

Bob Gaines: – 9:00 from KSIR, Estes Park from the main dining room at the Ramada Inn, it's time for KSIR's Breakfast Club of the Rockies brought to you by Sew and Sew on West Elkhorn, Harris Furniture on Longmont, Strings and Things for macramé and weaving, Gerard's bakery on West Park Center, The Fleur-de-lis in Longmont, the First National Bank, and Jeanette's Knit Shop on Elkhorn Avenue. And now, ladies and gentlemen, here's Steve Swanson and **Dottie Muchler**.

Steve Swanson: Thank you, Bob Gaines. I'd like to welcome everybody here to the Ramada Inn. We thank **Jim Crandall**, the manager of the Ramada Inn for allowing us to use the main dining room this morning. We have a lot of room this morning and a good audience and we look to have a lot of fun this morning.

Nice lady on my right is Miss Dottie Muchler; she'll be my co-host this morning. Dottie?

Dottie Muchler: Good morning, Steve, and may I add my welcome also? And it's so nice to see all of you out here so early in the morning. And very frankly, it's always so beautiful in the morning here in Estes Park that I can't see why people want to just stay home and not get out and enjoy all this beautiful air and fresh sunshine and – fresh air that we have and the sunshine.

This is a great day to come on out and hear and have rumors dispelled about the MacGregor Ranch, and that's what we're gonna be talking about today. And also, the people that came here that are renowned.

And the people that we have on our program today are interesting, they have authentic facts, they've dug into them and I know for a personal fact that the MacGregor Ranch was always kind of a legend to me, and now I'm going to hear for myself just exactly what they're – have been doing out there.

Steve Shaw: I think it's sort of interesting, the last program we had at the first Breakfast Club, we were dealing in first person, had the actual residents, the people that were brought up and raised up in the early days of Estes Park.

Well, today's program will be dealing mainly with second person, people that came to Estes Park, wanted to learn about its history and then did a lot of research and then are going to pass this

research on to all of us so we all can learn a little bit about Estes Park and it's past.

Dottie Muchler: And it's going to be a fun, fun morning, and your breakfast looks so good that those of you who haven't attended are really going to be sorry that you've missed it.

Steve Shaw: I think it was as the – well this is actually a spin-off of the old **Don McNeil** thing, I think he came on every morning. First thing he said is, "What a terrific day it is." And it really is nice out today and we're gonna have a fun time this morning.

Dottie Muchler: We surely are.

Steve Shaw: Our guests on our panel this morning are Ruth Stauffer is one of our guests, also Orpha Kendall and John Ramey and Bertha Ramey, and we'll have Charles Miller playing the piano, Charles was with us on our last program and we had such favorable response within this past month that we decided to ask Charles back again.

Dottie Muchler: Steve, have you had many comments on our last broadcast?

Steve Shaw: Oh it was amazing, the response was just – I was impressed.

Dottie Muchler: I was, too, yeah. It was something that, you know, when you try it for the first time, you really wonder, and we were really gratified by the number of calls the station received and that we received – that I received regarding it.

And the response we have today makes us encouraged for the next time. We're going to update this, as you know we're going to bring in people that are in business up here and how they started. And then we're going to bring in the people that have moved here and find out why they moved out here.

And everybody is so excited about living in Estes Park that my favorite statement is when people say, "Oh, are you fortunate, living in Estes Park." And I say, "Yes, we feel sorry for you earth people, because we think we're out of this world."

[Laughter]

Steve Shaw: My sponsors on this morning's program are The Fleur-de-lis; Harris Furniture in Longmont, Sew and Sew, Jeanette's Knit shop, The First National Bank, Gerard's Bakery and Strings and Things for macramé and weaving.

And as mentioned, on our panel this morning we'll have Ruth Stauffer, Orpha Kendall and John Ramey, Bertha Ramey and Charles Miller on the piano.

And Ruth, could you quickly just name drop a couple of the early settlers' names, or are they homesteaders of the village? Maybe mention a word or two about them?

Ruth Stauffer: Well, I have six names here, some of them are familiar, I'm sure. These were all homesteaders in 1875. Griffith Evans, Alexander MacGregor, Horace Ferguson, John Huff and his family, William James and his family, John Cleave, Abner Sprague. If you read the Estes Park Trail, you probably read about these people at least.

Steve Shaw: Thank you, Ruth. And John, you spend most of your time now working at the Bond Agency, but for awhile you were out at the MacGregor ranch. What type of relationship did yourself and your wife have with Muriel MacGregor and what role did you have a far as the ranch went?

John Ramey: Well, during the time when I knew her, from about 1937, she would periodically call me and ask me something about what was going on downtown maybe, and just sort of confided in me about ranch business periodically.

I don't know why, but she did, and she's very wonderful person to know. After she got sick, why she was going to the hospital and I volunteered to help take care of the cattle. She was curious – worried about the ranch while she was gone, I said, "Well, I'll take care of it until you get back." And unfortunately she didn't, so that was sort of my role, just help her when I could.

Orpha Kendall: Good friends.

Steve Shaw: And Orpha, you became very close to Muriel also, and how much time had you actually spent with Muriel?

Orpha Kendall: Well, I knew her for six years before she passed away, saw her every day.

Steve Shaw: Now there are a lot of tales and rumors that have developed both during her lifetime and after she passed away. What was that story you were telling me about the other day about the park ranger and the shotgun?

Orpha Kendall: Well, I think everybody in town has heard about Muriel MacGregor and her shotgun. And there are numerous, numerous tales about Muriel running people off with her shotgun. All I can say is, in all the time I was there, I never saw a shotgun and I didn't find one after she passed away. Perhaps she had one before I came here, I don't know, but I never saw it.

Steve Shaw: Nothing? And Bertha, you spent a lot of time since 1936 at 234 East Elkhorn Avenue and the Bond Agency. Have there been many prominent names to pass through your books then?

Bertha Ramey: Oh, there certainly have, I have a very long list of people that have been in our office, real prominent people. Of course, I really think that some of the Estes Park people that I knew early were great, and I certainly can't put the visitors ahead of them because they have been great, and some of them have been my friend all through these years.

