

**Transcript of Vera Walling**  
*An Oral History Presentation by the Wyoming State Archives*

*This interview was conducted by Sue Castaneda, Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources with Vera Walling, July and September, 2008, Cheyenne, Wyoming.*

*Disc 1*

**Track 1 – Intro**

**Track 2 – the Early Years**

CASTANEDA: Tell me your name.

WALLING: Vera Walling

CASTANEDA: Where were you born at?

WALLING: Stella, Nebraska.

CASTANEDA: Tell me your birthday and the year you were born.

WALLING: 21<sup>ST</sup> OF JULY, 1908.

CASTANEDA: What were your parents' names?

WALLING: My parents names were Ora Ethel and Cloyd Oliver.

CASTANEDA: And what did they do in Nebraska?

WALLING: He worked on farms and of course, my mother didn't do anything. I was the oldest one in the family.

CASTANEDA: How many kids?

WALLING: All together there were seven. I usually refer to there were only five of us because I had a brother who was born the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and died the 15<sup>th</sup> of May with pneumonia. And then we moved to Pine Bluffs – I had a sister who was six. She died of spinal meningitis. Both of them are buried in Sidney because we come from Sidney to Pine Bluffs.

CASTANEDA: Can you believe you've been here a hundred years?

WALLING: No! I can't because really as the days go on, I don't feel like I'm that old and I still plan to do everything like I usually did except when I order stuff subscriptions

CASTANEDA: It had to be hot over there!

WALLING: It was. I had to milk cows before I went to school and every night when I got home.

CASTANEDA: So, how old were you when the depression hit?

WALLING: Well, when the Depression hit then it started in..the worst was '29. I got married in '28. I graduated in '28 and then I got married.

CASTANEDA: Who did you marry?

WALLING: Kenneth Walling. His folks were homesteaders at Egbert. They homesteaded in 1908.

CASTANEDA: So you met him in school?

WALLING: No, he graduated before I did.

CASTANEDA: So how did you meet him?

WALLING: Yes, I was still in school when I met him. I think we went together about three years. I think I met him in '25 and we got married in '28.

CASTANEDA: Do you have a wedding picture?

WALLING: No, we and another couple just eloped and got married – a good friend of mine and a cousin of his – Mary and Harvey Hobbs. We got married at the same time.

CASTANEDA: How did you meet him? I'm sorry.

WALLING: Well, this cousin...met him....let's see. At a ball game when I was in high school. I was trying to think if I was a junior or a senior. I know I wasn't a senior – I was a cheerleader. I look back and wonder how I did all that.

CASTANEDA: Do you remember any cheers?

WALLING: No, I remember the starting of one with a boy from Burns that was always – “go get a go-cart, go get a hearse...” and I can't remember the rest of it. He was always singing that to us. It was a lot of fun. We had a lot of fun.

CASTANEDA: Did you enjoy high school?

WALLING: Yes.

CASTANEDA: Did you play sports?

WALLING: No. I started to play basketball but then I didn't. My sister did. I went to all the games because I was cheerleader.

CASTANEDA: What kind of sports did they play?

WALLING: All I can remember is basketball. I don't remember at that time that Pine Bluffs had a football team.

CASTANEDA: How many people were in Pine Bluffs then?

WALLING: No. Wasn't very many. And, our school – we just went to school. We didn't have a lot of entertainment. Like we didn't have swimming and I can't remember if they had football at that time. They did have a glee club, I remember.

CASTANEDA: Were you pretty good in school? What were your grades like?

WALLING: Well, on some things I was good and other things I wasn't. Geometry I wasn't any good at and algebra...I was no good. But that's when you took shorthand, and typing and bookkeeping and I loved that.

### **Track 3 – Ken and Early Marriage**

CASTANEDA: So, what did your husband do?

WALLING: He started to work on the railroad right after he graduated. He stayed there until he retired in '71. He worked 46 years.

CASTANEDA: Was he an engineer?

WALLING: No. No. Down to Egbert about the only place you could get a job was on the section. And then he worked up to foreman. When we got married, they had these old section cars you pump up and down. And, then they got better. They got motorcars. When he quit, he had a truck.

CASTANEDA: How many kids did you have?

WALLING: One. He was a railroader. By that time, we moved. He started to school in Egbert and graduated in Hillsdale. We wanted him to go to college, but he didn't like school and he said we'd just be wasting our money so he didn't go.

CASTANEDA: Was his name Kenneth?

WALLING: Kenneth Eugene.

CASTANEDA: Back to when you first got married. What was your early marriage like?

WALLING: Well, it was pretty skimpy.

CASTANEDA: How about your marriage. Was it a good marriage?

WALLING: Yes.

CASTANEDA: How many years?

WALLING: When he died it was '57.

CASTANEDA: So when was your son born?

WALLING: He was born in Burns.

CASTANEDA: What year?

WALLING: '28.

CASTANEDA: So when did your husband die? What year?

WALLING: Uh, '84.

CASTANEDA: So you've been twenty-some years with him?

WALLING: Yeah, 23 years. It will be in October.

CASTANEDA: Does it feel like he'll still walk in the door any minute or are you kind of used to the idea?

WALLING: No, I've gotten used to him being gone. He didn't do anything but sit in the chair for the last few years. He couldn't walk very far either. Of course, he had to quit smoking and that ruined his disposition. People with emphysema get real cranky and mean. And, he drank a lot then. He was in ICU for 21 days. He was up there 46 before he passed away. 46 or 45.

CASTANEDA: I don't suppose you ever dated after that?

WALLING: No, no. That was enough married life for me. Or, even of men! Fifty-seven years of struggling.

CASTANEDA: Was it a hard marriage?

