

Beth: This is Beth Smith, on the morning of January 26, 2005 and I'm at 1432 I Street, the home of Dixie and Leon Stanton. They're going to talk to us about what they think about Salida and Chaffee County. Good morning. How are you two?

Dixie: We're great.

Leon: Doing good.

Beth: Okay Leon, I'll let you start.

Leon: Okay, Dixie and I moved to Chaffee County in 1964. There was an opening in the Extension Office here at that time and we came, looked the situation over, headed back to Burlington and said we weren't coming. We got to Buena Vista, changed our minds, and called back and said we're coming, so ...

[laughter]

Dixie: We had both never lived in the mountains and in fact, Leon lived on the plains of Western Kansas and it was a totally different atmosphere, but we love it here and we've been here ever since. Now they can't get rid of us!

Leon: The Extension Office was in what they used to call the USDA office on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at that time. There was a number of agricultural offices: the U.S. Forest Service office, the Farmer's Home Administration office, the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural and Stabilization Conservation Service, and the Extension office were all there, so it worked real well because we all cooperated on several different programs and projects, so we could just go next door and visit and coordinate programs. But in the, I'm not sure the exact year but it was in the late 1970s they moved the Extension office up to the Courthouse and I was there for...The Extension office was there until I believe it was 1980 when they built the new community building at the Fairgrounds and then they moved the Extension Office out there.

When I started working Extension, I was the only Extension agent here and tried to cover Home Economics, as well as agricultural and 4H and had a lot of good help from the secretary in the office who at that time was Nona Woods and she had been secretary for long enough. She knew a lot about home economics and was a big help to me. A lot of changes have taken place in Chaffee County, in the time we, in the forty years that we've been here. We kind of liked it the way it was. But you can't stand still in time, you have to progress with the times.

One of the main things that I remember when we came here in 1964 was agriculture was the number one industry in Chaffee County. It is no longer the number one industry, of course. Tourism is the #1 industry now. A lot of ranches have gone by the wayside. Of course, beef cattle and hay were the two main productions from agriculture. Water, of course, is a limiting factor and it's a very important factor for Chaffee County. Seems like we lose more and more of that now. But the water conservancy district is trying to protect that water for Chaffee County. I think that's a good thing. One of the big things other than agriculture that happened to Chaffee

County that we remember was Climax Molybdenum Mine closing. There again, I'm not sure of the date, I think it was in the 80s when that closed.

Dixie: They employed something like 500 guys up there, and of course, they carpoled from Salida and Buena Vista. It was a big ...

Leon: It was a big blow to Chaffee County when that closed because like Dixie said, it was a big payroll that came from there. Another factor that we remember that we hated to see happen was the railroad stopped running. The Denver & Rio Grande railroad stopped running through Salida and that was a low blow too. Not long after it stopped running they tore down the old depot which was ...

Dixie: A sad day!

Leon: ... Because this was a railroad town at one time. Salida was. So, that's some of the things that we remember. In Chaffee County, now of course one of the big things is subdivisions. A lot of the land, some of the ranch land is being sold and subdivided. And water has become an even more important factor. Now, when the land is taken out of agricultural production, it is no longer irrigated, the return flow back to the Arkansas River is not what it would be when it was in agricultural production, and irrigated. Because the water goes down and it eventually goes back into the river. So, if that continues to happen I think the Arkansas River is going to flow less and less each year. And that's not going to be good for downstream. Not good for Chaffee County, in fact.

Dixie: Well, we were visiting about this interview and Leon said "I can remember when there were seven dairies in Chaffee County." And you were naming them.

Leon: Yes, when we moved here, believe it or not there were seven dairies: that included Starbuck's, Knickerbocker's, Frank Roberts, the Reformatory had a big dairy, Bill Thomas, who was the guy we were trying to think of ...

Dixie: Paul Whitson.

Leon: Paul Whitson had a dairy, and Irwin Sage. Had the seven dairies and now there's only one left, Bill Thomas. The Thomas Dairy is the only one left, so we lost almost all of our dairy production here in the county.