In other words, Mr. and Mrs. Freeburg were the first ones that sent any money down to the Bond Agency. They paid me \$16.80 in January of 1936 and that was the first money we ever got, and of course I put in Charlie Hicks' bank, of course.

And they have been my friends and they're customers ever since. Mrs. Eleanor Hondius was the owner of Elkhorn Lodge at that time and she turned out to be one of the best friends I ever had, and I loved her.

Steve Shaw: You said you had a pretty prosperous summer in '36, but what type of a winter did you have?

Bertha Ramey: Oh, well I'll tell you about the summer. I figured up, the first house that I rented, Mr. Frank Bond when they sold us our office said, "Bertha, you will rent quite a few cottages." And I thought that was one thing that he said that he couldn't live up to, because I didn't think I would rent any cottages.

And so one day, who should come into my office but Mr. Donald MacGregor and he said, “Mrs. Ramey, the Bonds’ have always rented cottages from me, and I have four cottages, and I would like to have you come out and see them and rent them.”

So I went out to see them. And on the 15th of May that year, I rented the big brown house over on the south side of the meadow to Mr. and Mrs. D.S. **Dibrell** from Cincinnati.

They came out and a couple of weeks later, the brother called and said he would like the other cottage. So I rented two of those MacGregor cottages.

I brought my little book this morning, and the first names in it is Donald MacGregor renting the two cottages and I’m real proud that I got acquainted with him right then and there and they did give me a welcome in to Estes Park, and that was great.

Steve Shaw:

We’ll be talking about that welcome and the things you’ve done these past few years, okay Bertha? And Charles Miller, give us a C chord. Good.

I promise on this KSIR’s February edition of the Breakfast Club of the Rockies, we’ll be dealing with more history of Estes Park and on this program, we hope you’ll stay with us.

The people of Estes Park are very fortunate to possess an interest in history, and the people who wish to preserve that past in various forms. This morning we are fortunate to have with us on this Breakfast Club of the Rockies just a few of those people.

Ruth Stauffer is vice-president of the Estes Park Historical Society, which we will talk a little bit about this morning. She has also written feature articles for the Trail Gazette dealing with Estes Park history, which she has knowledge about through a lot of tedious, I assume, but dedicated research.

The articles have dealt with some of the earliest homesteaders of Estes, the **McCrery’s**, the MacGregors, the James’, Craigs, Fergusons and many, many more, and many personal insights on some of these pioneers.

I understand there’ll be a couple of other articles published in future editions of the Trail. She has also written a play based on

the facts she has uncovered. Before we discuss some of these early histories of the village, Ruth, let's talk first a bit about what motivated you to move yourself to Estes Park and then learn about its past.

Ruth Stauffer: I didn't have to move myself here, I was born in Colorado. And as a matter of fact, I have a picture of myself as a bonneted baby in the arms of my father at Gem Lake, and in my mother's handwriting, it says, "Summer, 1913." I don't know whether anyone in the room or in the audience was at Gem Lake 62 years ago.

After teaching in the college – various colleges in New York State for 30 years, I decided that I should retire to Estes Park. Where else?

Steve Shaw: Well I know I was talking to you the other day – you had taught school back in the Midwest somewhere?

Ruth Stauffer: No, I taught at the University of Rochester, Sarah Lawrence and Hofstra University on Long Island.

Steve Shaw: What classes did you teach there?

Ruth Stauffer: Shakespeare, Modern Poetry and all points intermediate.

Steve Shaw: So you have pretty good qualifications as far as literature and liberal arts goes, doing these articles for the Trail Gazette and some of your research.

Ruth Stauffer: Well it wasn't tedious research. That's one of the reasons I retired early, I thought it would be more fun to read what I wanted to read instead of, you know, freshman compositions.

Actually, in today's issue of The Trail is the fifth article and it is, by coincidence, on the MacGregors. I hope to do two or three more.

Steve Shaw: Where do you get your information from?

Ruth Stauffer: The library. The public library has quite a good collection. The historical society has some archives, and talking to people, I sometimes, at least in one case I was able to find out about the grandfather when I – the last issue when I was talking to Mrs.

Roger Lau, she had stories that her mother-in-law told her about her father, who was Horace Ferguson. That's the most direct – the closest to primary information I got.

Steve Shaw: Let's go back and talk about some of these early people such as Horace Ferguson. I was reading in one of your articles, I think it dealt with the early homesteaders itself of 1875, which, the centennial is coming up. You had mentioned the names in there, Anna Dickinson and William Byers. Who are they and what did they do?

Ruth Stauffer: William Byers was editor of the Rocky Mountain News as early as 1873 – 1863. When he first came up, he was already editor of that paper, which has been in continuous publication.

Anna Dickinson was an Easterner, and she had good friends at the New York Herald Tribune. I think it was just called the Tribune at that time. I think that's something that surprised me as I went into these records, is that how many distinguished visitors from the East and from foreign countries came to Estes Park in the '60s and in the '70s before – even before homesteading.

Steve Shaw: Well, did Dickinson and Byers come to Estes for any particular reason?

Ruth Stauffer: The great lure of Estes Park was to climb Longs Peak, and William Byers was the first person who tried with a party and published in the paper that no man would ever climb Longs Peak.

He came back later with a Haitian survey party and climbed it himself with the party and with a woman, of all things, Anna Dickinson – is that her name – yes – climbed it with him.

That was '73, the same year that Isabella Bird came and climbed Longs Peak. Apparently it was a great challenge to people in the plains. You know how it looks from Fort Collins, from Longmont. People like Anna Dickinson and Isabella Bird wanted to be the first woman up. They made it the same year, '73.

Steve Shaw: They did make it to the top then, I assume?

Ruth Stauffer: Both, both, of course, Isabella Bird had to be pretty well hauled up like a sack of goods by Jim Nugent.

Steve Shaw: Well, we'll be talking about Isabella Bird and Rocky Mountain Jim also in a couple of minutes. In your Ferguson article, about Horace Ferguson, there was an interesting story, I thought, about how Bear Lake got its name. Want to mention about that?

