

Beth Smith: This is Beth Smith, I'm up at Janet Murphy's home today to talk to her about her life in Salida and when she came here. She lives at 7407-

Janet Murphy: 9.

Beth Smith: Oh, 7409, sorry. County Road 141. Hello Janet, are you ready to talk to us?

Janet Murphy: I think so probably.

Beth Smith: All right.

[00:00:30]

Janet Murphy: We started out, Dick and I were married in Pennsylvania in 1951, came out to Colorado, we actually settled in Aurora for a year before we came down to Salida. Dick worked with insurance and when he saw me out in the driveway, kick passing a punt with the boys he decided that was not a mother's job, that was a father's job. He went to work up at the reformatory and he was up there for about 13 years when I had been working at the radio station and had that surgery and didn't go back to work there. Went to work for Bev and George Dorson. They were selling the store and so we decided, we'd been florists back in Pennsylvania, that this was fine. We'd buy the flower store. That's where we really got started in Salida, was with the flower store. It was about 10 years after we came here. Some of the history of the flower store, we couldn't find the exact date that it was built, but it was built in the late 1800s.

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Beth Smith: The building that you were in?

Janet Murphy: Yes. The building.

Beth Smith: Where was the flower store, tell us that.

Janet Murphy: 225 F Street. There were 2 doors, if you see the flower store, now it's the trading, Salida Trading Company. There are 2 doors, and the one on the right was Hay's Photography, Helen Hays, and the one on the left Hoddings bought so that he could put in the flower store. So it was 2 stores until Edith Davis had it and she made it all open into one, big store. That's what we were in with one big store.

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Beth Smith: When did you buy that store, the year?

Janet Murphy: We bought it in 1976.

Beth Smith: 76.

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Janet Murphy: 6, yeah. We had it until 1988 when we sold it. There were 4 owners up to the time, we were the 4th owners of that store in about 100 years. The

[00:03:00] Hoddings and he had a greenhouse up on D Street, right near the Catholic church. There's a little store there that we used to remember, well that was Hoddings place and they had a little greenhouse out in the back. Then it was bought by Davis, Lou Davis, and then it was the Dorsons and then we had it. Then we sold it, we decided we better put it up for sale because we were getting older and tiring, it was too much work and we decided we better think about retiring. Not to do it for a year or 2, but within 2 months we had sold it and people from California bought it. The Thompson's had it for about 9 years and then they sold it, the building and all, the business because it was a little hard for an independent florist to sell prices that the grocery stores could sell, where they had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of flowers.

[00:04:00] The only thing was, and Thompson's didn't do this, Bev and George taught me to service a wedding and I always went out and saw the bride down the aisle and closed the door. Saw all the flowers were out and so forth. That was our best advertisement really, to see that done. So many people have said to me, "Oh why aren't you there to service this wedding? Why aren't you there to do that?" It was fun when I was doing it, but with arthritis, it's not fun anymore so that ended that. We bought it in 76 and we sold it in 88 and at that time the Thompson's ran it. Then they decided to sell and go back because of the flower business going downhill. The trader's, Salida trader, Terry and Tara Ruitter bought that and they have a lovely, lovely store in there now. They've changed it almost completely because we had refrigerators all over and so forth.

[00:05:30] Now they have jewelry and they make all their leather products in the back. They're really doing a very good job with it. After we retired we just decided that we would goof off and that's about what we've done. We lived over on 163 Mesa Circle and the stairs were too much for me when my back went out on me and so we got rid of that house and came over here and lived in these duplexes, which we are very happy with and after back surgery it works just fine. We had 2 boys, Thomas and Steven, Thomas graduated in 1972 and Steven graduated in 1975. They have gone out of Salida, naturally, to work. They went to college and got their jobs. Steve has been with cable TV almost all his life and he now is with Comcast TV out of Denver, in Englewood. Tom went to the Coast Guard Academy one year and when they wouldn't allow him to have a teaching degree, he decided he wanted to be a teacher.

[00:06:30] So he called us and wanted to know if he could come back to Western State and get his teaching degree. We said yes. He was teaching in Montrose, loved it, loved the kids and his neighbor said to him, "Oh we've got a wonderful job in computers, would you like to do that?" Well he'd look at it, it was much better pay. Possibly to educate his 2 boys, so he went on and took the job and then went down to fax down in Colorado Springs, Federal Express, is what it was, down in Colorado Springs. From there he went to Sea Land, he was, one of these job hunters had him under control

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[00:07:30] and they just found him all the best jobs there were and he went to Sea Land. Then he came back to Colorado Springs. He went to Kroger, he was a vice president of Kroger and he enjoyed that, but he came back to Colorado Springs and became a consultant.