WALLING: Oh no. No. Just had to work hard.

**Track 4 – The Depression Years**

CASTANEDA: You said the Depression hit so tell me how that affected you.

WALLING: We ..of course, in Egbert wasn't much of a place to live so we lived in one end of one of those long section houses. We just had one small room. We had bought a 9 x 12 rug and we had about a foot or two left over. And, on that end, we put the bed and you made your own clothes closets. Put a shelf up with brackets. I made cretonne curtains and I look back now and it was fun. You had orange crates for cupboards...little orange crates..and the same thing you put curtains over them. We had a little railroad stove to cook on and hung all my pots and pan on the wall behind the stove.

CASTANEDA: How long did you live there?

WALLING: Let's see -- about two years. Then we...they had an old school house later we could rent so we moved to that and we had more room.

CASTANEDA: Did the Depression affect you that much? You didn't have that much anyway.

WALLING: No, We didn't have much anyway. Well, yes..it got so bad that he'd work three days one week and two the next. They was doing that to give them all some work. Later, we'd work in the potato cellars –they had potato cellars. We'd cut potatoes and get them ready to plant for a dollar a day. You went in there in the morning in the dark and come out in the dark. It wasn't bad. Of course, everybody there was in about the same boat we were too. Nobody had anything. The guy that owned the grocery store there and the post office and the gas station was all in one. And, of course, we charged from payday to payday. And after we moved to the schoolhouse, I'd board several of the guys who worked on the section because there was nowhere to live or anywhere to eat. I did that all the time we lived in Egbert – like the depot agent would go on vacation and another depot agent would come and we'd board 'em. I took in sewing and I did hair. I finger-waved. Ten cents a head. And the setting solution, you'd buy in an envelope for a dime and mix up. You probably don't remember. You probably never heard of that.

CASTANEDA: Well, kind of like a finger perm, right?

WALLING: Yeah, but afterwards, later, I gave home permanents. I would have liked to go to the beauty school but living out there it – I couldn't make it back and forth.

CASTANEDA: When Roosevelt became president...

WALLING: That was a God's blessing.

CASTANEDA: Tell me about that.

WALLING: He made things – everything he did was for the people. Like he started these camps for people to get jobs. He made it better for the working people. He's the one that got electricity put to all the rural places. To me, he's the best president we ever had.

CASTANEDA; What does it make you think about now? They're talking now that we might be in a Depression again.

WALLING: Well, I'm not sorry I had to go through the Depression. It hurt my feelings at the time, but I look back and really, it made a better person of you. You had to struggle and plan and work hard. But at the time I probably didn't I think so but I look back and it didn't hurt me. I took in washings on the board too for those guys that come and live in the bunkhouses.

CASTANEDA: How much did you charge for that?

WALLING: I don't remember. It wasn't very much. Because they probably couldn't pay very much.

CASTANEDA: How many rooms did you have to board out?

WALLING: Well, we didn't board out any rooms. None of them slept at our place. I just cooked for them. Until the last, when we got a big house, a two-story section house and we did keep a couple – a man and his wife, she was expecting – while he relieved at the Depot.

CASTANEDA: After the Depression and the war started, did you know a lot of people who went to war?

WALLING: My brother-in-law, my sister's husband and my brother's husband and that was all out of both our families.

CASTANEDA; Did they come back safe?

WALLING: Yep, they did. My brother-in-law died in 1978. I can't remember when Kenneth's brother died. It was after that.

### Track 5 -- Driving

CASTANEDA: Do you remember your first car?

WALLING: Yes.

CASTANEDA: Tell me about it. What was it?

WALLING: We lived in that one-room section house and that fellow was going through in a Dodge Roadster from California and I don't....it broke down. He offered to sell it to my husband for a hundred dollars. And my husband knew he could fix it so that's what we had.

CASTANEDA: So what year was the car?

WALLING: Well, we got it in '29. I don't remember what year the Dodge was. It wasn't too old. It was kind of nice.

CASTANEDA: Did you know how to drive?

WALLING: Oh yeah.

CASTANEDA: How did you learn how to drive?

WALLING: I learned to drive on a Model A...belonged to my cousin. That back in Grand Island, Nebraska. I was back there and I learned to drive. But then the last two years in high school, after we moved to a farm, we had to furnish our own transportation so I drove us back and forth.

CASTANEDA: You and your brothers and sisters?

WALLING: Um hm..

CASTANEDA: How old were they?

WALLING: We were all about two years apart.

CASTANEDA: Where did you sister get the meningitis?

WALLING: We don't know. We had no idea.

CASTANEDA: And nobody else got it?

WALLING: No.

WALLING: The house was in real bad shape. The people that lived there before we did - she had birds upstairs. It was such a mess. The floors were buckled. We first moved there—we had to haul water down a couple miles down the road. We had a ten-gallon can we used to put in the trunk and I'd have to do that all myself too. And then the railroad put in a well. I don't know where they got the water -when we went there, maybe the well just broken but anyway, we had to haul water until they fixed it. And they promised to fix up the house and they come and started working on it - they had an extra

gang move in there. Then the big shots come along and said they needed that extra gang somewhere else. So, they just loaded up and moved out and left us. And I was so upset I cried -- I got into the car and I drove up to where the section men were working. But it didn't do me any good of course. But anyway, they finally did come and fixed it up real nice.

CASTANEDA: How did you even get a house from the railroad?

WALLING: Well, those houses were built for that -- like the foreman's house we would get after he was foreman. Then he had the little houses for the section men there --all you had to do was work for the section and if the house was empty, you got it if you wanted it. Just the section crews did.

CASTANEDA: Were there any trees there?

