

Beth: Ah yes. There we go. Can see the numbers. We're going. All right, this is Beth Smith and I'm up at 146 Adams to interview Jane Melien. Hello, Jane. Are you ready to go?

Jane: Right.

Beth: All right. First tell us about your family, where you came from.

[00:00:30]

Jane: You mean where I was born and so forth?

Beth: Yeah, sure.

Jane: Well, oddly enough I was born in Leadville and everybody thinks that I'm a native of Leadville. But that happened to be because my grandmother lived there. I was born there and then immediately my family left. They took me and took off. I know nothing about Leadville, very little about it.

Beth: Where did you go from Leadville?

[00:01:00]

Jane: Oh, well, my father was a railroad engineer at the time here in Salida, so he moved down here to Salida for a while, not too long.

Beth: Good. Can you tell me what your birth date was?

Jane: April 16, 1914.

Beth: There you go.

Jane: In other words, think of the number of wars.

Beth: If you're still following on TV, aren't you. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Jane: I have one sister who lives in upstate New York in Wilmington, New York.

Beth: What's her name?

[00:01:30]

Jane: Harriet Adams.

Beth: Her birth date?

Jane: Harriet's birth date? April 28th ... Well, she's 12 years younger than me. Figure out what date it would be.

Beth: Okay. We'll do that. You moved to Salida then when you were very young.

Jane: Yes. I lived in Salida. I didn't spend too much of my childhood here. Do you want the rest of my family?

[00:02:00]

Beth: Oh, yes I do. Tell us about it.

Jane: My father was born in Omaha, Nebraska. My mother, oddly enough, and this is interesting was born in Breckenridge. Well, she was born in 1889, my father in 1888. When her father had come to Breckenridge from Georgia after the Civil War and he ran an ore team in between the mines up there. I don't know whether it was a result ... When I was a young person I didn't question my parents as much as I should have. But whether it was during the Louisiana Purchase or when Spain and the United States divided their property and made the Arkansas River the boundary between Spain. There's a little section near Breckenridge, up the Blue, that was never incorporated in that plan. My mother was born up there. She always claimed she wasn't really a citizen of the United States. I read recently in the paper that they just discovered that and they were trying to do something about that little chunk of ground up there. That was where she was born.

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What else?

[00:03:30]

Beth: We got you into Salida. Did you attend any Salida schools?

Jane: As I said, I didn't spend much of my childhood in Salida because I lived mostly in California or Phoenix, Arizona. But, during the period we did live here, I remember the town as being centered around the railroad with its shops and the railroad traffic which was very busy at the time. I do remember the noon whistle from the shops. When the whistle blew everybody in town knew it was noon and they set their time to the shop whistle. I can't remember if it blew at night or not. It seems to me it did blow at 5 o'clock. I'm not sure. But, I remember the noon whistle. I can't remember all the passenger trains that went through here except there were ... I'm sure I've got the numbers, 3 and 4, 7 and 8, and 13 and 14. That would be six passenger trains. The odd number went one direction and the even numbered would go the other direction. I think two went east and one went west, but I'm not sure.

[00:04:00]

[00:04:30]

Beth: This was the Durango and Rio Grande?

Jane: What?

Beth: Was it the Durango and Rio Grande or Denver and Rio Grande?

Jane: Yeah, the Denver and Rio Grande. These were all standard gauge trains and then there was the pea shooter over Marshall Pass that was narrow gauge. Although it was a narrow gauge, this train had a club car and a porter and the whole bit. Lots of tourists. I used to go over to college. I went to Western State

[00:05:00]

[00:05:30] when I first went to college. The tourists would get on when the train would go round an S curve where the engine would ... on Marshall. The engine would be almost opposite the passenger cars. All the tourists would just go frantic with, "Oh, look."

[00:06:00] Anyway, when I was young, if we wanted to go to Denver instead of like today when we hop in our car and it'd take 2 and a half or three hours to get to Denver, my dad would arrange to take the train. A Pullman car would be pulled up down here by the depot. It had a porter and all the rest of it. We'd go down about bedtime. We'd get on the Pullman and go to sleep. Then during the night, the eastbound train would pick up that car and take it to Denver and in the morning we'd wake up and we'd be in Denver.

Beth: Pretty neat.

Jane: I don't know if anybody else in the whole town would remember that because I was just a little kid at the time. Let's see. In July of 1922, speaking about the railroad, the shops machinists went on strike. It was a very prolonged and bitter strike. In one incident when the strikers were having a "social", down in the Odd

[00:07:00] Fellows Hall, a ranger in plain clothes came in and immediately caused a riot.