[00:08:00] Now he's traveling all over the world, consulting and has a summer home in Scottsdale and a winter home in Colorado Springs and that lets Kathy play golf all the time so they're very happy there. That's about it and we were raised in Kenneth Square, Pennsylvania most of our life. I was raised by an aunt and uncle who adopted me and we traveled around a lot. He was with the DuPont company so we lived in different parts of the state. [00:08:30] Then Dick was raised by his mother and dad, Elmer and Esther Murphy, and they had a brick, his grandfather had a brick kiln in Kenneth Square and made many buildings with the brick and so forth. Then bricks sort of went out and weren't building too many places in that day, not like they are today, and moving around so he gave up and turned that into, excuse me, a greenhouse. Raised flowers.

[00:09:00] We have 2 of the bricks that are on the front porch of 163 Mesa Circle, that he made. We put them in the cement, thinking that was going to be our home for good. We've had several variety of life. We've been active, I've been active with the school. PTA, I was treasurer of the library for about 8 years. Been in high school, when the boys had football games, I scheduled bus loads that we could travel and see and scheduled a place for them to eat. Just been real active with the community. [00:09:30]

Beth Smith: Hospital auxiliary, right?

Janet Murphy: Yes, very active with the hospital auxiliary, 45 years I've been in the auxiliary, active member. I've enjoyed it. I've helped kids get scholarships, I've helped older people who need help and I feel like I have been blessed to have been able to do this with them. I still work with the auxiliary, we're very active.

[00:10:00] Beth Smith: How about Dick? What has he been doing around town?

Janet Murphy: Well, Dick has been a golfer and he has, after we retired, he went into a house sitting job. He started a house sitting business here. He knew he was going to have to do something and one day he was reading in the Denver Post about this house sitting guy, so he called him. We went up to see him, and he has a very unique, he has a record of everybody's home that he sits with. If a plumber is needed, who you call and so on and so forth. He's very capable of taking care of homes and he has about 5 every winter regular. [00:10:30] That's about what he wants.

We're 76 now and we're beginning to tire down a little bit, but he takes care of dogs and houses for people when they're gone. Takes their mail in

[00:11:00] and waters their flowers and does that type of thing. He's been active with the boys. Whenever he could be with them as football and as I say golf. They all are golfers, even Kathy, our daughter-in-law is a golfer and she has a ball with it. So they've all been active with that. I was until I fell out of number 9 and fractured my knee, had to have a new knee and I decided,

[00:11:30] "You're old enough for this, you don't need this." We've been active in the Methodist church in years past, not as active now as we were then, but we're just slowing down some is all.

Beth Smith: Tell me Janet, what do you see the business places in Salida changing from when you started work down there on the flower shop, to what you have now?

[00:12:00]
Janet Murphy: When we started on the flower shop, Wal-Mart was really the only business. Now the restaurants and the motels and the restaurant gift shops, were the only businesses out on the highway. Now it's the banks and everybody's coming on the highway now. Downtown was, well the First National Bank was where Pueblo Bank is and then there were some dress stores in there and they were all torn down. Now it's more an art downtown, then it is anything, and antiques. There are a lot of antique shops. Most of your actual shopping is done out on the highway with your banking and so forth. I see we're getting another new bank, that's just what we need in town. Where's the money going to go to take care of all these banks?

[00:13:00]
Beth Smith: I thought they'd bring some money.

Janet Murphy: Right. Let's hope. The town has changed considerably. When we came here there was just no place to rent and I love Salida and I wanted to stay in Salida. The insurance company thought we could go to Gunnison, now that wasn't my idea. Salida, I saw F Street with all the trees up the street and it was beautiful. We were almost ready to move in to what was then the Sands Motel out on Highway 291, and just about that time we were ready to ... John Peeple's, our landlord in Aurora, got ahold of John Peeple's, and

[00:13:30] John found us a house on 1140 F Street, right next to Bill and Lois Rush. The people had gone to Castle Rock and surprisingly enough, they had opened a flower store in Castle Rock. They'd been with the telephone company. We rented that for about a year and the ... Elsie and Floyd Stallsworth ranch became available and we moved out there because the house on F Street sold, so we moved out there and loved that and enjoyed raising 2 boys on that place.

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[00:14:30] In fact, the first winter we were there, on Labor Day, Dick had to ride Tom on horseback to get him to school because we had 47 inches of snow. So he rode, as close as we were to school, he rode him on horseback. Then the

[00:15:00] Eastern part of town was just slowly being built up. There were no homes

[00:15:30] on Upper G to H, so over there, that the school was about as far as they went up. Then eventually out here in the country there was wide open spaces. Marion and ... Mrs. Chelf's house was the last place on Poncha Boulevard, and the radio station was out all by itself. When I went to work out there it was open in wide open spaces it was. It's changed, a lot. There's still, when you worked in the flower store you knew all the kids because they came in for corsages and it was always fun for me to take all these freshman into the cooler and show them the different flowers.

[00:16:00] I always felt like a freshman could have a nice daisy, mum, or a nice pixie carnation corsage. When they became a sophomore, maybe they could have a mixture with a rose or 2 in it. A junior, they could have roses and then when they were a senior, that's when, if they wanted an orchid, that's when they should have it. Not when they were a young kid. I took these kids in and taught them how to pick out flowers and so forth. It was a lot of fun because then some of them came back for their weddings and, "Well you told us this and you told us that." It worked real good that way. The last wedding we did, when we had the flower store, was Kathy Murphy's, and I promised her I would stay to do her wedding.