Dixie: Well, when we moved here there was Loudenburg's Honey, they produced quite a lot of honey. Were there other ...

Leon: Yeah, there was one other one ... Anyway, two honey producers here at that time. So, we had a good supply of honey right in the county.

Dixie: And they didn't like, certain bees came from the [Arkansas] Valley and honey is whatever they feed on, so some of the honey was a lot darker and these producers didn't like for the bees to mix, because of poor grade.

Leon: In the lower Arkansas Valley, along the river, the Tamarack, the bees pollinated the Tamarack and went to the Tamarack for food to produce the honey and it made it a darker honey. Tamarack made a much darker honey than our alfalfas and clovers here in Chaffee County so the beekeeper's association used to have their annual meeting here in Salida and they got in some pretty heated arguments between the producers in the lower Arkansas Valley and the upper Arkansas Valley because they didn't like to mix their honey together.

Personally, I think Chaffee County has a bright future. The growth that we're having here, and if we can keep enough water here, I think it does have a bright future.

Dixie: Well, one of the features that I think we need to push more is our Hot Springs Pool, just up the street from us here. A lot of people use that for therapy. I know when I had a frozen shoulder between the doctor and the hot pool, the hot springs, it pulled me out of it. It's not a good feeling. Frozen shoulder didn't want to work for me.

Leon: That was I guess a blow and a blessing. It'll be three years ago this May we had 50 inches of snow in three days. It caved in part of the roof on the swimming pool which everyone hated to see but we got a big new improvement in the hot springs pool because of that. We really needed the moisture from the fifty inches of snow but we needed improvement in the pool too.

Dixie: When they improved the pool, they glassed in the back and the front, just absolutely wonderful. It almost feels like you're outdoors.

10:10

Dixie: I'd like to talk about a few businesses that used to be here. We used to have a mortuary, Stewart's Mortuary was here for years. Joe and Mary Stewart were personal friends of mine because I used to sing for a lot of funerals.

Beth: That was up by the Elk's Club, right?

Dixie: That's where Amica's Pizza Parlor is now, yes. And brewery, microbrewery. Tuttle's Trading Post was here for a long time. Dick Tuttle had a wonderful sporting goods store, for years. I'm not sure again when he quit, or when he retired. I think when he was elected commissioner, one of our Chaffee County commissioners, he turned it over to Dick ... not Dick Jay, Chuck Jay. And Chuck ran it for a while. Then I don't know what happened but they decided to close the store. Sharpe's Style Shop, that's a tongue twister, had a wonderful ladies dress shop here for years. Also, Mode O' Day, Mode O' Day sold women's dresses and hats. Hats were the "in" thing for a while. Let's see. Ward's had a catalog store for a while, at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and F, I believe. 2<sup>nd</sup> and F. We had three drug stores. There was Waggener's Pharmacy, which was right by the stoplight, then in the middle of the block we had Salida Drug and Riley Bartley was the pharmacist there, and then Alexander's Drug is where Lallier's Drug is now. There was Jack's Shoe Corral. Jack Goettemoeller sold all kinds of men's and women's and children's shoes and boots. It was called Jack's Shoe Corral. There was Salida Men's Shop and they were like the name implies, sold men's clothing.

12:19

There was Boy's Market, a grocery store, which is now I think, an antique store, Antique Restoration, and a haircutting shop. There was Oxford's Market, which was out on Highway 50. And, of course Safeway's been around a long time, even though they moved their location on their lot a few times, Crews Beggs was a wonderful department store. They had everything from men's clothing, women's clothing, toddlers. They had some bedding, you could buy pillows and sheets, towels, that sort of thing. And we really hated to see them go out of business. We had Patterson's Hardware, we had Cady's Hardware, we had Ma-Bel Hardware which was out on Highway 50. We had Woolworth's, which was a five and ten cent store. We had Doveton's, and that was kind of a department store. They carried a little bit of everything, quite a variety. And then there was a little shop called B & C. The 'B' stood for Budd and that was Dr. Budd's mother. And of course Irene Budd still lives here and Dr. Budd passed away, I'm not sure when, how many years ago. But speaking of doctors, when we first came here, when you went to the doctor, an office call cost you \$6. Now you can make a comparison to 2005 what it would cost you to go see the doctor. But anyway, we had Dr. Hoover and Phillips, I can't even begin to name the other doctors, but we didn't have a lot of these specialists like we do now. And we didn't have a physical therapy department like we do now. We are fortunate here in Chaffee County to have one of the few open MRI machines. And I think that's just a year or two old, isn't it?

