to describe. So we got together with the post office and uh by this time Bob Stotler and uh had come on as an administrator, and uh, a county administrator, and also uh --oh, it was -- Donna Nevins, she came on as a clerk. And those two, those were the best employees anyone would ever want to have. And uh, Bob worked with me on this road numbering situation and all and he was just wonderful, and so was Donna. Uh, I often thought if I just had those two as co-commissioners I could have, we could, we could have done a lot. But they helped educate me. Donna particularly. She was pretty sharp, she was a historian and, and she got me out of trouble a lot of times. [19:37]

So, uh, let's see, where do we go next? Uh, we, oh, one thing we did, uh, the county had its own hot-mix plant, we made our own paving. We had the hot-mix plant, the rock crusher, the lay-down machines and all that to, to make our asphalt, and uh we paved a lot of roads with good.... When I first came in, the county roads, they had used what they called pentaprime, which was a uh, something to hold the dust down. It also made a thin crust, just looked like paving but it would break through. So the county roads were gravel roads with this thin crust and all these potholes where you'd broken through the crust, see. So paving the roads helped with that situation quite a lot, as well as the numbering and so forth. Uh, we did, we paved uh a good many miles of roads. And we had our new road numbering system.

Waste Management

Another thing that required our attention, uh, was the waste disposal situation. Uh, when I first took office and for many years before then, uh what you did if you had uh, your, your garbage or your waste and so forth you took it out to the alley and burnt what you could in your backyard incinerator. And if you couldn't do that you took it out to the dump out the edge of town, and you burnt what was left of it if you could. We had a hollow there, out the edge of town that was, they'd been filling for years, and it just went up a little bit of a time, layer after layer, because there wasn't a whole lot went in there. But, here they come with this edict about no burning. You couldn't anything -- you couldn't burn leaves, you couldn't burn tree branches, you couldn't burn anything -- so you were expected to uh cover each day's deposits with I think six inches of soil, or something like that, at the end of each day, you see. Well, it didn't take but just a very short time for what had been building up, this hollow had been building up and still had a lot of room out there, it was full to overflowing. I mean when you started uh, uh compacting and burying everything that you had been burning, I mean, you got a problem. So we had a problem. You had dumps all over the county. Poncha Springs had a dump. Buena Vista had a dump. Uh, the farmers all had their private dumps and uh trash was everywhere. Oh, uh, anyway, it seemed to me that that was something that should be a county-wide deal, so I talked Mayor Tauber into uh conceding control over the dumps to the county, so we took over from the towns. And we established a county-wide waste disposal situation.

Uh, problem there was, of course, that uh, the people were so used to having a dump close to them, when we went to look for a place to put a, to put a dump, not in my back yard, a nimbly situation. But we finally got in a deal with the BLM to but the dump out there where it is halfway between Buena Vista and Salida. And of course one problem there was that uh the people were not used to going 10 or 12 miles to dump, or to pay somebody else. They were used to taking it out to the And, uh, anyway, we made a deal with the BLM. And uh one thing that we did which was rather revolutionary, I think it was Alamosa that had a system where they uh, uh compacted their trash. They had the uh, they had the machinery to kind of make a mulch out of the uh, uh waste material, and it came out kind of like paper mache. And it didn't smell, it didn't breed rats, it was uh, you didn't have to cover it, uh, it was a wonderful deal. But it did have some drawbacks. Well, anyway, we decided after, after looking into all this to install this hammer mill. It's a whole bunch of hammers that beat this stuff to death, you see. And we built a shed out here halfway between Buena Vista and Salida, and installed this thing.

One problem that we had there was that you fed, you fed all this uh the boxes and the garbage and whatever, into this big bin and then there was a uh, a lift that carried it up and it had to make a right-angle turn. We could back the trucks in and uh this stuff that had been pounded would be dumped right into the back end of a truck, you see. The only problem was that uh that, uh, we took it as far as we could until we hit the end of a building and then we had to make a right angle

turn and stuff would pile up there and uh it would cause things to kind of break down. What we should have done was to knock a piece of the wall out and run it straight on out, but we didn't do that. And uh so while for the time that we were using it this pulverized material took up, oh, maybe a tenth of the area that the uh unprocessed stuff would, and it was clean, it wouldn't burn, it didn't attract flies, or anything. But there were problems, that these hammers that they hammered with had to be uh always the same. So about once a week they had to take them into the shop and weld em up and they had a scale there that they had to weigh each hammer to make sure they were all the same weights, you see. That, and that right-angle deal.