Ruth Stauffer: Yes, I found that in a penciled notation by Mrs. Roger Lau's mother-in-law, Mrs. **Reed**. Is that her name? I have to have my record here.

The James family and the Ferguson family – yes, well Bear Lake was named for – named by him because it was there that he, while hunting elk and deer, met a bear, took a shot at him, and decided not to wait to see whether he'd hit him or not because it was a muzzle loading musket. But he called it Bear Lake.

Steve Shaw: Who was Enos Mills?

Ruth Stauffer: Well, you should ask his daughter, Mrs. **Kylie**, on another program. He was an _____ homesteader, he came as a young boy in about 1885, I think, built his own cabin, and I'm sure many people have stopped at the homestead cabin because he did take out homestead rights.

It's just across from Longs Peak and his daughter, **Enda** Mills Kylie has kept it as a small, informal museum, very much worth seeing.

Steve Shaw: On our last program, we had – well, we had **Roy Walden** in the front row here this morning, and let Charles Hicks talk about the old Estes Park school and the classes that went through that. He also mentioned the origin of the school and some of the things that took place besides teaching of students. Want to talk about that, then?

Ruth Stauffer: I wasn't here at the time. I could have been, but I was going to school in Denver, and then in Boulder. So I think you'll have to ask **Roy** or **Frank McGraw**, or **Lee Byerly**, I understand they were all students there.

Steve Shaw: Well the reason I brought this up was in one of your articles about a Mr. Cleave, and Horace Ferguson I guess and a couple of other people I guess about building this school. Ruth, do you recollect any of that?

Ruth Stauffer: I have only the fact that they built it. Apparently it would only take two or three men and a lot of hard work and they would build the building, singly.

Steve Shaw: What were some of the other things that took place within this school besides your basic teaching?

Ruth Stauffer: Not many records about it. I wish that people who had gone to school would write more. I know that the very first school, if you could call it a school, the first classes were held at the Elkhorn Lodge. A young man was hired to teach and he was given free board and room and then something like \$40.00 a year.

Dottie Muchler: _____.

Steve Shaw: What was the story about Lord Dunraven? He became sort of a notorious person up here it seems.

Ruth Stauffer: Yes, when I was – before I started any what you might call research, I thought, well maybe he was just a fake, because, of course, in those days if you were an Englishman, you could always pretend to be a Lord among these greenhorns.

But no, Lord Dunraven was actually a very distinguished Irish statesman. He was the 4th Earl of Dunraven in western Ireland and he was known among his British friends as being a yank-o-maniac because he was always coming to the United States, and his favorite place was Estes Park. He discovered it in '72. Friends told him that as a hunter, he would like to try Estes Park because the game was so abundant. He was so impressed that he built here.

Steve Shaw: We'll be back to talk more about Lord Dunraven and **Elizabeth Bird** and a couple of other details. Also reading from one of **Ruth Herndon's** plays in a minute.

We are back here at the Ramada Inn this morning with KSIR's February edition of the Breakfast Club. We were talking with Ruth Stauffer, and Ruth, we were talking just before we broke away about Lord Dunraven. You want to talk a little more about him?

Ruth Stauffer: Yes, he was so impressed with Estes Park that he decided he would like to buy up the whole valley, the meadow and the adjacent valleys, for a private hunting preserve.

He brought the famous painter Albert Bierstadt out who painted at least two famous pictures, one in Washington, one in the Denver library. Bierstadt chose the site for a cottage, as he would call it, and for a hotel, which was built with about 50 or 60 rooms for Lord Dunraven's guests.

He also had a hunting lodge in what is now called Dunraven Glade or Deserted Village up above Glen Haven. This was in '74, 1874. He would return with his friends, his English hunting friends and their ladies, several summers.

But the homesteaders of course did not like this and it wasn't quite legal for a foreigner to buy up homestead land. What he would do is hire middlemen to put down four logs, file a claim, and then he would pay them off.

People like Alexander MacGregor, who was a lawyer, objected, brought suit, got the Rocky Mountain News on his side and eventually the homesteaders won out. It's a good thing for the Centennial, you know, it's sort of the second victory over the British.

Steve Shaw: You had written a play, or a drama as it were, about – from some of the history that you have picked up on the facts of – well everybody's heard about him, I suppose, Rocky Mountain Jim.

Ruth Stauffer: Yes.

Steve Shaw: His real name, you said, was Jim Nugent, I think it was.

Ruth Stauffer: Right, he was a real person as well as a legend. His fame was confirmed not only in the letters, later a _____ edition book by the English lady Isabella Bird, but also by a paragraph in the autobiography of Lord Dunraven which is in the library, it's called *Past and Past Times*.

He was a tragic hero in estimation of Isabella Bird, but a dangerous ruffian according to Dunraven, and of course, he was both. He lived just four miles southeast of Estes Park, in Muggins Gulch, just south of Meadowdale Ranch. And his squatter's cabin there commanded the only good entrance to the park in those years, 1873, '74. I'm sure that most of you know the story from reading Isabella Bird's book called *Young Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*.

She'd heard about Mountain Jim when she wanted to come up her to climb Longs Peak. And she went out of her way to meet him. She was strangely fascinated and so, apparently, was he. It was an unlikely couple, she a 42-year old dumpy English spinster, he a mysterious outlaw hermit who had once been handsome until a grizzly bear had clawed half his face, lost a lot – an eye in it.

He was known to declaim in Latin and Greek, this is Lord Dunraven speaking, who had no axe to grind, he wouldn't have glamorized him. But he lived in this squalid den, he was dangerous when drunk.

As a matter of fact, a year after this short scene that will follow, he was dead by the gun of Griff Evans and probably at the behest of Lord Dunraven who wanted this park as a private hunting preserve, Both Evans and the Irish Lord resented Jim's self-appointed guardianship of the park.

Well the question is who was Mountain Jim Nugent? Where did he come from? No one knows more definitely than you will at the end of this short six minute scene. William Brown, the only other character in this skit, was a friend of Jim's. We have this from Enos Mills, who got it from Abner Sprague who got it from William Brown that he was later a witness to the fatal shootout.