WALLING: Yes, we had some trees. We had a nice yard after we got the well. We finally got it in the house. My husband put in a lawn and a fence around there. I have pictures of it. It was real nice. I was always for making things better -- fixing things up and we did fix it up. I had Venetian blinds all through the house.

CASTANEDA: Is the house still there?

WALLING: No, they moved it. Somebody bought it. It was still a nice house. When they put the water in the house, they put cupboards in --before that I just had a kitchen cabinet from Montgomery Wards. A happy day was in May, 1941 when they come and put in electricity. Up until then we just had lamps and stoves.

CASTANEDA: What was in the lamps? Oil?

WALLING: Kerosene. They furnished it and they furnished the coal.

CASTANEDA: Did you go around and turn the light switches on just to see it?

WALLING: Oh yes! My biggest joy was when we moved to town and I had a thermostat! That was something -- that was back in '62, not too long ago.

CASTANEDA: So you've seen a lot of inventions come around.

WALLING: I sure have.

CASTANEDA: Do you have a cell phone?

WALLING: No. I don't think I'd get enough use out of one. My son and his wife don't have one. The girls gave them one for Christmas but they don't use it. The girls have one, of course.



CASTANEDA: So your son went to school in what town?

WALLING: He started in Egbert and finished up in Hillsdale.

CASTANEDA: They had a school too?

WALLING: Yeah, but that's school is gone now.

CASTANEDA: When did you get a television?

WALLING: '53.

CASTANEDA: What did you like to watch?

WALLING: I liked to watch Channel 5. I don't really remember.

CASTANEDA: What shows? Did you like Lawrence Welk?

WALLING: Yeah and Dallas.

CASTANEDA: That would have been in the '80s.

WALLING: Yeah.

CASTANEDA: Why did you like Dallas?

WALLING: I don't know. I just like the characters and what they did?

CASTANEDA: Soap opera kind of stuff?

WALLING: Yeah, now that one fella that was on Dallas-- the cute one -- Bobby -- He's on the Bold and the Beautiful now.

CASTANEDA: Oh really? Do you watch soap operas.

WALLING: Yeah, I record 'em and then I play 'em at night. I hardly ever watch tv during the day.

CASTANEDA: What do you do all day?

WALLING: Well, I don't know -- I'm just messing around.

CASTANEDA: So then beyond the tv, the vcr came along and that's pretty cool.

WALLING: That's....I record.

CASTANEDA: And a dvd player as well.

WALLING: Yeah, I've got a dvd player but I don't use it much. I get too messed up.

CASTANEDA: Do you like to watch movies?

WALLING: Yeah. I watch a lot of 'em on tv. I watch whatever's on.

CASTANEDA: Cable? Do you have cable?

WALLING: Yeah. They keep wanting you to get more digital and all that stuff. But I don't. I just have cable and I don't have all them things either. I don't want to get rid of this tv. It's a good tv. It's an RCA and I still have a good picture. I've had it since December 1988. It's getting old like me? Whenever I buy anything, I write the date on the instruction thing and I keep it. If I don't remember I can go back and look.

CASTANEDA: Is there anything you would do over if you had a chance?

WALLING: There's a lot of things I'd do over. Like well, when I was in high school, I think I would have paid more attention to school instead of running around and things like that. Although, my grades were never too bad but I could have done better. I did good at the things I liked anyway, let's put it that way.

CASTANEDA: Was there any chance of going to college? Did women go to college?

WALLING: My dad talked about me going to college but I don't know where the money would have come from.

CASTANEDA: So marriage was sort of the option?

WALLING: Yeah. I was the only one of us five who graduated.

CASTANEDA: Oh really? How come?

WALLING: I don't know.

CASTANEDA: Have they all passed?

WALLING: Yeah, they're all gone. I don't have any of my relatives -nieces or - of course, my brother or sister had no children. My one brother had two and my other sister had one. There were never very many kids in the family. All my family's gone. All my nephews are gone. I might have a niece in Denver but I don't know. When my husband died that's the last time I talked to her, she said they couldn't afford to come up here. And she had a boy and I would like to know what become of him but I don't know what happened to him or her. Last time I saw him, he was up here to my brothers. He was ten-years-old and I have seen or heard a word of him since.

CASTANEDA: The potential exists that your son, he could go before you would. That would be awful.

WALLING: Oh, it'd be terrible! I don't know what I would do without him...or his wife either.

CASTANEDA: How old is she?

WALLING: I think she's eight years younger..or six.

CASTANEDA: And he still ranches, huh?

WALLING: No, they live out on that place..but he doesn't do any....of course, he always worked for the railroad. He didn't ranch.

CASTANEDA: So how many parties will you have for your birthday?

WALLING: I've had two pretty good ones. Last Saturday was a pretty big one. And this niece that called – she's having one and then the one at the church.

CASTANEDA: That's good! Keep it up and you'll be 101 before the 100<sup>th</sup> parties get over with!

### Track6 -- The Blizzard of '49

CASTANEDA: Tell me about the blizzard of '49.

WALLING: We about lost our lives in that. We lived out here in Durham about 15 miles. Of course, it was off the highway right along the railroad tracks.

CASTANEDA: It's Durham Estates now, right?

WALLING: Yeah, but Durham was a little railroad station along the track. That's where my husband was foreman. We lived there twenty-one and a-half years.... what was I going to say?

CASTANEDA: We were talking about the blizzard.