So anyway -- course, you couldn't run a stove or refrigerator through there, it was just for the softer stuff, so we still had to use a cat or other tractor, and we uh we did, we got, we bought a John Deere uh, uh -- well, it was a, uh, it was actually made for compacting trash and it worked so well that we were having problems with the hammer mill and we just ended up going to the, uh, to processing this stuff with the tractors, you see. And I think, [laugh] one thing that was a problem I can remember, we had a whole bunch of brush loaded on us and uh I went by and saw it and I -- he was expected to compact all that darned brush and cover it with dirt, and I told my foreman Joe, Boy it would sure be tough if that stuff would catch fire, wouldn't it be? And lo and behold, next morning it HAD caught fire, and [laugh] it was all burnt up. Fortunately, none of the EPA guys happened to be going by at that time. I didn't tell him to burn it, but somehow or other it caught fire. An act of God, I called it. [laugh]

Anyway, it had its problems. But the building is still there, the uh, the uh, in the same location. They've taken on more land from the BLM. One thing, though, that we did differently, we reasoned that everybody that used the landfill, that everybody in the county produces trash and everybody pays taxes, so we just figured that we would make it free to everybody except out-of-county people, no charge. They'd just go dump, see. And we'd take care of it. Well, this had, one thing, you didn't have to have somebody there weighing your trash, you didn't have to hire somebody to collect the fees, and it worked just fine. It so happened that after I left office the commissioners eventually put on a, a uh, fee and the weigh stations and all and the charges, and uh that was their -- I had my way, they had their way, and uh --

Anyway, while this was going on, well, Buena Vista -- you know, I was talking about Salida all this time, and Poncha Springs had one. Buena Vista's dump was right at the end of Main Street, I mean just a block or so from the last store. And at that time Main Street was a gravel road. It had been, I don't remember when they finally got it paved but I'm pretty sure at that time it was still a gravel road. And, uh, though, they had of course, uh, they had to come in the county system, too. And now, I don't know -- it was a terrible thing to have that right next to town. But uh I'm sure that when they started hauling their stuff to the central dump why, it was a big improvement.

Holman Avenue

Uh, one thing that I think I'm as proud of as anything I might have done was uh constructing Holman Avenue. Uh, getting from Highway 50 up to the Mesa involved going to almost downtown and then back up to the Mesa, and I'd had it on my mind for some time and I just didn't get on it until finally I said, well, boy, I found out somebody was getting ready to build on at the top there right where the road would go. And uh I thought well I'd better get on it. Well, Joe McDonough, who was working for, was a surveyor, so he surveyed the road that now goes, that now is Holman Avenue. Back in those days we called it Tuttle's Turnpike [laugh]. But anyway we got the road through and off highway 50 and right by the swimming pool and up on the Mesa and I think that was, that was uh something that really needed to be done and uh, it was paved and all. They had to put a little crook in it to make it come our right. Harry Witter was going to build

a home right there where we came out, see, and I hated to do it to Harry but we said, Harry, that's where the road's going to come out, and he still had a large patch that he could have built on, but he had his heart set on this bigger plat, see, but he gave up on that and built his place on two or three blocks on down the, down the road. But, uh.

Oh, let's see, where are we?

BL: When did you uh get involved with the Senior Center?

Oh, that comes, that comes later, quite a little later. I'll get to that.

BL: I was just worried about the time.

Okay, well, we've got a lot to talk about here!