Incidentally, Jim lived long enough after the shootout to write his own obituary, so to speak, and publish it in the Fort Collins Standard. I have a Xerox copy of that that ends – Jim Nugent was a _____ and ends, "Is this your boasted Colorado? That I, who have trod it's soil so many years now lie wounded by a shot from –," Well, I forget, I should have brought the thing, but it ends, "and all for British gold. Rocky Mountain Jim."

But this scene I'll just set very rapidly. Jim, Mountain Jim Nugent is sitting in the cabin of Griff Evans, tilting back, probably whistling Yankee Doodle and cleaning his gun.

Steve Shaw:

We will have Rocky Mountain Jim played by our Sales Manager **Charles Fry Chandler** here.

Ruth Stauffer:

Good, thank you. And William Brown will be read by Steve Swanson. He was a friend of Jim's who was later the witness to the shootout. He comes into Griff's cabin, which is the social

center and dining room for ranch hands and guests. Miss Bird recently returned from a tour of South Park on her pony, Birdy, is in a nearby cabin. She won't appear in the scene. The date is late November, 1873. Brown enters from outdoors, stamps snow from his boots and says –

- Male:* Where in the Hell is Griff? More significantly, where is Miss Bird? You know I've come to hear some details of her misguided tour of the Rocky Mountains and I don't know why she went traipsing off in this weather.
- Male:* She's a traipse-er, all right. Why didn't you go with her?
- Male:* Why? Well, for one thing, she didn't ask me. For another, if I left my place down there just who'd keep out the land grabbers?
- Male:* You mean Lord Dunraven's crew? Foreigners can't homestead. Griff told me to keep fire in that lady's cabin. God, this snow will bury us all.
- Male:* I'll poke up the fire here; we'll hope Miss Bird turns up for tea a little bit later on. Brown, my friend, our spirited little English lady, just what do you make of her?
- Male:* Wouldn't want to try, she ain't exactly my type, you know, even though ladies are women, I suppose.
- Male:* Well, you are a philosopher, aren't you? Well, let us address another topic then. Tell me, who am I? Just who do you think I am?
- Male:* Who you are? What the Hell do you mean?
- Male:* Well, I been called so many names and I've played so many parts that I can't remember sometimes just which one I am.
- Male:* Well, so far I really don't know you very well, Jim, I'll admit you're not exactly that scary guy I'd heard about down in the valley.
- Male:* I knew I could count on you for some insight, Brown. Well, let us define me by first eliminating certain false versions. Now what had you heard?

Male: Oh, you know, trigger happy, whiskey man, kill you sooner than say, "Howdy."

Male: Not true. Oh, I've killed men, sure, sure, but not without good reason.

Male: Yeah? Well, you Confederate or Canadian or what?

Male: Well that's my problem, Brown, you see, I make up stories and novels in my head and I act them out. Let's go on with some more eliminations right now. My father, for instance, was no British army officer. I never even saw Hudson Bay, but I can imagine that life. And I think Miss Bird would appreciate that background, so I sort of incorporated it lately.

Male: How's that?

Male: I pretend I lived it.

Male: Why?

Male: Why? Why not? It amuses me. You see, I set out to be whoever the person I'm talking to wants me to be or doesn't want me to be, depending on who I'm talking to.

Male: Huh. So who do I want you to be or not want you to be?

Male: Well, I don't think you care, so maybe I can stop pretending for the moment and try recalling something real. Would you believe I was born in Concord, New Hampshire? My father taught Latin and Greek at Milton Academy.

Male: Well, I don't know say some Greek.

Male: **Naman, Iata, thaea, paleoteo, oculaue.**

Male: That's Greek? What does it mean?

Male: It mean, it means that the wrath of Achilles, son of Paleus. That's from the first line of Homer's Iliad.

Male: Okay with me. So you went to school.

- Male:* It's the only line I remember. Maybe it's the only line I ever knew, and just maybe I learned it from a French trapper in the Hudson Bay Company.
- Male:* You just said you never saw Hudson Bay.
- Male:* I want to give Miss Bird a choice. Shall I be a teacher's son or a trapper's son or a son of a British Army officer?
- Male:* You don't decide who your father is.
- Male:* Why not? He wouldn't care, he's long dead.
- Male:* Okay, orphan, let's go, I'd better get the lady's firewood to her.
- Male:* I'll go with you. Oh, wait, just recalled another line,
"Medoccheden parathenana falais sais"
- Male:* Greek orphan? Don't tell me. I'll stick to **Ki Yippee Yi Yippie Yi Yay.**
- Male:* So be it. You fetch the wood _____ and I'll play Prospero.
- Male:* You just go right ahead, be anybody you want to be, Jim.
- Male:* Well, thank you very much, my friend I am not, but I am, but that's the _____ though. I played Othello to Miss Bird, with my tales of wild dangers that I passed on to her. And she did pity them. Shall I try Hamlet now, Oh, what a rouge in peasant's slave am I. And yet, readiness is all. We go.
- Steve Shaw:* Thanks Charles.
- [Applause]*
- Steve Shaw:* Charles Fry Chandler, Sales Manager at KSIR, he played Rocky Mountain Jim. Ruth, that's an interesting play. You said that you were think – do you have a complete how many scene version at home?
- Ruth Stauffer:* Oh it has eight scenes, this is just one.
- Steve Shaw:* And you'll be working this up for the Centennial?

Ruth Stauffer: Sure, if anyone wants me to.

Dottie Muchler: We'll encourage you, Ruth.

Steve Shaw: Well what – you're Vice President of the Historical Society, what role does the Historical Society have in Estes Park?

Ruth Stauffer: I think it should have a very active role, and we have a good program coming up. We're planning for the Centennial which as you know all begin in '75 and go all the way through '76. That's one reason I've been doing these articles, trying to find descendents of those first homesteaders if possible, because we do want to focus on what happened in Estes Park in 1875 and 1876.

Steve Shaw: When do you have meetings then of the Historical Society?

Ruth Stauffer: We have meetings, which are open and all people are welcome, anyone interested in the early history of Estes Park. We have meetings the third Thursday of every month at 7:30 in the Municipal Building.