WALLING. Oh. On Friday night, we had come to town to spend the weekend and on Sunday night we started home. We got out here along where Pershing and Ridge Road is now, that was a campground. And, the snow started drifting in our car. My husband says "We'd better go back." So we did. And then we went to the depot and was gonna take the train. The train was late. We were gonna take the passenger train that come through –

the passenger train. Well, it didn't come through 'til midnight but we got on it and it was really bad then. When we went through Durham, they didn't even see it. So, they let us off in Hillsdale. The other freight trains and that were stopped there too. When they let us off, they said, "There's a freight train going west, you can take it back." But the freight train never did go and I'm glad we didn't go because if they'd let us off in Durham, we'd have never made it to our house.

CASTANEDA: Where did you stay then?

WALLING: Well, we stayed with one of the section men there and his wife. That was on Sunday night.

CASTANEDA: The blizzard started what day actually, Sunday?

WALLING: Sunday.

CASTANEDA: How many days did it last?

WALLING: Well, I can't tell you how many days it snowed but we didn't get home until Friday. It was so bad. See, people lost their lives down there. One section man and his family, a little ways east of Hillsdale, was trying to get into Hillsdale and they froze to death in their car. It was a mess at the Hillsdale depot for toilets and that... it was awful. Trains came in there with people and they took 'em up to the school house. And then my husband, they put him to work right away, of course. He worked all the time. When we got home - we went home on Friday behind the railroad snowplow on the motorcar. And of course, I didn't have any extra clothes with me. June, where we stayed, let me borrow some of hers. But we went home on that motorcar behind the snowplow.

CASTANEDA: And you had your son with you?

WALLING: No, he was living in town. No, he was living at home driving back and forth but, of course, he stayed in town with my sister. That's where we left our car. Of course when we got home, everything was froze up. My son had a dog - a Doberman Pinscher - it had a little dog house --we thought he'd be froze to death too. But, the Mexicans that lived next door took care of him the best that they could while we were in Hillsdale. That was a mess. That was something.

CASTANEDA: I've seen pictures where the snow around the trains that was as high as the train. Once they got rolling, were they able just to plow through it?

WALLING: Yes. Once they got to going, they did all right. But they froze up settin' there at the Hillsdale depot.

CASTANEDA: Have you ever seen anything like that again?

WALLING: No, and I hope they never do. That was terrible. I was always so thankful that they missed Durham because we'd have never made it to our house cause we'd have a block or more to go.

CASTANEDA: How much father would you have had to go?

WALLING: Where they let you off, it'd be a good block. We'd have to go different ways to go to get up there...run into a fence.

CASTANEDA: How many people died?

WALLING: I don't really know. I know of three in Hillsdale that froze to death in that car.

CASTANEDA: And the people you stayed with had enough food?

WALLING: Oh yeah. See they come out there and dropped food. We had plenty of food - the people that stayed in the school and other people that had to have food. See, the people in Hillsdale couldn't hardly get out either.

CASTANEDA: Did they have a store then?

WALLING: They had a store there.

CASTANEDA: There's nothing like that now, right?

WALLING: No, there's nothing there now. Archer's sure built up but there was nothing there - there wasn't anything there but section houses and a depot. And Durham all it was - there was a depot. But they've done away with the age of the people that lived in it. It's all gone now. Nothing there.

### **Track 7 -- The House on 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

CASTANEDA: So when did you move here?

WALLING: June, 1962.

CASTANEDA: Why did you move to town?

WALLING: Well, they was going to do away with that section of Durham so they put my husband at Burns then and he drove back and forth from here. And then the Cheyenne section came up for bid and he got it and that's where he worked until he retired.

CASTANEDA: What is your address here?

WALLING: 4009 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

CASTANEDA: What was around here when you first moved? Did you have this house built?

WALLING: No. It was two years old but it was just like new. It had no drapes or carpeting. A young couple from the Base had rented it and I don't know if he got transferred or what but they moved out of town.

CASTANEDA: Was there anything around here?

WALLING: Yeah, there were houses. My son was in the Korean conflict. Here's when we moved here. Not a tree in sight. The car's sitting in our driveway and then you look down that street, there's not a tree or a bush. And there are only about three families here now when we moved here. They've moved.

CASTANEDA: Look at the old cars down there. So you put the...

WALLING: ...the sliding glass doors in. I'm sure glad to get rid of that....my husband didn't want 'em. One time when he was working out of town in Nebraska after we moved here. I made arrangements with my brother and a contractor to put in the sliding glass doors. Well, when he come home, he had a fit. He didn't want sliding glass doors. It'd be cold and let in the wind. And he'd have enjoyed them more than anybody but for some reason or another, he had to be contrary.

CASTANEDA: You were supposed to make him think it was his idea.

WALLING: Yeah! But anyway, I said to him, "Well, if you die before I do, I'm going to have sliding glass doors." He said, "I don't care what you do after I die." So the first thing I did was get those sliding glass doors because I wanted them so bad all those years.

CASTANEDA: Well, they make it nice.

WALLING: In the last years of his life, he had emphysema real bad. Of course, being a railroader, you know he was a heavy smoker. He'd could sit at that table and watch the birds and everything...but for some reason or another, he didn't want those doors.

### **Track 8 -- Shopping**

CASTANEDA: Do you ever feel like now or was there ever a time when you felt like you had money at least – you could live comfortably – or do you ever get over that fear of not having?

WALLING: Well, you never get over that fear. Just like now when I shop. Like so many years you didn't have nothing to shop with and you had to remember prices. Right now I compare grocery prices. I can tell you which is the best buy which every week was the best buy.

CASTANEDA: Where do you like to shop?

WALLING: Wal-Mart.

CASTANEDA: Yeah, they do have great prices but it's just a pain to go out there.