[00:17:00] We did her wedding and that was the last one. Of course Kathy's not related, but she's like a daughter. I think there are a lot of changes and a lot of farmland is now built up with homes and so forth. The town has built up considerably and the mountain, S, Christmas Mountain has brought a lot of people to town and I see they're going to be bringing in a television station in this year. A lot of airplanes, both Tom and Steve have flown over Salida when they were coming into Denver, but the pilot said, "We're going round this way to see a scenic tree on a mountain." It was interesting for the boys to see the tree-

Beth Smith: On Christmas Mountain?

Janet Murphy: Yeah. So there's been a lot of good things that have happened, and a lot of changes. We have to go with progress. That's what it all is about.

Beth Smith: Changes are not all bad.

Janet Murphy: No, that's right. Sometimes we don't particularly like them, but then we learn to live with them.

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Beth Smith: Right. You remember back to the World War? How did that affect Salida?

Janet Murphy: World War II? See, I didn't come until after that.

Beth Smith: Oh, you were ...

Janet Murphy: We didn't come till after that. I really don't know. I do remember when we

[00:18:30] first came, on Lallier's Pharmacy, which was owned by Mrs. Alexander. It was owned by Mrs. Alexander, the drugstore on 2nd and F Street. The wall was painted with all the names of all the fellows from the area who were in service. I always thought that was very nice, I hated to see that go because [00:19:00] it was a memorial to the men at that time. I just don't know too much about how the World War did affect the town. I would think, there were a lot of people, Beth, when we moved here, who had never been to Denver and when they found out we were from Pennsylvania, they were absolutely stunned, "How did you get here?" and so forth. 45 years ago, they hadn't really been traveling that much.

[00:19:30] People stayed home by that time, but not the Murphys, we traveled. I really don't know how much, the biggest change that I can think of is the library. Tom was in first grade and my father very suddenly died. We had to go back to Pennsylvania, but they had gone as a first class, grade, to the library and gotten their cards to read books and so forth. It was Mrs.

[00:20:00] Nedderman, and I don't know whether you've ever hear of Mrs. Nedderman, but she wore the typical black dress and the black apron and the black hat and so forth, when you walked into the library you were almost afraid yourself, let alone these little kiddos going in there. It was funny because then Pat Rennie, well we had one other lady, and I can't think her name, she lived on G Street, who was there for a couple years and Pat Rennie helped her.

[00:20:30] Then Pat Rennie went along with Norma Edlund and I think it's the only time in my life I ever got mad with John Ophus, and that was because when the lady who lived down the street from me was the treasurer and she insisted that I was going to be treasurer, well, Pat lived around the corner

[00:21:00] and I thought that would be good. I had 2 little boys and I could do this at home and was right close to the library and so forth, which worked fine. When I was treasurer and Bill Andres was there, we had worked on a budget, he and I on one day and he was gone the next day, but John Ophus

[00:21:30] turned the job over to Norma Edlund, who was not a librarian, and left Pat, who had been wonderful in that library and with the kids, the kids loved her.

[00:22:00] They would go in and she'd sit down with them and read books, 2 of them were there and so forth. He said, "Well, he didn't think that she would want it." I said, "Well I think you needed to give her a chance." At that point is when I said, "Okay, I'm out of the library. If you're going to work things that way." Then Norma went into it and then of course Jeff came in and was president of the library association, which we collected money and got lots of good things for the library, and the library of course, brand new building, which is just gorgeous and really very useful to use. I think that was probably the biggest change I saw in Salida.

Beth Smith: Are you still active at the library?

Janet Murphy: Not as active as I was. I'm not as active in anything Beth, as I was.

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Beth Smith: I realize that.

Janet Murphy: Jeff and I occasionally get together and gab and talk and so forth, but not too much anymore. I don't even think they have a Friends of the Library anymore, do they?

Beth Smith: I don't think so.

Janet Murphy: No. I think it disbanded when they got the new library and they have, of course at that time it was Jeff and the little Nelson girl, and they were the only 2. When they got the new library, I don't even know, I went into the library for something a couple weeks ago and a fellow looked at me and he said, "Have you lived around here a long while?" I said, "Yes." I said, "In the old library I knew all about, even the back room downstairs," where the organization of women met, I knew all about that. It's changed and it's just great. It's a beautiful library now. For a small town we are very fortunate to have it. We're very fortunate to have Jeff. Jeff's done very well with the library. I think that's probably about all my old kickby, Elsie Stallsworth and I used to do a lot together and it seemed like after she left, it was easier not to do it as it was to try to do it without her. After you've worked together for so many years. So I think that's probably what I really know about Salida.

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Beth Smith: Well thank you Janet. You drew a nice picture of Salida.

Janet Murphy: I hope.

Beth Smith: Thank you very much.

Janet Murphy: You're welcome.