

Oral history with 85 year old white female, Mesa County, Colorado (Transcription)

OH-106 TRANSCRIPTION FOR --- W-17 DATE: 1977 PLACE: INTERVIEWER: Mildred Fuller

(beginning time lapse <1 1/2?> min.) Begin M9 B (5)

Emma <Nacel?>: We left Potter the last part of November.

M. Fuller: That was Potter, Nebraska.... Potter, Nebraska, yes, for Colorado. There were Dad and <Nana?> and the four of us youngsters. The oldest one was eight, and the other one, five, I was two and the baby was six weeks old, when we started. Now, what all they had in the wagon I don't know because it was full, of course, and there were just the two little mules to pull it, leaving the horse to use for a lead horse in case the road was bad. The,.. I don't know much about the trip as far as Greeley but at Greeley they let me go with Dad to the blacksmith shop to have the mules shod and that was about the prettiest place I thought I'd ever seen. The fire, the force and the sparks that flew all over. It was really something. Then how,..what passes we went over I don't know, but we came to Kremmling, and went down Gore Canyon and that I guess was really some canyon to go through, not very good road and narrow. Then Toponas and McCoy and State <Irisse? >, Wolcott, Eacle and at Gypsum we started over <Cottonwood?> Pass or the way to Glenwood and it wasn't too <unintelligible text>. Then on through Rifle, Parachute... Grand Valley now... Debeque. We were in Debeque on <unintelligible text>. There they had a camp house that the

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(E.N.) different campers could use and Dad went up into town and got four Ben Davis apples, no, five, that was our Christmas. Then the next stop was Atwell Bridge and then down Plateau Canyon. The road was on the opposite side of the creek from what it is now and it wasn't too good a road because they had to use the lead horse all the way. But he wouldn't pull unless he was led so either <gap> or <gap> the older brother, took turnabout leading him down the canyon. Then we ferried over the Grand River now the Colorado, at Palisade. And where we camped on those nights I have no idea but we did come down, right down Main Street in Grand Junction and on out to the claim, north of Fruita. Four miles north of Fruita and a mile and a half north of Highpoint. Dad had expected some kind of a cabin there but there wasn't anything but creasewood, rabbit brush and sage. High as your head. And a few logs lying criss-cross in a clearing. But <gap> kindly offered a cabin on his place at the foot of Highpoint Hill for us to use until something could be built on the claim to house the family. Dad gladly consented to do that and it was much better than camping out in wintertime even though one of the doors was missing, but by using a strip of carpet tacked over it it did very well to keep the snow and the wind out, though I remember seeing snow clear across the floor at times. How long it took to <unintelligible text> to build to live in on the claim I just don't know. But with the Panic of 1893 money was scarce and hard to get materials and we just had to use just whatever was at hand. So he, he started building a dugout, digging down three or four feet and pulling up with cottonwood poles and roofing it and <unintelligible text> in it. And in that way we soon had something we could <unintelligible text> into. When we moved in and it was warmed up the

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(E.N.) cottonwood poles started leafing out. (laugh) As soon as the school opened at Highpoint after the Christmas vacation, <gap> and <gap> the older sister and brother, went to school there. He had a window in the door of the dugout and a window on one side and at one time when my younger brother, Herbert, and I were left alone there we saw either a dog or a coyote look in through the window. Probably a coyote because there were no dogs around but we stayed <quiet?> and everything was all right.

M.F. But scared...(laughter)

E.N. I guess we were scared. After the family moved out on the claim the next thing was to clear the land so that there would be something to plant in the spring. Dad had eighty acres there, but only ten acres were under the Grand Valley so that was all that could be watered. The rest of the land was what would be under government highline and that didn't come through with water for that part of the country until 1917. So with grub hoe and scraper and plow he started clearing that land and leveling it about ten acres. There were washes in it and high spots but there was a lot of work to get that done and then when it came time for the water to be in the Grand Valley, and the Grand Valley was only about two hundred feet from the house, and the <unintelligible text> wash was on the other side of us. The Flume #14 on the Grand Valley was right close to us all the time.

M.F. What crop did he plant <gap>? Food was his first concern, wasn't it?

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E.N. The one <thing?>, they hadn't had fruit in Nebraska but there was a <unintelligible text> at the time so he planted an orchard, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, cherries, every kind of fruit you could think of-and planted a strawberry patch, one of the

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(E.N.) first things, and then in the rows of the trees he planted asparagus. And food crops, dry beans and carrots and vegetables... carrots and beets, and potatoes that could be put in a cellar to be used for next winter's food. Cabbages and tomatoes, and there was a sorghum patch, and corn. The sorghum he had pressed at a press not too far from Fruita and cooked down into sorghum and that was part of our spread for bread. He planted pumpkins and squash, too, and Mama made a lot of pumpkin butter and that was always good as a spread altho she had put down butter in stone crocks with salt and then a layer of butter and then salt and another layer of butter in Nebraska, that we brought with us and in that way we had butter for a while, probably a year.

M.F. You had no cow or any meat?

E.N. No cow, yet, no, and the meat we had was cottontails. (laughter) But oh, it was good! The cottontails were plentiful and Dad had his old #10 shotgun with him wherever he went, that he brought in plenty of rabbits. And <gap> just cooked them and then fried them in cracker crumbs and egg and they were good. Some who ate them with us there thought they were chicken. Then the rabbits were so plentiful that the young orchard had to be racked so they wouldn't eat the bark off the trees through the winter. And the rabbit brush was used for that, tied around all the <little?> fruit trees to keep the rabbits from

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eating them and it works. The first spring we were trying to get a headgate in the Grand Valley Ditch so there'd be fall enough to water all of this, about ten acres <unintelligible text> because they were just a little bit high but by going clear to the very east edge of the place he managed to do it but that was a long ditch there he thought but he got the water through. And when alfalfa was ready for the first cutting

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(E.N.) Dad worked out in the hayfiel