WALLING: Yeah, that's it. And you have...things I usually get like oleo ...the grocery department is way back in that corner. And usually, I have to buy dog food or something in the pharmacy and it's way in *this* corner. My son said I should get one of those riding carts but heck, that'd be a nuisance to me. I went out there the day before yesterday. I go early if I can. I got out there a few minutes before eight and I usually get a handicap pretty close. But it tires me out by the time I pick up everything I want. I don't go very often and then when I go I get a lot of stuff. And then by the time I load it in the car and I get it home and unload it...by the time I put it away, I'm pooped.

**Track 9 -- Remembering Cheyenne People and Places**

CASTANEDA: Did you ever eat at the Mayflower?

WALLING: Oh yes, we did and the Bluebird.

CASTANEDA: Where was the Bluebird?

WALLING: That was on the corner right down from the Mayflower. I don't know what's in there now. The Bluebird was there for years. Trying to think of the Greeks that owned it but I can't right now because I had a sister-in-law that worked there. The Mayflower and the Valencia was right across the street from the Mayflower, remember that? The Valencia and the Plains.

CASTANEDA: Uh huh. Which did you like best?

WALLING: Oh, I think I liked the Mayflower the best.

CASTANEDA: Do you remember the Marine Room?

WALLING: Oh yeah.

CASTANEDA: What did they do there?

WALLING: Oh, they had parties in there? Different parties. Penneys had some parties for the help in there.

CASTANEDA: And entertainment right?

WALLING: Yes. Entertainment. They'd dance. (Speaking of Penneys) I started there in '51.

CASTANEDA: And you did what?

WALLING: Alterations. Layaway. Sometimes I was on the floor but not very often. I liked it. I really enjoyed working there.

CASTANEDA: When did Penneys open here?

WALLING: I couldn't tell you. They were as long as I could remember.

CASTANEDA: Do you remember the theater?

WALLING: Oh, yes. Went to a lot of shows there?

CASTANEDA: Do you remember going to see any particular movie?

WALLING: Well, seems like that most of them were western – Tom Nix, Jones and Alan Ladd. Then they used to have a Princess Theatre. Let's see...I think it was up on Pioneer, I think. Safeways, at one time, was on the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and Pioneer.

CASTANEDA: Is that the one that fell in?

WALLING: No.

CASTANEDA: Where was that at, by Schraders?

WALLING: Yeah. Up there on Pioneer I think. We used to come to town –they would give away groceries. I forget how they did that – you could win a basket of groceries. It was back when times were tougher.

CASTANEDA: T.Joe Cahill. Do you remember him?

WALLING: Oh yes, very well.

CASTANEDA: What was he? Who was he?

WALLING: He was the sheriff.

CASTANEDA: Sheriff. He's in quite a few photos. Was he a good sheriff?

WALLING. Well yes and no. I heard stories about him..how he took care of people that was drinking and that. He was kind of a hard man but he was real popular for years. Let's see. Don't they have something here in town named after him?



CASTANEDA: Oh yeah...the park. See I never knew that --that's where that came from.

WALLING: Yeah, that's him. Yeah. He was quite popular from all the things I heard but he was still popular -- I guess that's what made him popular.

CASTANEDA: See, here's Penney's again.

WALLING: That was the best store. The friendliest store. You know, they had chairs and stuff up front -- like for all the farmers would come in on Saturday and set there and visit and now you don't see things like that.

CASTANEDA: While the wives shopped the farmers sat around? What about Woolworths? Where was that?

WALLING: You know where that Chinese restaurant is on the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and Carey? It was in there. Across the street, in the middle of it, was Newberrys.

CASTANEDA: A department store?

WALLING: Well, kind of like a department store. Like Woolworth. Then on the corner next to Newberry's was Walgreens. They went out of business. They went out of town -- weren't here for years and now they're back. Used to have a real good jewelry stores called Todd's Jewelry. Trying to think where they were here too on Carey.

CASTANEDA: When I came here Christianson's was on Carey.

WALLING: Well, Christianson's was a real good store. They were the higher priced ones or the more refined or something. Now Todd's were south of them in the same block by the alley. I got a lot of stuff from there. Times have sure changed. See, when we moved here in '62, one of the selling points in Sun Valley was I-80 was where College Drive is. And they were going to build a big mall, some Dallas outfit where the mall thing is now. They had a lot of...they dug out for the basement...did you ever see that?

CASTANEDA: Where at now?

WALLING: Where Hobby Lobby and the Dollar Store...all that area was going to be a big mall. They dug out for the basements but all that fell through. And the highway fell through and people ...oh these kids with their bicycles and motorcycles raced up and down those holes -- had a ball until they started this. The filling station on the corner now was there but there was another one that set like at the cross the 12th street. 12<sup>th</sup> didn't get go clear though. You went between the stations to get up on what you call Nationway now. It was kind of bad when it was stormy. I don't know -- the one filling station -- I don't know if they went out or they moved them to make 12<sup>th</sup> Street. 12<sup>th</sup> Street just goes a far as Nationway. I can't think of it now. People did take pretty good care of their lawns until they started moving out for bigger homes.

**Track 10 -- Does It Feel like 100 Years?**

CASTANEDA: Does it feel like you've been here a hundred years?

WALLING: Oh yes.

CASTANEDA: What do you think the weirdest change is or the toughest is?

WALLING: The winters aren't as bad as they used to be. That's for sure. We used to live down at Egbert and that was bad.

CASTANEDA: How do you think you've managed to live this long?

WALLING: Well, really, I just lived normally doing what I wanted to do.

CASTANEDA: Did you ever drink or smoke?

WALLING: No, I never did smoke. But I used to drink. I like beer. And I still like to drink -- I like wine. You know, not to excess but to enjoy. But I used to have friends to go out with and have a drink and do a few things but I don't know anyone now that does much. So, I guess it's a good thing.

CASTANEDA: Do you go out an each much?

WALLING: No.