Steve Shaw: Orpha Kendall moved to Estes Park with her husband Orval in 1965. Shortly after they arrived in the village Orpha became acquainted with Muriel MacGregor. She is now the Curator of the MacGregor Museum with the help of Gladys Thomson.

John Ramey, also an acquaintance of Miss MacGregor helped run the ranch during this period that Muriel wasn't able to. John's wife Dora helped Miss Kendall establish this museum.

We'll talk about the museum specifically in a bit, but John and Orpha; let's start this morning with the MacGregor family and how you became acquainted with Muriel themselves.

Orpha Kendall: Well, John knew Muriel for years and years. I met her the first winter I was up here. My husband came up to build the condominiums at Dr. Myers by the radio station.

And, of course, like always, the cattle were out. So I took the cattle back several times and it wasn't doing any good. So I decided I would take them back to the home ranch. So I was walking down the road with 8 or 10 cattle, I guess, and Miss MacGregor drove up, wanted to know if these were my cattle and I said, "Unfortunately, no, they weren't."

So she wanted to know where I was going with them, what I was doing. And I said, “Well, I’ve put them in several times up on the hill and it didn’t do any good. So I was going to take them over to the home ranch, perhaps they’d stay there.”

She said, “Well, why didn’t you call the police?” And I said, “Well, you know, I never thought about it. I’m from a farming community where, you know, the police aren’t interested in cattle or pigs or anything that are out. So I thought I’d put them in.”

She said, “Well, this is very unusual.” And I thought, “Well, I’ve heard about this lady, you know, she really is crazy. She thought I should have called the police instead of putting the cattle in.”

So I took the cattle on over. I asked her what she wanted me to do with them, and she said, “Well, what you intended. Go ahead and put them in.”

So I went back and told Dottie, Dottie was at the Black Canyon Ranch that winter, also. And she related a few stories to me, and we talked about them.

And so the next day my daughter and I decided we would drive over to the MacGregor Ranch and just see what there was over there. I didn’t go any farther than the gate.

Dottie Muchler: Why?

Orpha Kendall: I’d heard about the – I’d heard about that shotgun. So we drove down to the electric gate and I said, you know, “I’m losing my nerve. She probably does have a shotgun and she may not know that it was me, you know, in this car, I’m the same person that put those cattle in yesterday.”

So I backed, oh, a quarter of a mile, I suppose, to get away from this shotgun. Well, I found out later that there wasn’t any shotgun. I might as well gone on and saw what the ranch was like.

But this continued putting in the cattle, and this lady was really crippled and handicapped very much. It was awfully hard for her to do anything. So I helped her that winter as much as I could. I patched a lot of fence with bailing wire, some of it’s still there.

I continued to hear these stories about Miss MacGregor, but she was always very gracious to me, very nice.

So in the spring one day the telephone rang. I'm getting ahead of myself. There was an ad in the paper, we were looking for a place to rent – a house to rent, and I called the number in the paper and went – this lady said she would meet me at the church, take me up to the house.

So I met her there, it was Miss MacGregor. I was really surprised. So we went up to the house, which is the **aunt's** house up behind Otie Whiteside's. Well, the house wasn't what we wanted at all, but everything that I found wrong with it she said, "I'll fix."

So I went back and told Dottie, "What am I gonna do?" You know, "I don't want to rent the house, but I can't get out of it. Everything that's wrong she's gonna fix." Dottie said, "Well, just don't call her, just let it go. What did you tell her you'd do?"

And I said, "I told her I'd let her know." She said, "Just don't let her know." So that's exactly what I did. I just didn't let her know.

Dottie Muchler: The look on Orpha's face then at that time, her eyes were really large. She said, "Oh, you won't believe it. I don't want to move up there but anything I wanted she said she'd be glad to do for me." And she just couldn't see herself moving up there.

Orpha Kendall: And we didn't move up there. We found another house. So then one day the phone rang and Miss MacGregor wanted to know if this was the short, chunky, red-headed one from the Black Canyon Ranch.

And I said, "Yes, it is." She said, "Is your husband the one that makes all that noise over there hammering?" And I said, "Probably so." She said, "Well, I wondered if you would take me to the doctor in Loveland today." And I said, "I can't today, but I will later if you can get an appointment. When is your – if you can get another appointment."

And she said, "I can." And I said, "When will that be?" And she said, "Whenever you can take me." So I took her the next week.

Dottie Muchler: You know, one thing that I think is interesting; we're talking about the cattle. There are cattle _____ all over every place, and there

was an article in the newspaper quite a few years ago and it said – and this came from a Los Angeles paper, and it said, “In all the newspaper readings you’ll hear of violence, burglaries, the most atrocious thing, and yet there is this little town called Estes Park that has a Muriel who has cows.

Now, we wonder if Muriel is a telephone operator that is reporting these cows all over the country? And this is the only violence that we have ever seen in this paper. It is just people reporting on cows.”

[Laughter]

And it was a real clever article and the – one point in time a man came up to my place and he says, “Hey, do you know that you’ve got a bunch of cattle on your road down there?” And I said, “Sure, where do you think I get my prime from?” He said, “Don’t tell me that.” He said, “I’m a cattleman, I certainly wouldn’t eat prime here if they came from Muriel’s cows.”

[Laughter]

Steve Shaw: The ranch itself is still a working ranch, isn’t it?

Orpha Kendall: Oh, yes, we run almost 200 head of cattle.

Steve Shaw: John, are you still working at the ranch itself?

John Ramey: No, I don’t work there now. I have enough to do now down on Main Street. I thought that after, let’s see, up to November ’73, having made Muriel a promise that I’d take care of her cattle until she got back. And then she passed on, and I thought, “Well, I’ll stay until the will gets admitted to probate.” And I figured that was long enough really, and that was about all the time I could put to it.

Orpha Kendall: John’s my father advisor now.

John Ramey: I still cast an eye over here and help Orpha when I can. In the days leading up to all this I can remember one time, I was thinking a minute ago, I just had bought **Norm Billings’** truck from his estate. So I was about – Ralph was about 3. So that was about 17 years ago.

