

Beth: This is Beth Smith. I'm up at Janet Murphy's house. Janet, where is that house? Where's your address?

Janet: 7409 Country Road 141.

Beth: Thank you. We're going to talk about the hospital and the hospital auxiliary today. When did you move into town, Janet?

Janet: In August of 1959.

Beth: On the other side of here is Opal Heister. When did you come to Salida, Opal?

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Opal: I came about September of '67.

Beth: All right. Well, you two gals just take off and tell us all about the hospital auxiliary.

Janet: Well, first of all, let's start with the history of the hospital, some of it. The hospital was built in 1885 and all the brick for that new hospital was \$20,000

[00:01:00] and it was all from brick east of town. There used to be a brick house down there that you could see from the highway, which has been torn down now. It

[00:01:30] opened up on November the 10th, 1885. It was the Denver & Rio Grande hospital at that time. They had a fire in 1891 and burnt the hospital down. Since then, they rebuilt it and made it larger, added the large fountain in the front yard. Which is still in the front yard, beautifully taken care of.

[00:02:00] In 1925, was when the railroad made a contract for a new addition, which would go to the west. The original building ended right at the porch. The side of the porch. Now, you're adding onto the west and you would add hospital patient rooms. The kitchen eventually came back there. Some of the layout for that was ... Opal, maybe you can tell that on the first floor.

Opal: I went to work there in 1952. I remember the kitchen as being to the east. What I remember about the kitchen was that they had a steam table that they cooked

[00:02:30] on. The steam was piped under the Arkansas River from the round house. Later on, of course, they modernized it. The dining room was kind of where part of

[00:03:00] the business office is now. It was right across from the kitchen. When I first worked there, the entire business office was where the auxiliary room and the waiting room are now. We had an admissions area and a dismissals area. The administrator was in there and the head bookkeeper and the billing clerks. We were all just in that small area.

[00:03:30] Across the hallway, where is the business office now, was the waiting room for patients. To the First Street side was the laboratory. To the other side of the waiting room was the x-ray room. All outpatient services were done right there.

[00:04:00] The head nurse at that time was Matilda Vogelsburg, and she worked in the pharmacy and she took x-rays. Irene Jackson Cope also helped take the x-rays. I

remember, Marcilia Boast was the lab technician. James Camel was the administrator. It was still a railroad hospital. Mario Pasquale was the chief clerk. Elva Watson and Pat Warner and Pauline Amicone were the clerks that worked there at that time.

[00:04:30] The sun porches were at the end of the long hallway at the patient room and I remember first floor as having beds in there for the men and second floor having beds for the women. The obstetrical department was upstairs and the delivery room and nursery were right where the elevator came out at that time.

[00:05:00] We only had one elevator. To my knowledge, that elevator was there in '52 and it's still there and it's still working. Dr. Fuller was the chief surgeon and he had an office upstairs. At that time, the men's ward was up there where medical records would be right now. That's the main structure, as I remember it then.

[00:05:30]
Janet: It was interesting, because Dr. Fuller's office was on the second floor. When I came in with the hospital auxiliary, which was in February of 1960, we walked down three steps. Those three steps was where we had Proudfoot and Frankie Stevens. Later, we bought Frankie Stevens's house on East Street. Dr. Proudfoot was one of these fellows who used-

[00:06:00]
Opal: Nox.

Janet: Noxzema constantly. The minute you walked down that step, you knew where you were going. He was our Noxzema-path. It was this part of where Opal giving

[00:06:30] ... A lot of it was for the convalescents. The auxiliary too care of those. We shampooed their hair. We washed their hair. We did their fingernails. One of the interesting things that Opal and I were discussing was the fact that ... What was her name? You neighbor?

Opal: Norma Claire.

Janet: No.

Opal: Oh, Alfreda Caviness.