CASTANEDA: Do you like to go out?

WALLING: I like to go out but not all the time. I like to go once in awhile.

CASTANEDA: Where's your favorite place?

WALLING: Well, Twin Dragon's I guess. I wouldn't say that if I ate out a lot but when I go once in awhile I like to go there. Now there's a lot of new places in town I haven't been. I had a friend take me to Culver's for lunch one day so I went there. I haven't been to a lot of the new ones. I like Mexican food too.

CASTANEDA: Do you like it hot?

WALLING: Not too hot. I belong to a birthday club and usually we go there.

CASTANEDA: Where?

WALLING: Casa De Trujillo on the south side. It was real good. They changed hands --it's not as good as it used to be --but we still go there. We went there last Tuesday.

CASTANEDA: For margarita night? Oh, you went there for lunch.

WALLING: We had lunch but they serve margaritas. Now, I had one...I haven't had one lately but I get the virgin kind – the one with no liquor. I like the flavor.

CASTANEDA: I think that's kool-aid. But their margaritas aren't very strong anyway.

WALLING: Years ago, we used to have them but I don't think I'd dare drink a margarita...probably put me under the table. Not used to it. I'm weaker than I was too.

CASTANEDA: Did you used to exercise a lot?

WALLING: No.

CASTANEDA; So what's your philosophy of living? Were you a religious person?

WALLING: Well, up to an extent. I went to church all the time. I belonged in Hillsdale, Egbert, Pine Bluffs. I'm a fifty-some year member of the First United Methodist Church down here. Then I did lodge work. I belonged to Eastern Star and Daughters of the Nile. They disbanded but I belonged to the Lions Club, UP auxiliary and birthday clubs, canasta club. I've been busy all my life. I worked election boards in Durham and then they closed it. Then I worked it in Hillsdale.

CASTANEDA: Are you a republican or a democrat?

WALLING: Democrat. And I belonged to extension clubs....most all of my married life. I joined in Egbert.

CASTANEDA: Do you like to read?

WALLING: Yeah, I like to read. I can't read as much as I used to because I have to use a magnifying glass.

CASTANEDA: So there you are? (Looking at photo)

WALLING: Yep. That's me.

CASTANEDA: You're cute!

WALLING: Is that the fair board?

CASTANEDA: Yeah.

WALLING: I was on the fair board too. Well, that's when I belonged to Amaranth (sp?) so we used to cook for the Shrine Club.

Track 11 -- Health and Wellness

CASTANEDA: Have you ever had to be in the hospital?

WALLING: Oh yes. Not very long. One July we was on vacation. My son at that time lived over on Bevans and the girls were roller-skating so I thought I could still roller skate. The backyard was slanted a little bit so I got up and those darn roller skates – I just went 90 miles an hour. I tried to grab for the clothesline and everything. I fell and broke my wrist.

CASTANEDA: How old were you?

WALLING: Well, that was in...I was still working at JC Penneys. I went to work with my arm in a sling?

CASTANEDA: Sewing?

WALLING: Hmmm?

CASTANEDA: Did you have to sew then?

WALLING: Yeah, I had to sew what I could. I had to stay in the hospital overnight. Dr. Gramlich was the doctor. Then when I had my cancer operation I was in Depaul. Rusty! You just want attention, baby.

CASTANEDA: How long have you had Rusty?

WALLING: Seven. He's seven in January.

CASTANEDA: Where did you get him?

WALLING: I got him from that place called Puppy Love over on Fox Farm. She had a whole bin full of dogs and I picked him out because he was pretty. He was a real red color. You faded! He's got one little brown spot.

CASTANEDA: Well, are you glad that you've made it to 100? I mean certainly, considering the alternative but are you glad to be alive during so much change?

WALLING: I'm glad to be alive and I can do what I can do. But being 100? I have to think about it because ---I think I'm a hundred but life is like it always was, really. Can't realize I'm a hundred until I go to do something I can't do. My hands – I have arthritis in my hands so bad. I don't have any strength.

CASTANEDA: Do you have many friends from the past?

WALLING: No. They're all dead -- dead or in a nursing home and I sure do miss 'em. Used to do so many things especially with those friends from the lodge. There was always so many things to do.

CASTANEDA: What lodge again?

WALLING: I belonged to the Eastern Star --? Chapter #36. Sixty five years this year. I went in '42.

CASTANEDA: Are they with the Elks?

WALLING: No. Just Masonic. Masonic affiliated.

CASTANEDA: Was your husband in the Masonic Lodge?

WALLING: Yes. He was a Shriner. He was in what they call the Blue Lodge, then ?? and then a Shriner.

CASTANEDA: What did you do in the Eastern Star Lodge?

WALLING: Well, they do things to raise money and help people. Daughters of the Nile, they worked the harvest and raised money for the Children's Hospital. We always had a big bizarre every year and we would be able to send six or seven thousand dollars for the Shriner's Hospital.

CASTANEDA: Why do they call them Daughters of the Nile?

WALLING: I don't know. You're a branch of the Shriners. Your husband has to be a Shriner to be a Daughter of the Nile.

CASTANEDA: But you still drive and everything.

WALLING: I just got my new license in June.

CASTANEDA: Really?

WALLING: Good for four years! And I'm lucky I don't have any restrictions other than glasses and side mirrors on my car.

CASTANEDA: Did they say, "Are you sure you really need one of these things?"

WALLING: No. They treated me just like they always did when I went down there. I have a handicap sticker because I can't walk too. And that's a joke too because everybody else has one and a lot of times I can't find a handicap place.

**Track 12 -- The Greatest Things Since Sliced Bread**

WALLING: Remember when we were talking about groceries and how I had to be a shrewd shopper?