[00:07:30] They almost beat him to death, the strikers. Sheriff Hutchinson, Wendell Hutchinson's fore bearer, was the sheriff at the time. He came in and settled everything down, but he declared that no more rangers from the state would come in. They interfered with his keeping the peace. There was a lot of hard feelings during this strike between the strikers and the scabs and the townspeople too as a matter of fact. Finally, almost a year later, the strike was settled but the hard feelings never were settled, for a good many years anyway.

[00:08:00] My father was a railroad engineer and he decided to try commercial art. We moved to California and then we went to Phoenix where we were until the Depression got severe and we came back to Salida. He still had his seniority on the railroad. I started to school here. That was when I was in eighth grade, I guess. After I graduated from high school, I had to wait a year before going to college.

Beth: When did you graduate?

Jane: What?

Beth: When did you graduate?

[00:08:30]

Jane: 32 for crying out loud. Yes, the Depression was still in effect by that time so I had to wait a year even though I did have a scholarship. Incidentally, the tuition at CU for each quarter was only \$45. Hard to believe isn't it?

Beth: Wow.

Jane: That year, I spent time as the society editor for the Salida Mail. That gave me a
[00:09:00] taste for journalism which I followed through when I was in college. There I met
my future husband who with three other Connecticut Yankees had come out
West and not in a covered wagon, but in a model-T. Which was almost as bad, I
guess. I remember his saying that they were really awed by Monarch Pass, but
they were scared too because their brakes weren't very good. They tied logs on
[00:09:30] the back of their wheels. They thought to slow them down, going down the hill.

Beth: Now, this was Charles Melien?

Jane: Hmm?

Beth: This was Charles Melien?

Jane: Yes, Charles Melien. Oh yes, I've only had one husband that is.

Beth: Just want his name on the tape.

Jane: Well, we married the year I graduated which is still the Depression. Teaching
[00:10:00] jobs were scarce. They were almost impossible to get. My new husband's,
Charles Melien, first job was in Sargents over the hill over here. Unlike what we
remembered, it was a very busy place because they were building Monarch Pass
at that time or constructing Monarch Pass and the town was just running over
with people. They had seven grades or eight grades in the school, first through
[00:10:30] eighth grade. The high school kids went to Gunnison on the bus. He was the
principal and teacher too over there, one of the teachers. There were several
teachers. What a way to start out a life of education, I guess because his salary
[00:11:00] was \$100 a month. \$100 a month for nine months. When I go to the grocery
store that seems like what it is. Anyway, I'll have to admit, we didn't have to live
on that salary because in the summer times he was assistant manager at Rocky
Neck State Park in Connecticut. I think he got paid as much at summer's work
there as he did over at Sargents.

[00:11:30] Speaking about Sargents, after we left, they had a big fire over there. I think
their big old Trinchera Lumber Company burned down, if I remember. Then they
took a lot of those cabins and houses, even the boarding house, down to
Buckskin Joe, down here. A lot of those places down in Buckskin Joe came from
this Sargents. That was there when we taught over there. When Chick taught
over there.

Beth: Now, Buckskin Joe is down by the Royal Gorge?

[00:12:00]

Jane: Yes, that Buckskin Joe. I don't know. Our time over there was certainly different,
but it was lots of fun living. When you're young, everything is lots of fun. We
could get up on top of a hill and ski right down to our front door, you know. Just
lots of fun things. From Sargents we went over to Saguache. Chick taught a
couple of years or so. Then we went to California.

[00:12:30] After the war, we came back to Salida since Chick would be teaching here in the high school. He taught history and journalism. He was a high school counselor to begin with. One interesting point in his journalism stint was when Harry Truman's train came through Salida. You heard about this. When his train came through Salida, he assigned one of the girls to interview Harry Truman. I tried all morning to think of that girl's name and I cannot think and I apologize to her if she ever hears this because she was really a go-getter. I'm telling you.

[00:13:00] Everybody in town went down to see the President down by the depot. It was just crowded with people. When the train pulled out, this girl was missing. She had slipped into President Truman's car. Unbeknownst to the President or anybody else and she rode all the way to the next stop with President Truman. She got a wonderful interview with the president. I cannot remember that girl's name. I can see her as well as can be. You never saw such a girl.