We had Morris Photo Shop, you could go get your family portrait, or anniversary, special anniversary photo taken. And they were very good. And we had Salida Flower Store, just right on F Street. We had Koster's Insurance, Salida Realty, Peeple's Realty. We bought this house from John Peebles, when he was a realtor here. We had Martin Shoe Repair, and that was a wonderful place, because if you needed to half sole your shoe, or you wore out your heel, run your heel over on your shoe, you put new heels on your shoes, and for a very nominal fee. So, we miss Virgil Martin and his shoe repair. I think his wife now lives in Pueblo, Roberta Martin.

We had Stallsworth Motors, which is now where Peter's Interior Carpeting and Floor Covering Store is. We had a public service company, had their office where Fabulous Finds now is located. We had several old cafes. We had Neal's Café, which is down on Lower F Street and the railroaders used to, when they'd come into town, they would slip over there and get a bite to eat.

Leon: It's Mama D's now.

Dixie: Yeah, it's now Mama D's. We had Andon's Café. We had Salida Inn. What used to be The Spa Restaurant, it's now Country Bounty. And of course, the Salida Inn is now the Fiesta Mexicana, Mexican restaurant. We had Lippard Electric, and Mr. Lippard, I mean I don't know how he found anything in that store but if you needed a plug-in or if you needed an extension cord or if you needed a short fixed in your lamp, why he could do it. We had a Coca-Cola Bottling Company, that is located out, what street is that?

Leon: That's Valley Home Furnishing.

Dixie: Well, I know Valley Home Furnishing now occupies that building. That was quite an operation, Salida Bottling Company. And that's how we became acquainted with Don and Marilyn McQueen because he was the manager of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company.

We had a Mountaineer Drive-In. It was located on Highway 50 west. We had an A&W Root Beer Stand. I remember one time, Leon was always taking trips, taking 4-Hers somewhere or taking 4-H leaders to conferences and conventions and whatever, so the kids and I took the car out one time and we got to, arrived at the Drive-In and Jeff just looked at me and I said, "Well, which one of you are going to go put our order in?" And Jeff said, "Not me!" And I said, Jeri was quite young at the time, but she said. I said, "Well, neither one of you want to go and put our order in. I guess we'll just go back home." Well, Jeri said, "I will, Mom!" So anyway she went and ordered, I don't even remember what we had, but it was fun.

We had a Ben Franklin store. I think I mentioned, that didn't last too long, but the Woolworth's store that was here is now, what do they call it?

Leon: Fresh Ideas.

Dixie: Oh, Fresh Ideas and there are several shops in there but that used to be Five and Dime. We had, Marv Danhauer and Lucy had the Bakery here when we moved here. They did a wonderful job. That's now the Home Bakery. We had a Donnohue's Jewelry Store.

19:00

Dixie: You know was that, what's located in that shop now?

Leon: I don't know.

Dixie: I'm not sure. But anyway, that's just some of the businesses that used to be located here. We had several filling stations. We had BigLow's Texaco Station, now Bob Biglow has his surveying company in there. In fact, I worked for Bob for fifteen years. I was kind of the Girl Friday. I would receive phone calls, I did a lot of map work, printing on maps. But in addition to Biglow's Texaco, we had Chet Rand's Conoco Station, we had a Standard Station. I'm not sure what Pete Salerno's station was called but that's now Brandon/Ward Graphic Company. Anyway, that's just a few of the changes in our downtown. We have a lot of art galleries now.