CASTANEDA: Yes.

WALLING: You used to get ole and it came in like a pound of butter with a yellow capsule and you had to color your own ole. That was such a mess every time.

CASTANEDA: Really? What color was it if you didn't do it?

WALLING: Just white like a bar of lard.

CASTANEDA: So why did anybody bother to color it? Did it taste the same?

WALLING: I don't know. I don't think I ever ate any of it when it was white. I always colored it. And the same with bread. I used to have to fix Kenneth lunch and bread wasn't sliced then. It just came in a loaf and the day that that come out sliced, that was a happy day.

CASTANEDA: So, "it's the greatest thing since sliced bread" is true!

WALLING: Yes. I'll never forget those two things.

CASTANEDA: How about milk? Did the milkman used to come or did you have your own cows?

WALLING: We bought milk..well, it was before I was married. Seems like most of my life I remember being married because I was married so much longer than I was a teenager at home. The people on the hill from Durham – they were dairy farmers. They sold milk. The truck picked it up every morning. And we went up there and bought it for five cents a gallon.

CASTANEDA: Have you considered yourself to be a good cook?

WALLING: Well, at one time, I thought I was. I baked. I canned a lot. That's where we had the freezer. I did a lot of canning. Like we used to dry corn...cut it off the cob and lay it on sheets -- cook it first...and then cover it and lay it in the sun to dry.

CASTANEDA: What do you do with dried corn?

WALLING: Well, you cook it just like you did your beans or peas and then you'd cream it. It was real good! Of course it seems like most of the time we had cream. We had to buy it from some people in Hillsdale that sold cream.

**Track 13 --Haircolor**

CASTANEDA: So, what's on the agenda for today?

WALLING: Well, at one o'clock, I'm going to get my hair set.

CASTANEDA: Where do you go?

WALLING: Sherman's Beauty Salon. There's a fellow there.

CASTANEDA: A guy?

WALLING: Bill Atwood.

CASTANEDA: A man does your hair? That's cool.

WALLING: He has for thirty years. But the one I had before him I went to for eleven years but she moved to Yoder. You know, that's close to Torrington so she does beauty work in Torrington. I hate changing beauty operators ....of course, Bill's 72 so he might retire any day and he only works two days a week.

CASTANEDA: Have you ever thought about just going gray?

WALLING: Well, I have but I can't stand to look at myself. My hair would be such a dirty looking color. Beauty operators tell me that too. I know it'd never turn white...it'll turn white - like some of them are so pretty, but mine wouldn't. So, as long as I can do it I will. I had another friend that colored her hair. Then she got real sick, of course, and then her hair turned a dirty color like mine would be and oh, she looked awful.

**Track 14 --Politics**

CASTANEDA: What did you think of Hillary Clinton?

WALLING: Hillary? I liked Hillary. I wished he'd have picked her for his vice president. She's a smart woman. And world wise, I think she could help him a lot. Especially being in the White House eight years. No, I was for her. I guess the man he's got is good but I don't know. I never heard nothing much about him until he picked him.

CASTANEDA: So, will you be voting for Obama then?

WALLING: I haven't made up my mind but I think I will because I don't think that Palin is any more experienced or educated than Obama.

CASTANEDA: Have you always been a Democrat?

WALLING: Yes. I'm a registered democrat but I like to vote for the man...or the woman! I was 100% for Hillary but she didn't make it...obviously she wasn't that good. That's just my opinion.

CASTANEDA: Yo've seen a lot of politics change over the years and this is a pretty interesting.

WALLING: Oh, yes. The one I remember most of all is Hoover...that was in 1928. He was running for president and he run around saying, "two chickens in every pot and a car in every garage." Of course, we didn't get neither.

CASTANEDA: Things got pretty bad really with him, didn't they?

WALLING: Yeah, they got real bad. The big depression started in '29 and people lost a lot of money and banks...of course at that time, I didn't have any so it didn't make any difference. And food. It was pretty bad. We lived in Egbert. I remember more history after I got married than I did growing up at home.

CASTANEDA: You probably didn't pay any attention growing up at home did you?

WALLING: Yeah. Egbert just had the grocery store and he had the gas and the post office and everything. Of course, we had a charge account and we got paid every two weeks on the railroad and we'd pay our bills. It was pretty rough.

CASTANEDA: Who do you think has been our best president?

WALLING: Roosevelt! He was elected in '32. He did more for this country – to me, in my opinion – than any president since then. He helped the rural people and during the war, he made these camps for people...to make like...working in Snowy Range, fixing things. He did that all over the country. What did they call them?

CASTANEDA: Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC camps.

WALLING: Yeah. Right. That's what it was. I knew a fella that was there and he thought it was good. And then he brought electricity to the farmers. The rural electric. Of course, he made it tough on us right at first. When then things started getting bad, the war had to start. They put a twenty percent tax on luggage and jewelry – anything that was a luxury you paid twenty percent tax and that run pretty high especially when you didn't have any money but it was a good cause. They should do that now on credit cards. I think what's wrong now is people – they don't save to get what they want. They see something they want, they just use their credit card and buy whether they can afford it or not.



**Track 15 -- On Wyoming**

CASTANEDA: Have you traveled around Wyoming very much?

WALLING: Quite a bit. Took bus trips.

CASTANEDA: Could you imagine having ever lived anywhere else? Did you ever want to live anywhere but Wyoming?

WALLING: No. At one time, I thought I 'd like to live in Fort Collins but I don't anymore. I never wanted to live anywhere but here.

CASTANEDA: Are you proud of Wyoming?

WALLING: Yep. I am. I think when people talk about the wind blowing and I've traveled a lot and the wind's blowing everywhere I've been.