Muriel called me one day and she said – and it was snowing. She had a bunch of cows and they were out around Charles Heights, that’s when she said the **Sanborn** pasture way over south, the whole country she used to have –

Orpha Kendall: All of Carriage Hills.

John Ramey: – ran it all, Carriage Hills, and all of that was Sanborn’s land and she leased it as summer pasture. Then the fall, well, she’d round her cattle up, and I’ve helped do that.

So anyhow, this one day there was a lot of snow and these cattle were over in Murdoch’s Trailer Park or something, he was complaining about it. And her car wouldn’t start, **Buffalo** was at **Kiser-Frasier**’s thing, and Buffalo wouldn’t start, so could I take her out there?

And I got her in this old pickup and we went out, and I noticed in the snow that – I’ll never forget this, she’s all bundled up and she said, “Now, I’ll be back in about an hour. I’ll take the cattle over west.”

So she got out, and the snow was about that deep, and her foot would just leave a little skip in the snow.

Dottie Muchler: That deep, is that about 2 or 3 feet?

John Ramey: No, it was about a foot deep and her toes just – she was starting to get crippled then, and it was just leaving a little skip in the snow. But I went back in about an hour and she was waiting for me.

The – she had a lot of problems that way. People would – apparently afraid of the cattle, I think, and really the most docile things there is. And they’d be afraid, you know, to –

Dottie Muchler: John, did she really have names for her cattle?

John Ramey: You bet. I had some, too.

[Laughter]

Dottie Muchler: Like **Jenny** and **Jennifer**?

John Ramey: Oh, yeah, sure we had Popcorn and Fish Creek and –

Orpha Kendall: We have names now. We have Snowflake and such things, you know? George Washington.

Dottie Muchler: You know, there's a woman here in the audience that told me something that – and I may ask her to verify this, that they used to come up to her property. And so she called Muriel one time after, you know, chasing them off so often, and told her disgusted she was that they were there.

And she said, “Now you get an umbrella, take it outside, open it up and close it, open and close it, and they'll go away.” So anything to get these cattle off my property.

And sure enough, this woman opened the umbrella, shut it and closed it again, and the cattle left.

John Ramey: Yeah.

Dottie Muchler: Isn't that right, **Elsie Hicks**?

Orpha Kendall: She could have gotten them to leave if she'd have gone out and flapped a shirt or anything.

[Laughter]

John Ramey: Just tell them to go home.

Orpha Kendall: Yeah.

John Ramey: Listen, I'll tell you one thing, there isn't anybody that knows any more about ranching than those cattle.

[Laughter]

Really, and if you'll open –

Orpha Kendall: They taught me a lot.

John Ramey: – the gates at the right time and go out there and talk to them, which we did, and I verified, you know, I thought maybe something's wrong with me, and I asked the other cattlemen, I said, “You ever talk to your cows?” “Oh,” they said, “you better believe it.”

I said, “You name them?” “You better believe it.” And they’re just like people, you know, they all have a separate face and you’d be surprised at how that is, you know, really.

Dottie Muchler: You know, one thing I wanted to know, John, I had heard the story quite some time ago that – with the story of the shotgun that Muriel was always supposed to have had, that the reason she used it to keep people off of her property was that two young men had been hiking up at Twin Owls and they were killed – or I guess one was killed and one was severely hurt, but they had permission from the National Park to do this.

And so the theory was that she wasn’t going to allow anyone to go through there and hike because if they had been stopped at that time, well, nobody would have been injured. And so she was a kind person, it’s just that she had idiosyncrasies and nobody could ever say whether they were founded or not founded.

John Ramey: I never heard that she ever did anything without –

Dottie Muchler: You ever heard that story?

John Ramey: – reason. For example, many times she spent – just before she died she spent about \$3,000.00 to put in a new fence between the ranch and town. Okay, about a week after it was completed went up by Kingstone; somebody said some cows were out.

We go up there and here’s this brand new fence, two wires cut, laid clear back out of the way, and who knows, somebody went in there to get something, whether they shot a cow, an elk, or stole a tree. Now, what would you do if somebody came up Rock Acres, you know, and just started driving a bulldozer across the place? Wouldn’t you say something?

Dottie Muchler: You’re right, you’re right.

Steve Shaw: We’re broadcasting live at the Ramada Inn this morning on the February edition of the Breakfast Club of the Rockies. We’ll be back in a minute.

Last night while preparing for this morning’s breakfast club, my curiosity got the best of me. I went through the Yellow Pages and

not counting the ones in the valley I counted 26 real estate agency listings.

Well, in 1910 there was only one. In 1936 that particular one became known as the Bond Agency, and its owner was and is this nice lady to my right. Bertha, you told me an interesting story the other day on how you acquired the Bond Agency. You want to start from the beginning there?

Bertha Ramey: I think it is rather strange that they asked me to tell about the Bond Agency on this program, because they had – they learned about strange – Rocky Mountain Jim and the strange MacGregor Ranch, so there must be something rather strange about the Bond Agency.

[Laughter]

So I will go back just a little bit and tell you that my father happened to be the first City Clerk of Carbon, Wyoming. They later moved to Sand Coulee, Montana where they acquired me. And when I was one year old they moved to **Perry Hill**, Colorado which was a mining town between Central City and Rollinsville.

The first thing in my life that I remember was that one day my father picked me up and held me to the telephone that had just been installed on the wall of our grocery store. He cranked that thing up and said, “**Cherry 53.**” Immediately I heard the voice of my Uncle Joe Moody. He had just purchased, in 1902, a grocery store in Lyons, Colorado from **Samuel Service**.

Mr. Service and his family then moved to Estes Park, Colorado where in 1903 he started building operations in partnership with one Cornelius H. Bond.

Rhoda **Talent** is the daughter of Mr. Service and Mrs. George **Knites** is his granddaughter. **Florence** Bond is the daughter of Mr. C.H. Bond, and Dan **Bird** is his grandson.

The original log part of Herzog’s Gift Shop, the Coffee Bar building and the Bond Agency building were all built by these two gentlemen after they started into the partnership of building.

One of our most prized possessions in our office is the canvas sign which in 1902 advertised the building operations of Samuel Service and C.H. Bond.