Plane Crash

Let's see. Oh! Uh, what was I...? Uh.... Okay, we had uh this Board, George Dominick and uh myself and uh -- why can't I think uh of the other -- I have an awful time with names! Bruce Davidson, for heaven sake. Uh, anyway, uh another election and we got two Democrats. We got Eddy ... what was it ...from up at Buena Vista, oh... I wish I could think of... Anyway, I had two Democrats to work with, see, and uh they uh they hadn't been in office a very long time when uh, uh, ...they were getting, well, they elected me chairman of the board because I had the experience, see, and I had been chairman most of the time. Uh, Eddy Holman and Eddy Kruscynski, that was it. Okay, about that time there was a uh a uh commercial flyer that was starting a little airline here. He had taken some of the dignitaries on some introductory flights and Eddy Kruscynski anyway, he was on all these flights. Now, the board chartered his plane to take us to Denver for some kind of a meeting. And we had a full load. I think the plane held seven, something like that, and uh it was a windy day when we went to Denver and coming back leaving Denver I didn't think we were ever going to get enough altitude to get over the mountains but we finally did. Came into Salida airport and we couldn't land straight in, we came kind of sloughing in just an at angle. And, cause the wind was just terrific.

Well we were scheduled to go to a water meeting the next day down in Durango area, and uh we had the, the uh, president of the lower Arkansas -- well, their water district -- and he, he had to go attend this meeting, and I should have gone as chairman of the board but I was getting too far behind in my work. My wife didn't want me to go. And I asked Eddy Kruscynski, do you really want to go, Eddy? You've been on too.... Yeah, he wanted to go. And I think if he hadn't said that, no he'd stay home, I'd have gone. Anyway, the morning they were take off, early in the morning, why Ken Baker our attorney called and said, Dick there's a plane down up over Poncha Pass and I think it may be ours. And it was. They had taken off in this terrible wind. They had the weight of a whole load of fuel and a full planeload, and they crashed and I mean everybody was immediately incinerated.

And then, they uh, well, I lost my board. I couldn't do a thing as a single citizen, so we had to uh, we had to get two more commissioners then, real quick like. Well, the governor was up, Governor Love, and he, uh -- I talked with him and I said, I'm going to need some help. We've got George Dominick here who's already been a commissioner, he could help, but he's a Republican. And the Gov... said, Well, if you can keep your people happy I think I can keep the Democrats happy. He was a Democrat, of course. So, anyway, uh, that didn't work out. Some, some busy body had to tell him that he thought George Dominick was practically senile and that did it. The Governor

said, Well, if you can't keep your party together why I'll have to, uh, I'll have to appoint two Democrats, which he did.

This gets uh [laugh]... We had Mark Vanderpool, and we had Pat uh uh --oh, oh, what's -- Pat Slaughter. Well, how much time do you got left here?

BL: I'm not sure. ... But I think we've been going for 45 minutes. Before, I think it was an hour and 15 minutes, and we were told we have to do 2 hours. But go ahead -- if we have to do another one, we have to do another one.

DT: Well, okay. So here I was, again, I was in the minority. I was the one Republican with two Democrats and uh Mark Vanderpool had been a County Assessor and he was was a real nice guy. Pat Slaughter was George's wife and she was elec-- appointed, they were both appointed, they weren't elected -- but uh Pat came in there uh, uh, she was one of these uh gung-ho ladies that uh -- I don't know, what do they call, woman's lib types -- and she was going to straighten that courthouse out and get rid of the good ole boys and all that. So she proceeded to make herself just about as unpopular as she could be. She tried to run the Sheriff's office, she tried to run the Commissioner's office, she.... When she came aboard, Mark Vanderpool told me, you're the only one with experience, we've got to elect a chairman, he says, I'll vote for you. So uh it came time to uh, to uh, conduct our business and to elect our officers, Mark, "I nominate Dick Tuttle." Pat just like to hit the ceiling. She was sure if there was two Democrats we'd have a Democrat. She, "I nominate myself!" She actually did! So we took a vote and I was elected chairman again, two to one. Well, anyway, Pat was just a kind of thorn in my side all the rest of my time there. And uh I eventually, my third term was coming to a close and uh I pretty well decided not to run again.

So, anyway, that was the end of uh of my career. I would like to say -- away from the county, but in county business -- one thing that we accomplished uh was the creation of the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. The uh state had been divided into twelve planning and management regions, and uh Chaffee County was under Pueblo in Region 12. Well, we were up in the Lake or Chaffee or Fremont or Custer county, we knew we'd be the tail of the dog, that uh Pueblo would get everything, so we petitioned for a thirteenth district, and we got it. So uh we had to form a new council of governments and uh several of us commissioners, we got together and uh we created the uh, a board. I was the original chairman of the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. And uh Frank Cervi was the uh, the uh executive officer. So, we had our own, our own, uh, uh, planning and management region, which we have to this day, and uh I was actually the guy that, that named it, cause we were trying to think of names for it. Well, it was the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. That name stuck and uh it is continuing of course.