[00:13:30]

[00:14:00] I never planned to be a teacher. I was not going to be a teacher. But I did have the basics of psychology in Colorado School Law and that was about it. I spent my time learning the subjects I wanted ... Well, journalism and archaeology. See far from teaching. Anyway, they had more students than they planned on. The superintendent and the principal came up here and begged me to come and take a class on. I finally said I'd try it for one year. I taught several English classes up there and I stayed for 20 years.

[00:14:30] Among the extra-curriculars I handled, I started National Honor Society. Of that I'm proud because the kids needed it. I had some wonderful students that I keep seeing in the paper that's continued today. When I first went up there, they didn't have National Honor Society. Then I was a senior sponsor of the last years of my teaching up there. The year I retired, I had 137 seniors. Now they average around 80 something every year. I had 137 seniors. My recollections of those years are good, but I don't know.

[00:15:00]

Beth: When did you retire?

Jane: What?

Beth: When did you retire?

[00:15:30]
Jane: 1978. Now, I hate to compare it today with the years that I taught. My husband retired as superintendent and his experiences were many. I'm telling you, he had some wonderful experiences.

Beth: What years did he retire?

Jane: 78. We retired together. For instances, when he was a track coach, they won the state championship. I remember Johnny Bayuk being interviewed by the Denver Post. But then, I'm not talking about Chick at the moment. Looking back at education, the only thing I can see. We didn't have the feeling that big brother

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[00:16:30] was breathing down our neck all the time as I'm afraid is maybe happening today. With all these government regulations and government intervention and paperwork and things like that, CSAP and things like that, we were able to focus on our subject matter instead. I'm sure the teachers do a wonderful job, better maybe than we did. But I think it might have been easier teaching when I taught.

[00:17:00] Shortly after we retired, the Presbyterian church had its centennial celebration. That was in 1980. Being retired, they think you have lots of time. I was named chairman of the centennial committee. Luckily, Elda Burgner volunteered to help me. We went at it. Our church, as I said, the Presbyterian church was founded in 1880. It was the first church in Salida. To begin with, the meetings [00:17:30] were held in an old building that they hauled up here from Cleora. The people had to sit around on timbers on the floor. That was in July, I think, and by November there was starting of construction of a new building. The bid was \$260.

Beth: Where was the new building going to be?

Jane: Downtown about where the other old church was. At the time, I have pictures of them, but I gave them to the church. Put it in the scrapbook. It looked like [00:18:00] this little white frame church was sticking way out in the boondocks. Actually it was down on that property where our other church was. Down on F and 3rd Street. It was given to us by Governor Hunt. I think he had some business dealings in Salida at the time, so he gave that property to the church. They built, [00:18:30] as I said, this little white church down there. I don't know if you remember Grace Baird and Ruth Parker, but many people in Salida would know them. They were baptized in that church.

[00:19:00] A new brick church was completely in 1901. That's the one that was down on the corner of F and 3rd street. It was completed at the cost of \$7,000. You can't imagine that today. But with the furnishings, it cost \$8,044 and 70 cents. This property was sold to the Standard Oil Company and then our present church was built. I heard some criticism about selling it. Today, I don't think we could [00:19:30] have sold it. It was in the historic district and having been built in 1901. No kitchen facilities, no restrooms or anything of that nature. People weren't supposed to do things like that in a church. It had a big belfry with the bell. I can't remember when it came. I think in 1883 or something. I can't remember exactly the date, but that big bell was the first bell to be heard in Chaffee County.

[00:20:00] That belfry for the bell had bats in it. If you didn't watch during the church service, the bats would fly down into the church. It was a good thing. We had to have our church meetings and many of the Sunday school classes in a little old building where the driver's license is today. We had some experiences over [00:20:30] there. We had to go and get the water across the street if we had a dinner for the potluck or something. No running water in there and an old coal stove. We had lots of fun. Lots of chili suppers and things in there.

By 1903, the congregational meeting had to be held. Now, this was in the brick church to raise money for the pastor's salary. It was already \$100 in arrears.
[00:21:00] There had been an overdraft on the treasury for about \$81. The people responded. Three people pledged \$10. Three other people pledged \$2.50. Others were willing to give \$.50 a week as long as they were earning a living. Five people gave \$.25 a week. Anyway, it seemed to get them out of the hole.
[00:21:30] Another interesting thing that I remember from the old minutes. About this time, repairs had to be made on the manse and it cost \$.85 as it was recorded in the minutes. How different it is from today, I'll tell you.