Janet: Alfreda Caviness had been in the nursing home for quite a while and Theta Sigma Phi had a member from Center who was in there, Helen Moore. She had MS and she had to have a way of taking a bath or a shower. We bought the tub that you step into. Poor Alfreda had never had a shower or bath either. We told her, yes it could be used for anybody in the hospital. She was just like she was having a birthday. She thought that was the most wonderful thing there was.

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[00:07:30] It was interesting how the hospital has changed because now we have a wing that was added in 1991. Is that when it was, Opal?

Opal: Right. 1991.

Janet: Was added to the back where our patients now are. All the patients were moved from the first floor to the second floor in this wing and they have a hospice room and so forth up there. Downstairs is all the technical parts. The x-rays and the labs and all of that and the cafeteria. It has increased. One nice point that I would like to add is that Goldie Davidoff was our president 2 years ago. When she died during presidency, her husband made all the money for memorials to the hospital auxiliary. The hospital auxiliary refinished room 221 and it is absolutely beautiful. Go by and see it if you can because it's a very good room.

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In the meantime, with the auxiliary formed in 1960, January of 1960 with Adele Donahoo as president. Who was a wonderful president. We did such things as donating. All of our money is spent on equipment to the hospital. We have spent a total of \$319,505.80 as of the end of '92. We have worked 382 hours, 682. 3,802 682 hours we've worked. That has saved the hospital a lot of time.

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One of our best remembrances was from Dee and Jack O'Haro. Dee was treasurer a few years before I became treasurer. When they died, they left some money to the hospital auxiliary. We had no idea how much money was left to us or what.

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In the middle of May, I got a telephone call from Connecticut. This is in 1991. They left \$65,000 to the auxiliary. I was a nervous wreck because I didn't know what to do this stock. Finally, the lady who was handling it back in Connecticut said, "Why don't we just leave it in there, then, until you decide what you want to do with it." That was fine. Well, came September, as she called me and she said, "I really think you need to take this money out. You now have \$93,629.80.

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The interest we got in that period of time. That allowed us to be able to buy a second mammogram machine for the hospital. It is wonderful to have two of them, not to have to wait in line too long.

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We just do everything that we do. The money goes to the hospital to buy equipment. We've bought lots of big equipment in the convalescent, at the ICU room. We have a bed that you can lay in it, that can measure and weigh you in that bed without ever being moved out of bed. Those kind of things have made it really good for the hospital. They're very appreciative of everything that goes on.

Beth: What kind of things do you do to raise money?

Janet: We have bridge marathons. We have bazaars, which we will be having on the 30th of October at the Granzella residence. We have cookie makers. We sell pies just before Thanksgiving. We've done so many things. I was telling the girls, they didn't call this a bazaar before, it was a country cook's kitchen. That's where they sold everything that they wanted to sell. We've raffled off ... Helen Hoover gave us a silver coffee service, which we raffled off many years ago. Somebody made homemade napkins, which we raffled off. We'll do anything there is that can make money, is what it amounts to.

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Opal: I remember quilts being raffled.

Janet: Yes. Afghans and quilts. Books, all kinds of things. We used to have a picture fair, which they would put them up in the Monarch Room and you would come in and you could buy these pictures. We did very well with that. We sold a lot of those mountain scenes and so forth. We'll do anything you want us to do.

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Beth: Can you tell me about how many people you have on your auxiliary list now?

Janet: Right now we have about 83. The sad part of it is we do not have 83 working members. We have some assistant members, or some auxiliaries who are not active. This is fine, because we do use those people some. We really need working members. When I first joined, we had working members because I would go and take care of Eleanor Pasquale's children while she worked. Then the next day, she'd take care of my children while I worked. We worked it that way. Today, wives have to have a second job so we don't have as many that way that we used to have. We have, I would say probably, 40 active members. We have 25 places that can be placed to work. Don't ever hesitate.

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Beth: What do your auxiliaries do?