I am sure glad that my Uncle Joe sent Mr. Service up here to build this office which was operated by C.H. Bond and his son for 26 years and then it has kept us busy for the next 40.

Mr. Service had bought the Elkhorn Avenue location in 1904. **Faith Rockwell** said the building was already there when she came in 1907, and the insurance and real estate office was started by Cornelius H. Bond in 1910.

Mr. **Everett May** and Mr. **Byron Hall** had lived in Lyons many years, but both had later become prominent citizens of Estes Park. Therefore, before we ever bought this office we had to confer with them, and both of them said that, "If you will work hard, you will do all right in Estes Park." Well, I can guarantee I've worked hard.

I wanted to tell you something about Byron Hall. He was the young man that had been a great asset and helper of Mr. F.O. Stanley before 1907 when the hotel was built.

Mr. Hall owned the only garage in Estes Park. He did not want anyone else to start a garage so he could keep that business all to himself. He told me one day that he would often rent a surplus empty building in Estes Park so that nobody else could think of starting a garage in Estes Park.

[Laughter]

And then he said one day he happened to think that any town that had only one garage would be a one-horse town. So he changed his thoughts and Estes Park is not any more a one-horse town.

I have used his psychology in thinking of our business. Mr. **Swanson** mentioned a little bit ago that there were 27 or 28 real estate agents in Estes Park. Well, I have thought about the garage, and so I would say that Estes Park would certainly be a one-horse town if I was the only real estate in the town.

So I am certainly glad that there are others, and I welcome every one of them to our association and to the Board of Realtors which really has been a pleasure to us to belong to.

One day somebody came into the office, very shortly after I had opened up the office, and they had –

John Ramey: In 1936.

Bertha Ramey: In 1936, January the 10th, 1936. And one day somebody came in the office and they said, “Mrs. Ramey, the sooner you get your name on the front of the office there, why, the better off you’ll be because the Ramey name has been associated for some time with insurance and you should get your sign fixed and get your name on the front office.”

And then that afternoon somebody came in the office and they said, “Mrs. Ramey, you surely are smart that you’re keeping that Bond name on the office and on the window because that’ll be an asset to you and I think it’s a good thing that you’re –,” So I just didn’t do very much. I just changed it a little bit from Bond and Company to The Bond Agency.

Steve Shaw: Its name was Bond and Company since Cornelius _____ with that.

Bertha Ramey: Yes, since 1910. Mr. Service was no engaged in the insurance business. Mr. Service owned the land and built the office, and then in 1910 Mr. Bond began his insurance office there.

One of the reason I think it’s nice that I have the Bond Agency, you know, the Bond family really did something for Estes Park when they donated the town square to Estes Park. And I sometimes – when Johnny goes appraising I sometimes say, “Well, he ought to appraise the town square.”

And I think that is one piece of property in Estes Park that no real estate office wants to appraise because it just worth so much that I don’t think you could possibly put a value on it. And I think that we should always remember that the Bond family had – is responsible for giving us a town square.

Most towns in Colorado do – in Northern Colorado, do not have a town square. Many of the beautiful towns in the southland have town squares and a town square. And we should just think of all the things that happen in our town square.

Steve Shaw: Besides having a center of town where things are built around it, it’s also most towns such as Estes Park that are, you know, basically just orientated around a tourist industry see people going

down their Main Street they're just gonna be rows and rows of signs and buildings and everything, and it's nice to have an open spot down town.

Bertha Ramey: Oh, it would certainly aggravate all of us if we just even imagined having stores on all four sides of that town. I will tell you how beautiful that town looked – that town square looked one day when Mr. Lamborn came.

First I will tell you that I did tell you about renting the first houses that I rented in Estes Park, and you did ask me how much money I made that first year. I made \$1,000.00 the first year and that was the whole year.

And in the summer I figured up and I collected for the people of Estes Park that first summer \$3,640.00 in rent, and that the end of September their last rental was made. And there was not an entry in that rental book until the 5th of June of next year.

Dottie Muchler: Oh, my word.

Bertha Ramey: Now that is what Estes Park now does. We don't know what it means to close rentals.

Steve Shaw: You want to mention a few of the things that you had found out about Cornelius H. Bond as far as his association with the county, the town, and maybe a couple of the roads real quickly?

Bertha Ramey: Yes, I want to tell about that. Mr. Cornelius H. Bond lived in Loveland and he was the Sheriff of Larimar County from 1895 to 1901. And in 1902 he was put on a committee in Loveland, a committee with two others, it did not give their names. He was put on a committee with two others in Loveland for the purpose of deciding whether or not it would be practical and good to build a scenic road to Estes Park.

And Mr. Bond, being – had one vote of those three, and it was voted that it was practical to build a scenic road to Estes Park. So Mr. Bond has had a great deal to do with getting that beautiful road up the Thompson Canyon.

And when he got here you can see what happened, he was living here in 1903 or '04, so naturally he just decided that Estes Park was the place to live.

Steve Shaw: Okay, we'll be back to talk more with Bertha Ramey and about Cornelius H. Bond in a minute.

We are back this morning at the Ramada Inn with the February edition of Breakfast Club of the Rockies from KSIR. And Bertha, we were talking about Cornelius H. Bond. And you had a couple of other things you wanted to mention.

Bertha Ramey: Well, I did want to tell about how beautiful the town square looked the morning Alf Lamborn came to Estes Park as a Presidential candidate in 1936, the first year we were here.

And really Estes Park had a bang up season. Alf Lamborn was here and just think of the electricity that went through this town when it was noticed and told and advised that he was going to spend the summer at the McGraw Ranch.

And, of course, that really excited me, too, because I knew that every time he came to Estes Park in his car he would be looking at our office. And so we put two beautiful great big yellow sunflowers with brown centers in each one of the windows and they were there all summer. And then **Stanley** came down later on and borrowed them one day for a party they had for him.

The morning he came in they asked everybody to put on a red shirt and get on a horse and go down to the end of the canyon and meet him. And so everybody that could ride –

Dottie Muchler: Everybody? How many would that be?

Bertha Ramey: Oh, just hundreds of people.