After we retired, we did quite a bit of travelling. We went to the Caribbean and Jamaica and Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, South America. We went to Venezuela, Tenerife in the Canary Islands, Ivory Coast in Africa. Of course, they call it the Cote d'Ivoire. We went to Germany and Ireland and Denmark and Yugoslavia. That was one of the high points of our travelling because though we stayed in Croatia and went to Serbia and Montenegro, by that time it had all these different states under the name of Yugoslavia. We spent a lot of time in Dubrovnik. What memories I have of that.
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How glad I am to be back here living in Salida. When I hear of all those upheavals in many of those places, like in the Ivory Coast. We were staying in Abidjan, which is the capital I guess. All of they've been having riots and killing, dreadful there. When we got to see it, it was not that way. It was a very prosperous country for Africa. Anyway, I'm just glad to be living here in peaceful Salida. I think it's peaceful. That's it.
[00:23:00]

Beth: That's all?

Jane: Any questions?

[00:23:30]
Beth: Yes. I didn't get your maiden name.

Jane: Oh, it's Hollander.

Beth: Hollander. How do you spell that?

Jane: No, my maiden name was Ingledew. My mother's name is Hollander.

Beth: Can you spell your maiden name for me?

Jane: I-N-G-L-E-D-E-W.

Beth: B-E-W?

Jane: D-E-W. Ingledew.

Beth: What nationality is that?

Jane: English.

[00:24:00]

Beth: English. Yeah. All right. You didn't even mention your family.

Jane: I'm really proud of both of my children. My son, as I said, lives in ... Oh, you mean my own children?

Beth: Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jane: Lives in Aurora. Works in Denver. My daughter teaches in Connecticut, which is of course with the exception of Chuck, all of our relatives are in the east, in the far east. I mean on the east coast.

Beth: Do you have any grandchildren?

[00:24:30]

Jane: No. No grandchildren.

Beth: No grandchildren, that's unusual.

Jane: No. Well, I have two grandchildren, but no great grandchildren.

Beth: Tell us about your grandchildren.

Jane: My granddaughter, Jennifer, teaches in a private girls school in Texas. My grandson, Jonathan, is in college. They're Sue's children. My daughter's children.

[00:25:00]

Beth: Yeah, good. You mentioned some kind of a Connecticut state park, where you would spend your summers. I didn't get the name of it.

Jane: Rocky Neck State Park.

Beth: Rocky Neck. All right. Fine.

Jane: Beautiful state park it is. When they built a pavilion, it's up on kind of a hill. It's a large pavilion, but it was ... Oh I guess prior to the World War two or something. They swore it was a fortress, a government fortress instead of being a park pavilion. The Germans and people, "Oh, they're building that fort up there." Which it wasn't, it was just a pavilion. It's a beautiful state park.

Beth: Right. We have beautiful state parks around here too.

Jane: But not like that.

Beth: Not like that one.

[00:26:00]

Jane: Well, no because it doesn't cover the ... The state parks here don't cover the territory that they do there. This was a large state park. Great camping grounds and so forth as well as the beach and so forth.

Beth: You worked there too?

Jane: No. I didn't work until I started to teach school. I lived off my husband.

[00:26:30]

Beth: Ah. All right. Can you see any changes in Salida from when you were teaching here to now?

Jane: Maybe it'd be better I didn't say because I think a lot of people who are newcomers, I've heard what they say about us old timers. When was younger, of course, it was a working town with a railroad and climax and downtown had

[00:27:00] lots of stores where you could buy things besides art galleries and things. We had two or three drug stores and several grocery stores and a number of meat markets, instead of being like Safeway where you can go and buy everything at once. There'd be a grocery store and then a meat market. I remember down where Gambles, there was a big grocery store, Alexander's Grocery Store, across the alley was Calloway's ... I think that was the name, Meat Market. It was that way.

[00:27:30] Now I think we have a little bit of a different attitude in the town. I don't know that it's any worse or any better, it's just different. Of course there's a lot more houses here in Salida, building I mean. When they put in Holman Avenue down here, there was just to be a little alley like thing for a few of the people here up on the mesa to complain how long it took to get down the road. Now it's the busiest highway in town.

[00:28:00]

Beth: You're right.

Jane: I'm speaking from experience since I go down there a lot. All the new building and one thing and another.

Beth: No trains now.

Jane: I can't think of anything else unless you have a question or two.

[00:28:30]

Beth: Well, I think that you've done just real well. I really appreciate you sitting down and talking with me. I think you've done a fine job.