Leon: One of the real tragedies that I remember happening in Chaffee County was, I think it was in the 70s. Two of our commissioners, our county assessor were headed for Durango meeting one morning and their plane crashed and killed them. Killed all three of them and the pilot.

Beth: Now who were they?

Leon: That, yes, it was George Everett

Dixie: Ed Krocesky.

Leon: George G. Everett and Eddie Krocesky. There was three of them. Eddie Holman. All three commissioners.

Dixie: And they were all killed.

Leon: Dick Tuttle was fortunate. He was supposed to go but something happened, he didn't go that day and his life was spared.

Beth: What good memories you have.

Dixie: As you can see, I wrote a lot of notes, to help me.

Beth: Good!

Leon: If my memory was good I could remember the dates.

[Laughter]

Dixie: But we worked with a lot 4-H kids in Leon's thirty years. Now, the 4-Hers have their children in 4-H. We have grandkids in 4-H! And like he said he used to work with the home agents before we were able to get funding to have our own home agent.

Leon: Homemakers.

Dixie: Wasn't Kathy Tessitore one of the first home agents?

Leon: Yes. I think Kathy started in about 1980, around there. She was the first extension home agent in Chaffee County.

Dixie: And then after that was Nina Green. And now it's Karen Chapman. So, we've seen ... We've worn out a few people!

Beth: Yes. You helped a bunch of county fairs get underway.

Leon: The main, when we moved here, it was just a 4-H Fair then. It was held in the old county shop where the subdivision, there's a subdivision in there now, with houses.

Dixie: Oh, the Cochetopa Estates?

Leon: Yes. The county road crew moved out and we moved in for about...

Dixie: They had to move all their heavy equipment outdoors so the 4-H kids could set up their exhibits. They had their animals. They brought in hay, if I remember right. Straw.

Leon: We put sand down in there for the animals. Then in the early 70s, the county commissioners built a 4-H building there in that same area for the fair and we expanded then to

not only 4-H exhibits but open class exhibits. We didn't get that many entries in open class but we got a few. Then in the early 80s, they built the new community building at the Fairgrounds that expanded the County Fair, that has grown every year since I think.

Beth: So, if you have a county fair, you also go to the State Fair.

Leon: Right, we always had a lot of 4-H exhibits, the winners there in the county fair, their exhibits went to the state fair, which I got the pleasure of taking them down there. [Laughter]

And picking them up, usually.

24:05

Leon: We've had quite a few open class exhibits go to State Fair also. Tough competition down there.

Beth: Has the State Fair always been held in Pueblo?

Leon: Since we've been here it has. Even before that when I was a boy growing up in southwest Kansas I remember it being held in Pueblo. We stopped there one time on a short vacation, we stopped there and went to the State Fair.

Dixie: Leon was a boy scout when he was young and he said he earned his swimming badge at our Hot Springs Pool right up here.

Beth: Well, now Leon came from southwestern Kansas and where did you come from Dixie?

Dixie: I was born and raised in northeast Kansas. We met at, at that time it was Kansas State College. It's now a university, Kansas State University. Of course, the student population has grown considerably. It was about 5,000 students when we attended. Now it's something like 21,000.

Leon: 22

Dixie: 22,000. Lot of changes have been made there too. When we visited the campus for the first time, oh, I don't know it's probably fifteen years later, we didn't know our way around because there was so many new additions. But Anderson Hall has been there for years and is still there. In fact, we used to joke about the vines. There were vines crawling up the front. And we said, "The vines are still holding it up!"

Beth: So, when were you married?

Dixie: We were married August of 1956 in my hometown of Westmoreland, which is just a little village town, something like 500 inhabitants and there was no motel. And each of us had several attendants in our wedding so the neighbors around mom and dad farmed out their homes and

kept one or two attendants and mother, I don't know how she did it, but she fed the crew rehearsal dinner on Saturday night before we were married. Were we married on a Saturday?

Leon: Sunday.