CASTANEDA: Maybe it's your fault.

WALLING: Maybe it followed me!

CASTANEDA: Well, there's something everywhere but the wind does get tiring.

WALLING: Yeah, it does and you'd think after you'd lived in Wyoming most of your life that you wouldn't talk about it bothering you but it does!

**Track 16 -- Birthday Parties**

WALLING: So, I went to AARP Wednesday and they honored me with a certificate and they gave me that picture. I don't know where I'm going to put it but that fella brought that 1914 Ford down here. He lives in Riverton and he brought that down here especially to drive me down to my party in it. Of course, the wind had to blow and it had to sprinkle.

CASTANEA: There's no top on it is there?

WALLING: Oh, no. That 1914 Ford is just real old. I get a bang out of the windshield – it's just a little round thing right in front of the steering wheel. It's no good to you. But I guess at that time it was just pretty nice to have something to run. The fellow I'm standing with is the president of our AARP group here.

CASTANEDA: Do you do a lot of AARP things?

WALLING: Not a lot. Just go to the meetings. They're a pretty strong organization anymore.

CASTANEDA: I think that's good. There's getting to be more AARP members.

WALLING: Wyoming alone has 100,462 members.

CASTANEDA: Wow. That's like a fifth of the state. Were you glad to get to ride this car?

WALLING: Yeah, I didn't think I'd want to but I went. Now you wanted a picture of me. I went to a party Saturday out at the Holiday Inn. I had a friend that was a 100. Evelyn Johnson. She was a schoolteacher here for years.

CASTANEDA: No. How's she doing?

WALLING: Oh, she's doing great. She doesn't see too good. She doesn't drive. She sat in the chair at the party. She didn't stand up. But I've known her a long time because her and my husband graduated together in 1925.

CASTANEDA: I wonder how many people are 100 here in Cheyenne.

WALLING: Well there seems to be quite a few in Cheyenne I heard of someone who was 107. I wouldn't mind living that long if I had all my faculties and could get around like I am. But I wouldn't want to live that long. Of course, I never thought I'd live to be 100 either.

### **Remembering Cheyenne People and Family**

CASTANEDA: Roosevelt came to Cheyenne also in '36.

WALLING: Oh yes.

CASTANEDA: Do you remember Joseph O'Mahoney?

WALLING: Yeah.

CASTANEDA: That was when they decided that should be on the license plate.

WALLING: I'm glad the bucking horse is on there.

CASTANEDA: How about the quarter? Do you have one of those?

WALLING: Yep. I have a quarter from about every state that's out. I have a dollar—I can't remember if Truman put it out and it looked like a quarter. I have a couple of those and then I have a gold dollar.

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CASTANEDA: We have Senator Enzi – that's back when he was in the Jaycees.

WALLING: I got a letter from AARP wanting me to mail in some things to Enzi and to the three of them.

CASTANEDA: How about Governor Barrett? Was he a good governor?

WALLING: Oh I think he ever made any big news like some of them.

CASTANEDA: Do you remember the airline school we had here? Did you ever know anybody that went there?

WALLING: No.

CASTANEDA: Flory's Shoes. Remember that?

WALLING: Oh yeah, I bought a lot of shoes there still have some of them. He looks familiar.

CASTANEDA: Larry Birleffi.

WALLING: Oh yeah. You know, Curt Gowdy. I always thought a lot of him just from hearing about him and everything. He was in town once for something – not too long – I can't remember years go so fast – since my husband. It was something he was at at that bank out there US Bank by the mall –went to see him and he was talking to another guy and he just didn't pay any attention to me. He was actually rude and I've hated him ever since.

CASTANEDA: I don't blame you.

WALLING: Yeah, that made me so mad! There's the VA. Looks more like a penitentiary to me.

CASTANEDA: Maybe so.

WALLING: Right now, where Allison Hall is for the Methodist church, the VFW used to be there on the corner. And, things like that have changed so much. I have belonged there fifty-some years now. The kids are going to have a birthday party on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August there for me. They had one there for me on my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I haven't been going to church. Cause I usually cook dinner on Sundays for my son and granddaughter. Sunday's my day for Sonny to come in. And then if I've got things to do, he does it.

CASTANEDA: How old is he?

WALLING: He'll be 80 the first of December.

CASTANEDA: He should be having these parties for himself pretty soon.

WALLING: Yeah, the girls are going to have to put his picture in the paper for his birthday.

CASTANEDA: Is he married?

WALLING: Oh yeah, he got married in '56.

CASTANEDA: Is she alive?

WALLING: Yeah.

CASTANEDA: How many kids does he have?

WALLING: Three. Three granddaughters. They don't have any kids. I had a great-granddaughter and she took her own life when she was 15. That's the only one I had so now I just have the three granddaughters.

CASTANEDA: Why do you think she did that?

WALLING: We don't know. I have no idea and her mother don't either. One morning – they lived in Reno – she (granddaughter) was married and divorced...her father lives in Laramie. She went to work before the girl went to school and the girl was ready to go to school and she still had her purse on her shoulder and everything.

CASTANEDA: How did she do it?

WALLING: Hung herself. Sometimes we think it was an accident.

CASTANEDA: With her purse on her shoulder? How?

WALLING: I don't know. She had used dog leashes. She was all ready to go to school.

CASTANEDA: I'm sorry to hear that. That was hard.

WALLING: Yeah, that was sad.

CASTANEDA: (looking at photos) Which one are you?

WALLING: That one there. That's walkin' up from Penneys. That's when they had a cameraman stood on the street and took pictures of people. Yeah, my sister and I –we were shopping.

CASTANEDA: So you've never been very tall have you?

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WALLING: No. Never have. My sister was well-built – she looked nice.