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Janet: Well, we have auxiliaries who are at the desk as you go in. We have a gift shop, which we sell merchandise. We have auxiliaries who shred. We have auxiliaries who work in the heart respiratory room helping out there. We have auxiliaries in the new Heart of the Rockies medical center on Highway 50. Those auxiliaries work in physical therapy at the desk, and doing jobs and x-rays and so forth. We have lots of jobs that we can put you in. We'll find you a job without any hesitation. Because our job is to help the nurses and the doctors to be handy. If we're not needed, get out of the way.

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Beth: Which job do you like best, Janet?

Janet: My job has been, for the last about 8 or 9 years, with physical therapy. I think I went into it just before I had knee surgery. After they did such a wonderful job with my getting back on my knee and working and so forth, I figure that's the job that I like. I was treasurer for 8 years. At some point of time, I've had almost every job except president because we bought the flower store the year that I was going to be president, so I couldn't be president. I'll take any job and do any job.

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Beth: How about you, Opal? Which job do you like best?

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Opal: Well, as an auxiliary, I have always been an associate member. I'm afraid I avoided actual work in the auxiliary, but I was working full time at the hospital. I made a mistake. I told you I moved here in '67. I became the chief clerk there in '65 and I went to work there in '52. I always enjoyed the auxiliaries as a part of

[00:16:00] our hospital because they were so enthusiastic and so giving. I remember Faye Dunavin, from years ago. She would say, "What we do is so rewarding."

Janet: It is.

Opal: I never forgot her doing that. In addition to the things that Janet told you about, of course, I worked in the business office. These girls would come in and file for us and do many clerical duties at the same time they were helping on the floors with the patients. I remember one of the funniest things, and I don't remember the two lady auxiliaries, but one of them wanted to file alphabetically and the other wanted to file numerically. They got in a big discussion about what was proper. We were happy to have them put things in order because our charge tickets were by the patient's number, but when they got put in the file, they were alphabetical. Either way worked. One of them was Carol Cotton. Do you remember Carol? She was such a sweet person.

Janet: Yes.

Opal: I can't remember who the other one was.

Janet: It might be interesting, Beth, that I explain to you how I became an auxiliary. We moved here in August and that October my father passed away. He was buried on his 65th birthday in November and my mother came home with us for the holidays. I was an adopted child so it was hard to leave my mother, who had done so much for me, go back to Pennsylvania alone. I just almost had a nervous breakdown about it. Dr. Leonardi, I went down to see him. He said to me, "Why don't you let your boys and your husband here and you pack up and go back to Pennsylvania?" I thought, "He's a meany."

[00:18:00] He was trying to explain to me that I had much more to do here than I had back in Pennsylvania. He said, "I'm going to take care of that. I'm going to call the auxiliary and we're going to get Vidella to put you into a place in the auxiliary. I've been working to 45 years with the auxiliary and there's nothing more rewarding than what I've done."

[00:18:30] Opal: I would like to, you mentioned Dr. Leonardi. Before the days that we had extra money, I remember him donating equipment to the surgical department when they needed something. One of my jobs was to manage the funder of money. I do remember him as one of our largest donors over the years

[00:19:00] Janet: He had his heart and soul into this hospital.

Opal: Yes, he did.

Beth: Are there any doctors you think of right off that helped your auxiliary along?

Janet: I'm sure all the doctors did. I remember from the time of Dr. Howard Smith on down through Dr. Hoover, Dr. Steve Phillips, Dr. Sandow, Dr. Mehos. Many
[00:19:30] doctors. I think they all work with us and they all appreciate what we do. That's the nicest thing, to be appreciated.

Opal: I thin they really appreciated having you around because you were just kind of a right hand to the hospital. The nurses were very busy and they were very talented and very good, but they had certain duties. The hospital just often
[00:20:00] needed this person who had the free time to go do little things for the patients.

Janet: Right.

Beth: You have a gift shop down there now, don't you?

Janet: Yes, we have a gift shop. Which is now being remodeled. They just finished remodeling. The waiting room to the front is now a conference room to the back half of it. The front half of it is a few chairs for those who are going to be admitted into the hospital. The auxiliary office is there, now, to the side of the gift shop. We're all right there together. The gift shop is being remodeled and recarpeted. As soon as it's all done, the auxiliary has bought a cappuccino machine and we're going to have cappuccino in the hospital.
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Beth: When did your gift shop get started?