Dixie: Sunday. At that time we were still getting married on Sundays. These days a lot of weddings are on Saturdays. But different neighbors, I bet three or four different neighbors, we just farmed one or two persons out at each of the homes and like I said, mother fed everyone after the rehearsal. And then she had them for breakfast, I remember her making cinnamon rolls. I don't know what else she had, I was too excited. But she fixed a nice breakfast for everybody the day of the wedding. And still managed to get down to the church and help me get my veil adjusted, etc.

Beth: So, that's where your talents at cooking have come from! You're known as a good cook all over town.

Dixie: Well, I don't know about that but mom was a good cook. And she loved doing it, she loved to entertain. And if I had any artistic ability, it came from my mother. She could make something out of nothing. She sewed for a lot of people in town. She just had a high school education and she came from a family of twelve children. All by the same parents, so she was one of the older girls, so she helped her mom a lot and learned a lot from her mother. Grandma Blanchard never made one or two pies, it was six at a time. And of course, she had an old wood cook stove that she baked those pies in. I remember her getting so warm. She was a short, stocky little gal but boy, she was left-handed and she had a temper, boy that would just flare up like that. But it, she would also cool off equally as fast. But she was quite a lady.

Leon: Speaking of Dixie's talent at cooking, but also sewing. She was an assistant 4-H leader for a few years. Mrs. Forrest Miller, Bernice Miller was the main leader of the Mt. Shavano 4-H Club and Dixie joined her being an assistant working with the girls in food and clothing.

Dixie: And Mrs. Miller, Bernice as I used to call her, she had the patience of Job. She had girls for years in her home. We always met in her home. And I think she taught an awful lot of girls a lot of things. Not only sewing and cooking, but to have patience and to strive to do their very best. I remember there was more than one night she stayed to help some girl, maybe she sewed her sleeve backwards in her jacket that she was making or she couldn't get the gathers even. She just was so good.

Leon: The night before the county fair, so they could get their projects done.

Dixie: Yes! So they could get their projects done.

Leon: Stayed up all night.

Dixie: And then sometimes she had to kind of remind them of things, because they have to keep records in 4-H. It's another really valuable asset in life. And they learned to keep records.



Leon: One of Bernice's daughters, Anita, is now the secretary at the extension office.

Dixie: And I don't think they could operate that office without Anita's knowledge.

Beth: What is Anita's last name?

Leon: She's taken Miller now. She was married for a while, her husband had...

Dixie: A bad disease.

Leon: I want to say Parkinson's but I'm not sure that's correct. He finally passed away. And then Anita moved back here then. But those, Bernice's daughters, were all excellent in foods and clothing because they had a good teacher.

Dixie: They had six children, Forrest and Bernice.

Leon: Two boys and four girls.

Dixie: Two boys and four girls. And I think the boys were older so I don't remember them as well. Well, Mark was the youngest.

Leon: Danny was the oldest.

Dixie: Uh-huh. And I think Mark still lives in the state of Colorado. I'm not sure where.

Beth: Well, now after the wedding where did you go?

31:15

Leon: We took a honeymoon here in Colorado. The folks had a cabin near down near Rye, Colorado. That's where we headed first, then we headed to Colorado Springs.

Dixie: Went and visited the Seven Falls and the Cave of the Winds. In fact, our car was giving us a bit of a problem, as I remember. As we were coming down, you know you wind and wind around this narrow mountain road to get up to the Cave of the Winds and we visited there but on our return trip back down the mountain, the transmission or something started growling and I said, "Oh, what will we do if our brakes go out and our motor burns up?" And Leon said, "Oh, I'll just kind of run her into the side of the mountain!"

[laughter]

Beth: Did you have to do that?

Leon: No.

Dixie: No, we got back to town safe and left his old car there and borrowed his parents nice car. So we had a good rest of the honeymoon.

Beth: Where was your first town that you were working in as an extension agent?

Leon: In Burlington, Colorado. I started an extension there in 1961.

Dixie: As the assistant county agent.

Leon: Right, they had different titles and there was a county extension director there, Bob Crossen, and I was assistant agent, worked mainly with 4-H and they also had Home H up there.

