

Beth: This is Beth Smith. I'm at 207 Shavano and Virginia Imig lives here. I'm going to ask her to talk on the tape and tell us about some of her experiences in Salida. How are you this afternoon?

Virginia: Fine, thank you Beth.

Beth: Good. Let's hear what you got to say.

Virginia: Well, I thank you for interviewing me. Thanks to the library for doing this project. I think it's certainly very worthwhile. I would just give you a little background about my years in Salida. I came here with my husband in 1968. All right. I was telling you that, I was to 1980s, in the middle of the '80s. The 80s were just full of work and school and dialysis and going back and forth to Denver to the doctors and so on. Then in 1990, Gary went on the kidney transplant list. I think he was only on that a short time like a few months. Then in August of '91, he received a kidney and it was just up and down from there on for the next 3 months. His body just couldn't handle the stress and he died in December of '91.

[00:01:00]

[00:02:00] I continued to teach school and the kids were in college or working. That took us up until '97. In the early '90s from '94 until '97 I believe, getting back to the community stuff, there was a vacancy on the city council in my ward. I decided that I would apply for that and I was appointed I think since it was a vacancy that did not involve an election. I served on the city council for 4 years and that was very interesting. Then I retired in '97 and since then, I have been just as busy, even busier than I ever was before. You wonder how you ever had time to work. I do a lot of accompanying. I'm the organist of the United Methodist Church. I play for various people and if they need an accompanist, solos and ensembles for various events.

[00:03:00] I'm the accompanist for The Noteables which is a women's chorale. We practiced weekly as does the church choir. Two nights a week I'm always gone, taking up busy with that. That group has 2 concerts a year. This year we're having 4 because we have Christmas concerts which we had not done before, so that's fun. In a nutshell, that's my experience in Salida. The town has changed a lot. Meaning there are a lot of new people here, a lot of new homes. I think it's a beautiful place to be. There are a lot of tourists, but I don't think the population has changed very much. People must have also moved away in addition to the ones coming in. It's still a lovely place to be. I do not intend to leave here. I'm right here at 207 Shavano. What else can I tell you Beth? What do you think of?

[00:04:00]

Beth: How about some characters around town? People have made a difference in our ...

Virginia: Characters around ...

Beth: Town.

Virginia: Town.

Beth: Or maybe not. Maybe they just entertained us.

Virginia: I think the people who have developed the SteamPlant as a theater have done a wonderful job, that board has. It's just so nice to be able to go there and see really, really nice events, concerts and plays and individual performances. I'm also on the board of Salida-Aspen Concerts. We have 6 concerts in the summer, students and teachers who come over from the Aspen Music School and provide this area with concerts for 6 Saturdays. It's just wonderful classical music in the summer. We've very privileged to have that. As far as characters in the community, nothing rings a bell with me. We just had so many interesting people here and in and out, but the ones who have stayed have really made a difference in the organizations that I was just talking about. That's all I can think of right now.

[00:05:00]

Beth: Well, there must be something else.

Virginia: I hope this is recording.

Beth: You've been there a long time.

Virginia: I hope this is recording.

Beth: I hope so too.

Virginia: I don't know what else to tell you. What my children are doing, my son is 36 and he's married to a wonderful gal, Karen and they have my 2 grandsons.

[00:06:00]

Beth: Where are they?

Virginia: They're in Phoenix. They actually live in Peoria which is northwest Phoenix. Bradley is 6 and Brian is almost 3. They're just delightful and I love to go there and they come here about once a year. My daughter Sarah is not married. She's 34 and she is a social worker with the VA in Denver. Loves her work there and I get to see her when I go to Denver because she doesn't get home very often either. They're both doing well. They have good jobs and very full lives.

Beth: Good. Did you notice any changes in the town since you have come?

Virginia: In town.

Beth: Because you did move along some of those changes when you were on the ...

Virginia: I did move ...

Beth: City council.

[00:07:00]

Virginia: Yeah, yeah, the hospital board and the city council. I think there was a lot of progress made but to name them specifically, name events specifically, I'm not sure I really can. The fire department and the police department under the auspices of the city council I think have just done a wonderful job. I think we have excellent fire and police service here, a sheriff's office also. Of course, the jail was built during this time in the last, what, 2 years. It's very nice, if jails can be nice I guess. The hospital of course has just done wonderful things in say the past 20 years. It was probably 25 years ago or so that the addition was built on and then they've done many remodeling projects. Then there was another addition about 15 years ago, 10 to 15.

[00:08:00]

I think we get excellent care here. We have a lot of specialized services that we now do not have to go out of town for. We have many new doctors in town. We have those and we knew when we first came here have retired and the ones who have come seemed to be well-received. Our medical care is excellent. I think our school system is just very, very fine. Jenny Biglow being the president of the school board right now has really brought that along too and Jim Wilson who is the superintendent. I'm a little bit out of touch with the school system now that I've retired except for what are in the paper and talked to friends about it. Anything else I just ... Can you think of anything?