Janet: It was started right from the beginning. At that time, under the front stairwell is a little room. Sandy Holmes is the last one who was in it. That, in the beginning when I was in it, was our gift shop. It was a little dark dungeon at that time, but that was what we used. We had our coffee pots, our coffee carts. We had everything right in there in that little room. We made do with it and we made money in it.
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Opal: I remember that room as being the medical records when I first went to work there. Because everything was just in that area. There was nothing past the first turn in the bend except patient rooms.
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Beth: You mentioned Sandy Holmes. Who was that?

Janet: Sandy Holmes has been there ever since Opal left. Right Opal?

Opal: She was there before I left. We worked together for-

Janet: 25 or so years.

Opal: Many years.

Janet: Yes. Sandy is the person that I would say, in the hospital now, knows more than
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anybody does about the hospital. Sandy is just a good girl who keeps tabs of all these things. She takes care of all of the pictures. She takes care of all of the doctors who are retiring. She takes care of a lot of the nurses. She does the parties. She does everything. Now she she's co-chairman with the fund drive for the hospital, which is something new they're starting.

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Opal: She worked as the administrator's secretary. I know I personally worked for 15 administrators, so I'm sure that she worked for at least 15 administrators because she worked after I did. Sandy's young enough to be my daughter, so I was there first.

Beth: Well, we're talking the crisis in the community and how the auxiliary was going to step in and help.

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Janet: What happens is, years ago when they had the the accident on Trout Creek Pass, Pete Makris and a friend of his, John Mehos, said, "Please, let's set up so that we have people from every state. If somebody from your state is hurt and needs help or their parents needs help, you'll be responsible for helping them."

[00:23:30] We set that up years ago. We kept it going. It's not in effect now, I know, but I'm sure that ...

Beth: Do you mean that each state was given to an auxilian and she was called in whenever there was someone from that state?

Janet: Right. Particularly if you lived in that state, they thought you would know something about it. Then, it went into, when we had the football bus accident on Monarch Pass, that we were on that list and we were called in to do things then. That's when the Nesbeth Heliport came to part to take these young children from Salida Hospital into Denver by helicopter. The public service, I remember Lee Myers was one of them, came down and they moved the wires, all the electrical wires. Kept the hospital going, but moved the wires and got the helicopters in and out. That's been called the Nesbeth Heliport for years.

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Beth: That was in 1971. September '71 and those kids were coming down to play football.

Janet: Right.

Beth: Do you have anything else you'd like to tell us, Opal?

Opal: I'll tell you anything that you can think of to ask me. No, my favorite memories are private. I would like to say that I truly enjoyed my career there. I worked

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there for 35 years. Over the years, it has seen many, many changes. Not only the room and the additions and the personnel, but the whole practice of medicine and how things are done has changed dramatically. It has been a stable entity for our community and I was very proud to have worked there.

[00:26:00] I'm very proud of our community for keeping it going. I used to say I worked for doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs. It was very interesting, because almost everyone there had their heart and soul in it. Their families depended on it. Their livelihood depended on it. I personally appreciate having a facility that we don't have to go out of town for. The more improvements and the more services we get, to me, are always a plus.

Beth: When did you retire, Opal?

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Opal: Officially, in 1986 but I worked for 2 more years until '88. I went to work there in 1952. I made 45 cents an hour at Woolworth and I got this job at the hospital for 89 cents an hour and I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

Janet: Isn't that true.

Opal: This is true.

Janet: One of the things, Beth, that I forgot to mention about the auxiliary is a scholarship. The scholarship was formed in 1966. As I remember, Faye Dunavin was president of that. Carol Cotton and I served on our first committee for the scholarship. This scholarship, we started at \$100 a year for them to go to college. Patty Post was our first recipient.

Beth: Are these scholarships given to high school kids?