During my term of commissioner, let's see, I had several honors that uh I can mention. I had, uh, oh -- [rustling papers] Just a few of the honors that I accumulated, had to climb up on the steps to look at my plaque because I can't read them from down below. Anyway, in 1966 I was Chairman of the Chaff-- Chamber of Commerce. And, uh, in 73 and 74 I was the uh, uh, Chairman of the Council of Governments. And uh also the chairman of the Southern Colorado Economic Development District. And in 78 I was uh voted Man of the Year, and 99 uh I got the Cornerstone Award, so that's my braggin' --- HA! -- I got these plaques lined up on the wall and you can't even see them. I had to get up on the steps to see what they were for!

Okay, that just about covers it. There's a lot more I could throw in, but...

Senior Center

BL: Yes, we're just about out of time. But, what year did you take over as the head of the Senior Center?

DT: Oh, the Senior Center, yes, this is another thing I was gonna ... I went, I retired in 78. When I came back in 79 I was urged to join, to run for a seat on the board, on the Senior Center Board. And uh I was elected to the board and immediately elected chairman, with all my "vast experience" and all that stuff, and I've been chairman of the board ever since for something like 25 years. They can't find anybody else to put enough, to or whatever, to qualify -- yeah. So, I uh I've been uh more or less managing the senior center ever since then.

Uh, I finally got, I just did it voluntarily for a few years before we even moved in the building. We got this building built. I was eventually, my job was recognized as Director of the center. And then uh they came on with this rummage deal which was just a part time little deal for some of the ladies but it held on and held on, and uh once a week the ladies get together to sell the rummage, and they tried to make maybe thirty-five dollars on it. However, during the week this stuff comes in and the little ladies were not here so I inherited the task of taking care of everything that came in. And eventually when the last little lady resigned I said, This is foolish. Because I was doing 99 percent of the work, well maybe only 95 percent, and I'd have to go to the lady who had been the "manager" see, and so I appointed myself manager. And I was the only one who had any business experience and so forth, so uh I built the shelves and the counters and the this and that and the other. And uh more or less on the basis of my experience as a storekeeper, uh converted a little kind of a hobby into a, into a fulltime business. And now, right now we're enjoying the best sales that we've ever had. We're, we're looking at -- sometimes we take in a couple of thousand dollars in one month, or five, six hundred dollars instead of thirty-five dollars, and it pays probably at least two thirds at least of the expense of operating this place. So, uh, right now I don't know how we got along without it because, uh, uh, uh we, I also rent out the center -- we get a few thousand dollars that way -- and then we have some money invested. Those two don't quite cover the, the entire costs, so we've got some money invested the interest on which takes care of our needs, and we uh have substantial investments, and uh I think we're very fortunate. We don't get any tax money at all. At one time we did get a little from the city and the county, but we don't get anything from anybody. We're strictly on our own, and we built this building. We've kept this up. And we don't owe anybody and we don't have to have pancake breakfasts or anything to pay our bills, see. But we do have to sell a lot of rummage.

BL: So this has always been the Senior Center.

DT: Well, yes. It was built specifically as a Senior Center with, uh, in my view I wanted it to be a community center as well. I mean, it's basically a senior center, but I like it to be a community center. When they have some events that really effects everybody, I do charge for it but I don't charge for these, for public interest deals. I say, I want it to be a, a hub of activity for the community. The community supported us -- why, when we were building this building we got gifts, we got all kinds of help, so we owe the community and the community has really helped the senior center and I think we've helped the community.

BL: Well, listen, like I say, uh -- I think we could just go ahead and run this out, and I thank you very much, Mr. Dick Tuttle, for these two interviews. It's been very interesting, and I'm sure that as it will be into the Archives at the Library, that it will be history.

DT: [Laugh] If anybody ever thinks to turn it on!

[End]