Dixie. Oh, Bertha Ware.

Leon: Bertha Ware.

Dixie: She wrote a column for the newspaper. It was called, Be There with B. Ware because her name was Bertha Ware. So, I thought that was pretty clever. I still have one of her cookie recipes.

Leon: We were there three years and then the agent here in Chaffee County was Louis Stevenson and he went back to CSU to get his master's and they asked me if I wanted to move here, that it might be temporary, just nine months, if he finished his master's and wanted to come back. That was his prerogative. And unfortunately, he did want to come back so we had to move again. And we moved to Springfield for sixteen months. But then he left again and I told the district director that if Chaffee County opened up again, we wanted to come back. So, he called us and said it's open, and we came back.

Beth: That was 1964. You've been here ever since.

Dixie: That's right.

Leon: Well, actually, it was 1965, '66, when we moved back here because we were there ...

Dixie: In Springfield.

Leon: We moved here the first time in '64 and we were there for sixteen months, so when we came back it was '66.

Dixie: We have two children. Jeff is our older son, our only son, and Jerilyn is our daughter. They both went through the school system here, from elementary to high school. And then after graduating, our son graduated in '76, and he has known from the time he was in elementary school that he wanted to be an artist. So, he went to, it was called CIA, Colorado Institute of Art, upon his graduation.

Beth: Is that in Denver?

Dixie: Yes. It's now called something else. What's the title? Because they broadened the field, it's not only art, but you can learn to be a chef, for instance. What do they call it?

Leon: I can't remember what they call it.

Dixie: I can't remember what they call it either. My mind went blank.

Leon: They changed the name.

Dixie: But anyway, that's where he went and he is still an artist.

Beth: Where is he now?

Dixie: He's in Fort Worth, Texas. And he was working for a company called...Now I went blank again.

35:42

Leon: It's pronounced different isn't it?

Dixie: Oh...

Leon: Contrary.

Dixie: Contrary Creek was the name of it. And I guess it was Contrary Creek, because the guy that owned the business, he and his wife, they went bankrupt because they didn't collect their bills. And you can't hardly survive and can't keep up a payroll if you don't have any money coming in.

Leon: Our daughter Jeri, after she graduated, she went to UNC or University of Northern Colorado for a year, and then transferred to Metropolitan State in Denver and graduated from there, in Personnel Management.

Dixie: And she now works out of her home on the computer doing medical transcribing.

Beth: She's in Denver?

Dixie: She's in Arvada, which is same as Denver.

Beth: Close.

Dixie: Yeah, close. And she and Steve have our only two grandchildren. But we say we don't have quantity, but we have quality. They are two fine young men. Kevin the younger one is a freshman at Arvada West and Joshua is a junior this year and will be graduating next year, so he's shopping around for a college already. And we're hoping that he gets a scholarship.

Beth: And what is Steve's last name?

Dixie: Ross.

Beth: Ross.

Dixie: Steve Ross. And of course, Jeri's name is Ross.

Leon: We're very proud of our grandsons. Of course, everybody is. In addition to their athletic abilities, they're both carrying 4.0 grade averages. So, we're hoping maybe they'll get a scholastic scholarship.

Beth: You think you'll stay here in Salida, for a while?

Dixie: Well, when we retired, we both retired at about the same time like I told you, I worked for Bob Biglow for fifteen years, from 1972 until 1987. I wanted a part time job because our children were young and still in school and I wanted to be able to be at home with them as much as I could because Leon had to be gone a lot. Well, actually I started working for Harrison Associates, Bob and Flora Harrison had a land surveying company and they hired me to do the same thing I did for Bob. Well, then when Bob bought the business he invited me to come and work for him. I worked for him for fifteen years. And there again, it was convenient because he needed someone part time and I didn't have to go to work until 9 o'clock. Well, the kids had already gone to school. And I was off work at noon, so I was home when they got home from school. And I have to admire our daughter for doing the same thing. That's why she's gone into medical transcription. Medical transcribing. So her children never had to go into a daycare. That was important to her. And I think it's shown up, in the boys character because they know how much they're loved and how much interest their parents have. Now Steve and Jeri have gone on a lot of field trips during their elementary and middle school years, and also learned from it. Because, my goodness, of all the things they got to go to the Museum of Natural History, they got to go to the Planetarium, where else Leon... There's just a lot of opportunities in the city that we can't take advantage of here but they like to come to the mountains and enjoy our hot springs pool and getting out and seeing the beauty that we have been able to enjoy all these years.