Janet: High school kids who are interested in the medical center and who are the tops of their class. Because science and math are very important in nursing or doctors or whatever. Therefore, we do that. For 28 years, I chaired the auxiliary scholarship and had a wonderful time. Met wonderful kids. Had a wonderful committee to work with which we chose. Clyde Trainor of Buena Vista got with me and we sat down and made a format of how they can apply and what they need and so forth. It's done so well that a couple other organizations have asked us for this same type of thing that they can work at for students in their lines.

[00:28:00] It's been taken over by Tina Giles, who I thought was very secure because she had worked at the school with the kids. Tina has been doing it ever since. It's a wonderful thing. We have now raised it. We went from \$100 a year up to \$500 a year and \$750, is where we are now for each and it's renewable all 4 years they are in college.

Beth: How many do you give away each year?

Janet: One, but we carry on the other, so we end up with four scholarships each year.

Beth: How many kids have you helped with these scholarships?

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Janet: I can't tell you how many we've help with it. I would say probably 30, 35.

Beth: Do you remember if any of these children have come back to work, to make their career here?

Janet: No. That's the sad part of it. None of them have, but they've been doctors. Dr. Mike McQueen, Dr. Tim Sandell. Other names that I can't drop off my head.

[00:29:30] They've all had some part in doing. One girl, Dawn Martin, out of physical therapy, she was a scholarship winner and she works out of physical therapy. One of the really, really good physical therapists.

Beth: Good.

Janet: We have had some. It's given us a name because other doctors, other places, they know who we are by these doctors. It's been well worth the money we've spent on it.

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Beth: That sounds wonderful. Can you think of any incidences of funny things that have happened as you were working down there or helping out?

Janet: The funniest thing, I think, is that Dr. Leonardi said to me after probably 2 or 3 years that I was helping. I happened to be down there in the morning doing the coffee cart with Leona Matthews at that time. She was Leona McDonough later.

[00:30:30] She and I were doing the coffee cart and he said to me, "Come on, Janet. Stay for lunch. I'll buy you lunch." I thought, "Boy, he's a generous guy." He said, "I know it's what you like. Liver and onions." Lena could cook the best liver and onions you ever tasted.

Beth: Lena who?

Janet: Lena Elwes. She could cook the best liver and onions you ever tasted. That was probably the thing I remember most of all that was so funny that the doctor would ask me to stay and have lunch with him. Mary didn't like ... He was married to Mary at the time before she died. She didn't like liver and onions and she wouldn't cook it.

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Beth: Did you like liver and onions?

Janet: Oh I loved it.

Beth: That was good. Anything else you gals want to tell me?

Janet: I can't think of anything right off hand, Beth.

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Opal: I have made a list here of the doctors that I remembered were working there in 1952. I thought that might be interesting because I did mention Dr. Fuller as the chief surgeon. There was also a Dr. Close and I believe he was a general practitioner. Of course, Dr. Bender was there and Dr. Howard Smith was there. [00:32:00] Dr. Budd was the anesthetist and Mrs. Budd still lives here. Dr. Mehos was an anesthetist. Dr. Hoover was a surgeon. Dr. Phillips was an internist. Dr. Sandell was a general practitioner. I don't remember exactly when some of the newer ones came, but those were the ones that I remembered from way back.

Beth: You both have very good memories.

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Janet: Can I give a secret? I read all the minutes from the auxiliary before we did this.

Beth: I think that's great. Who's taking care of the minutes? Who has those?

Janet: Those are in the president's files down in the auxiliary file room. Eventually, I'm going to give this to them because they want to know. Some of these members are not as old as I am and they want to know what rooms were where and so on and so forth. It will be interesting to do it with them too.

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Beth: That's exactly why we're doing oral histories at the library. Somebody will come in and want to research somebody who has worked here years ago and they'll be able to find them in the oral histories.

Janet: That's good. That's real good.

Beth: Thank you gals very much.

Opal: Thank you.

Janet: Thank you.

Beth: I've learned a lot today.

Opal: It's been enjoyable.