[00:09:00]

Neighborhoods in my area are pretty much the same as they were. Out west of town and south of town, there are many, many new homes and lovely developments.

Beth: Are you pleased to see that?

Virginia: Yes, that's fine. I think we need new blood around.

Beth: Absolutely.

Virginia: I definitely think so. The people who have come here who have moved here. Younger people as well as retirees, I think that they have contributed to the town. The ones I have met are certainly doing that.

[00:10:00]

Beth: Good. Were you or your children active in any of the FIBArk specialties or above the mountain skiing or ...

Virginia: We all skied in the '70s and the kids into the '80s did. They were pretty active in school activities. My daughter was a cheerleader and she played tennis. What else did she? I was going to tell you something. They both were in band. Sarah played flute and John was a trombonist and neither of them does that now. Much to their mother's chagrin, but maybe one day they will because those are things you can always pick up.

Beth: That's right.

Virginia: Well, Sarah graduated from Salida High School in '89 and she went to CU
[00:11:00] Boulder. Then she went to Portland State in Oregon for her master's in social work after that. John graduated in '87. He went right to Greeley. Then he went to Aims Community College and got his certification in police work at the police academy there and so he went riding out and got a job with the police force in that area. Then he decided maybe that was not quite what he wanted to do, so he had several jobs and continued to take courses in school along with working and graduated from Metro State in 1998. He graduated many years after he graduated from high school, but I was just so proud and happy that he did that.

[00:12:00] Didn't matter that he had a wife and child in the meanwhile. At least he kept on and now he's working on his masters through Regis College on the Internet. He's pursuing that now, so that's about a 3-year program I think he said.

Beth: What is he doing in Phoenix now? What's his job?

Virginia: He is an information systems officer for the City of Goodyear which is southwest
Phoenix. His position is he is in charge of all the computers, the phone systems,
all communications for the City of Goodyear. He works for the city. His wife,
Karen, is a CPA for the City of Peoria. They have very good jobs and are really
[00:13:00] busy with all their activities and makes me very proud.

Beth: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now when you started out, you were from Oklahoma is that right?

Virginia: Right. I grew up in Norman, Oklahoma, went through the schools there, graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1961 and came to Jefferson County Schools in Denver to teach. Those were the days where you were recruited before you ever graduated from college. I had a job teaching before college graduation. I taught in Denver in Jefferson County Schools for 7 years before coming up here. I was not born in Norman. I was born in Enid, Oklahoma in 1939.

Beth: Your family name was what?

Virginia: Norris.

Beth: Norris.

Virginia: N-O-R-R-I-S.

Beth: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:14:00] Virginia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). My mother was a teacher. She was also a very fine singer. She was a soloist. My sister is also a singer.

Beth: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I've heard her.

Virginia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. That's how we get started on all that.

Beth: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Your husband was born in?

Virginia: He was born in Boulder and his parents were originally from South Dakota. His dad was from Scotland, South Dakota and his mother was from Yankton. Every summer when Gary was growing up, he and his sisters would go back to South Dakota and visit their grandparents. That made for a lot of interesting stories. Gary went to Boulder Public Schools, CU, graduated from CU and then went to the University of Virginia for law school where he graduated in '65.

Beth: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now his father ...

[00:15:00]

Virginia: His father was the dean of the college of music at CU in Boulder. He was on the faculty I want to say at Purdue but I'm not sure that that's correct but anyway back in that area. In 1937, he was hired by Boulder High School to come teach local music, chorale music. Then as the years progressed over the next 3, 4, 5 years, he started teaching some courses at CU in the College of Music. That progressed into giving up the Boulder High School job because the university job of course was what he was interested in doing and he became dean there in the '50s at the College of Music. He was dean of the College of Music until he retired in 1978. The music building there is named for him. It's called the Imig Music Building which is very, very nice. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:16:00]

That was done the year of his retirement in '78, so that was quite a year.

Beth: Yeah, that's fine.

Virginia: He has as I said retired and he lives in Mesa, Arizona. My mother-in-law passed away in June of 2003. He's down there alone now, but I think he's doing well with that. He's doing okay. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Beth: Good. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Virginia: His daughters take good care of him and he gets to see his grandson and his family down there. John and his family, they get together quite often.

Beth: Good. Well, thank you very much Virginia.

Virginia: Well, you're very welcome Beth.

[00:17:00]

Beth: I hope this turns out the way we wanted to.

Virginia: I hope it turns out. If it doesn't, I guess we'll do it again.

Beth: I want to mention the date. This is January 17th, 2005. I'll make sure they know when we've been talking about this.

Virginia: When this, that's right.

Beth: Then I'm going to say goodbye now.

Virginia: Okay. Thank you for coming.