Orpha Kendall: Oh, really?

Bertha Ramey: The whole town was – when they came back I looked – I stood at my office door and looked across the square and you could not see one inch of road. Every inch of the road on all four sides of the park and every place in the intersection and up towards MacGregor Lane was all filled with a horse and rider. It was the most beautiful site I ever saw, and it certainly did impress Alf Lamborn and me, too.

[Laughter]

I had never seen anything like it before. Now, I did want to say that some of the signatures in my guess book, which has been my prize – another prize possession I have, I have lots of people signing this guest book.

F.O. Stanley, **Marian Anderson**, Alf Lamborn and family, Florence Allen, who was the only lady that has ever been suggested as a possible candidate for the Supreme Court, Vance Brand, the astronaut, Mrs. John T. **Prendergast** of Prendergast fame, Liberace, he signed a card in the Plantation that morning and I pasted it in the book.

[Laughter]

And then last summer I had the pleasure of having a Lady and a Sir from England, a school master from Oxford, England, and they visited me at the request of my cousin. And I had them sign their names in my guest book, and they wrote their names down, they didn't put their titles, and I had to ask them to put their titles, Sir and Lady.

And **Susie Carr-McGuire**, the mother of **Lois Graves**, and the daughter of the man who was on the Constitutional Convention of the State of Colorado, and Lois Graves is the family of people that have been – meant lots to Colorado, it would take a whole morning to tell about that.

And well, I think that's all I'll say, members of Joel Estes family and good morning, and thank you.

Steve Shaw:

Okay, Bertha, we're gonna steal a couple of minutes of your time here. We're gonna talk with John. John, you wanted to mention something about the ranch itself, the MacGregor Ranch?

John Ramey:

Oh, first I want to apologize, you know, I didn't mean to slight my wife, Dora, but you asked about how we became acquainted with Muriel and she didn't, of course, know Muriel until later on, and periodically we'd – I'd have to go out to see Muriel on business or something, do a notary, and Dora would go along and the kids.

And I wanted to say that Muriel was most interested in children. She'd spend hours talking to him if there was any around. She really did like kids. And I know my kids would go out there and

they'd name some cats and one thing and another, you know, and talk about all kinds of things.

The other thing I wanted to tell you about was her, you know, there's a lot of stories about her, but to me this is the most impressing. She was out there in her sick bed and we used to lock her up so nobody could get in there, and she'd be all alone in the afternoon.

I was out giving her lunch one day and so I said, "Well, Muriel, I better go back." And she says, "Oh, yes, I take so much of your valuable time." I said, "That's okay." But I said, "We do think about you and worry about you being lonesome out here."

And all afternoon she says, "No, Johnny Bill," she never ever called me that but she did then. I was always Mr. Ramey. She said, "Let me tell you, and you hear me well, I've never been lonely but I've always lived alone."

She said, "You know, if you read books, the books are always with you." So she said – and that meant a lot to me because she did spend a lot of time by herself, didn't bother her. She was okay.

Orpha Kendall:

It was partly John's children that got Muriel interested in vocational schools. And I give a \$500.00 scholarship each year, you know, from the proceeds of the museum, and this can be used for a vocational school as well as a regular college, because she was so interested in the vocational schools.

Steve Shaw:

Okay, we'll be back in a minute.

We're back at the Ramada Inn this morning. I'd quickly like to ask Orpha if she wanted to mention something about Muriel and the fact that she had an extensive education, also.

Orpha Kendall:

Yes, Muriel had three degrees from three different colleges. She was one of the first women to graduate from law school in Colorado. She was also one of the first women to be appointed to practice before the Supreme Court of Colorado, and she did practice law here in Estes Park.

Her will left the ranch in a trust to be operated as a working cattle ranch and the proceeds go to charity or educational facilities. The estate is still just in an estate, it hasn't been put over into a trust,

and this is the reason that I give my wages and any of the other volunteer guides at the museum also donate their wages for a scholarship each year.

Steve Shaw: Okay, Orpha, thank you, Dottie. We're out at the audience, now we're gonna ask the audience to ask some questions. You want to take the first –

Dottie Muchler: They've got me taped in.

Steve Shaw: Okay. Can I have your name, ma'am, and then the question?

Audience: I'm **Bennie Bay** from Glen Haven and I have been reading a lot, and I want to know where **Emmons** Gulch started and where it came down in the _____.

Orpha Kendall: Emmons?

Audience: Um-hum, Emmons Gulch.

Orpha Kendall: I think that that's what we call **Tuck Away** Gulch.

Audience: Oh, past Eagle Rock?

Orpha Kendall: Yes, it would be over behind Eagle Rock and comes out –

Audience: And comes out on _____.

Orpha Kendall: Yes, between Loveland Heights down in the canyon.

Audience: That's the way so many of them went to the Big Thompson.

Orpha Kendall: Right.

Dottie Muchler: And that one road, too, used to be a toll road.

Steve Shaw: Any other questions, people have some questions? I'll sneak around here.

Audience: I _____ over there.

Dottie Muchler: You come on over here.

MacGregor Ranch
Presented by KSIR Breakfast Club of the Rockies
February 28, 1975

- Audience:* That's all right. **Jay Harding**. Johnny, how big is MacGregor Ranch and what does it cover basically? It is all part together –
- John Ramey:* Well, it –
- Audience:* – or is it strung out?
- John Ramey:* – started out at 2900 acres, approximately, and then the settlement, or the caveators on trying to break the will, why they gave them 56 acres behind the Stanley and about 380 acres over on Fish Creek. Yeah, so that's about 400 acres. There's about 2500 acres left.
- Orpha Kendall:* There's 1710 at the home place and 583 on Dry Gulch. I think that's probably what Mr. Harding was wondering about was the Dry Gulch property.
- Steve Shaw:* I want to mention the original homestead was what, 160 acres?
- Orpha Kendall:* Yes. There were two original homesteads, one by the great-grandmother, and one by Grandfather MacGregor, and those were both in Black Canyon. Muriel bought the Dry Gulch property in '32, I think 1932.
- John Ramey:* Something like that, yeah.
- [End of Audio]*