Leon: They face the same dilemma of a lot of young couples face. They would like to live in Salida but there's just not the jobs. Can't start to compare with the jobs they have there in Arvada.

40:22

Dixie: But what I started to tell you a few minutes ago when Leon and I both retired from our job outside the home, we traveled north, south, east, and west and we decided we were going to stay right here in Salida because it has a lot to offer, we know a lot of people, a lot of our old time friends are here.

Beth: What has music had to do with your life here in Salida?

Leon: It had a great deal to do with Dixie's life. She has a beautiful voice and has used it to serve well until she had the misfortune of having a stroke. That set her back for a complete year and the doctor told her the best thing for her to do was to not be under any kind of stress, so she hasn't tried to sing any solos since that time. That's been hard for her, because she loves to sing.

Beth: But you've both been very active in the church choir.

Leon: Well, there again she has a beautiful voice.

[laughter]

Dixie: Well, my first solo, I was six years old, and I sang for a teacher's meeting. It was a county teacher's meeting. My mother said she had a bit of a doubt because when they announced my solo, I stood up all right, but I took a big deep breath and looked all around the room, and was like "Eek! I didn't know there was going to be this many people here!" But she said I went ahead and did my solo. And I was so thrilled when we moved to Salida. I've always sung in the church choir. I started singing when I was twelve because in the little village town of Westmoreland, where I grew up, they needed choir members and they said, "Well, you can sing with the adult choir. We need all the people we can get." So I started singing in the church choir when I was twelve. And let's see, I'm a little bit older now, but I still sing in the Methodist Choir here in Salida. And Leon joined me after our children were grown and gone. And he decided maybe he would sing with us. And he has been very faithful, supportive of me and all my singing ventures and all my crazy ideas for decorating for bazaars and he's worked hard on the yard sales. We hope we've made an improvement in this church.

Leon: Our daughter Jeri inherited some of Dixie's talents. She's got a real nice voice too and while she was home, Dixie helped her. They played the piano, sing, or whatever, so feel fortunate that she did inherit some of Dixie's talent.

Dixie: Well, when we were going to college, Leon's fraternity was just down the block from my sorority. So, a lot of his fraternity brothers dated my sorority sisters and then they started marrying. So, I sang for an awful lot of weddings but now that I'm older it seems that I sing for more funerals than I do weddings, sorry to say. But that's the way life is. Time marches on. I was so tickled though when John Held lived up on Shavano and we lived on Eaton Street at the time and he invited me to come and sing with his choir. I tell you there's never been another director like John Held. He could sing every part, I don't care if it was soprano, alto, tenor, bass, and he could hear the mistakes! But he was a wonderful musician and I owe a lot of credit to him for my singing.

Leon: Speaking of mistakes, I made plenty, but John always said, "I'd rather for you to sing out and make a mistake than to sing so softly we can't hear you."

[laughter]

Leon: I didn't disappoint him!

Dixie: Oh dear!

Beth: Well, it sounds like you had a great life here in Salida.

Dixie: We did.

Beth: And I certainly thank you for helping us out with the oral history work down at the library.

Dixie: Well, I don't know how much we've helped. It was kind of fun to reminisce, and like I say make a few notes of some of the changes we have seen in our time.

Leon: We've really enjoyed our life here in Salida.

Dixie: Oh, we had some friends that are just precious. We've known you and Ed for a long time.

Beth: For a while, yes.

Dixie: But you came and went. Now you're back.

Beth: Well, you came and went too.

[laughter]

Dixie: It's true!

Beth: Well, thank you both very much.

Dixie: You're welcome.