



VERDIGRIS PROJECT

KBMF & BUTTE-SILVER BOW ARCHIVES

VIRGINIA SALAZAR

The Verdigris Project

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Oral History Transcript of Virginia Salazar

Interviewer: Clark Grant

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CLARK GRANT: Would you mind saying and spelling your name?

VIRGINIA SALAZAR: Virginia Salazar.

GRANT: And do you go by Virginia?

SALAZAR: Gin.

GRANT: Gin. Okay. Well, we're here today in Gin Salazar's home in your living room. Thanks for having us.

SALAZAR: You're welcome.

GRANT: For this oral history project, it's a pretty informal conversation. It's what's called a life history. And so usually what we do is start out by asking people to recollect about their grandparents. What can you recall about them?

SALAZAR: Well, both sets of grandparents lived in Washington, fairly close to Yakima. And that's where I was born.

And then I also remember my great-grandparents, because they lived with us for a time, with my mom and dad and my brother and I, you know, in Yakima.

GRANT: Where were they from?

SALAZAR: They were mostly from Texas. Texas and Oklahoma. My great-grandfather was a Texas ranger. In fact, he was the youngest Texas ranger that they ever had. But he also had a couple brothers and his dad, they were all Texas Rangers.

GRANT: Wow. Any idea how they got into that?

SALAZAR: I don't know. They were the Taylor family, and the Taylor family was pretty popular, you know? But none of my great-grandfather's children went along that line at all. The majority of them were in entertainment. They were in stage productions.

GRANT: So, would that be your maternal great grandfather?

SALAZAR: Yes, mmm hmm.

GRANT: And so they were all in law enforcement, but their kids were actors?

SALAZAR: Uh huh. My grandmother wasn't. My grandmother was the oldest of all of them. And her mother died when she was probably, oh, before she was in her teens. And so consequently, my grandmother was the one that had raised her two brothers and her sister.

Then grandpa got married and had six children and she raised them. So that was her life.

GRANT: What was her name?

SALAZAR: Carrie Taylor Barrett. Yes. Now, I'm 85, and my brother lived until, I think he was 83 when he died. And my sister will be 80 next year, but our parents or our grandparents never reached the age of 70.

None of them. So it just goes to show how, well, medicine keeps us alive. I guess! That's what I have to say. You know, just a few years ago, I wouldn't have said that, but now that's the way it is.

[00:03:49]

GRANT: Could you tell me a bit about the sort of stage acting they did and where they performed?

SALAZAR: They performed in various places. I mean, they were in Hollywood, several of them. And, I have the one great uncle, Glen Taylor, and he was a senator from Idaho.

And then, but he and his wife and his oldest son, they used to tour the country and they were called the Glendora Taylor players. His name was Glen and hers was Dora. And their son was Arod.

GRANT: Arod.

SALAZAR: Which was Dora spelled backwards. I have a very entertaining family.

GRANT: I'll say. And do you have any pictures of them in Hollywood? Or recordings?

SALAZAR: No. I have recordings of my one aunt. I tell the kids, well, I've got these old, hard rubber records. They can't believe there's such a thing. And of course, if you play them now, it's really kind of wobbly and everything. But my mom had a phonograph, you know, that you wound up and played. And that was my Aunt Lena. And she used to go on a lot of tours and she did a lot of singing, you know, all over the country, well around the world.

And I think she died in the early 1950s. I never knew her. But in fact my Uncle Glen, the senator, he's the only one I knew because they had come to Montana. On one of their tours.

[00:06:05]

GRANT: Would you say that your family going back to that generation was affluent? Were they pretty well off?

SALAZAR: Uh, not really. No. All of them were very hard workers. No, my grandparents on my mother's side, there were five children in her family. But on my dad's side, my grandmother had 11 and she raised her first grandson because his mother died in childbirth. And my dad was the oldest of all of them. And they named

him Theodore Roosevelt Jones, because Teddy Roosevelt was just going into office when he was born.

And they thought, well, he was a tiny baby, but if they named him a big name, he'd be a big guy. Yeah. He grew up to be a big guy. Not a fat guy, just a big guy.

GRANT: Big how?

SALAZAR: Well, he was tall. And my husband used to say, 'Oh my gosh, your dad's hands'. And I said, yeah, he had big hands. He did, he was a mechanic. He was a Jack of all trades. He could do anything. He only went to the eighth grade in school because then he went out and worked and helped raise his brothers and sisters. But he was very knowledgeable. He read books. You can tell - books. Those are my mom's books, and my dad's that are in there.

[00:07:54]

GRANT: Was he ever in the military?

SALAZAR: No. He was too young for World War one and two. Not just too old for World War II, but he also worked at a mine, it was outside of Norris.

GRANT: Oh, okay.

SALAZAR: Yeah. The Boaz mine. In fact, that's why we moved to Montana.

GRANT: Because he took that job?

SALAZAR: Yes, he took it, yes.

GRANT: What about Yakima, when you were a kid and even before, back in the day, what was that place like?

[00:08:30]

SALAZAR: Well, we never went into the town of Yakima a lot, at least I didn't. But both grandparents had fruit ranches, you know, which, they don't - the ones that they had were big. They grew everything. There's none of those now.

GRANT: What's there?

SALAZAR: Oh, there's homes. There's homes and stores and yeah, it took up all the orchards. I haven't been back now for quite a few years, but it's not like going back home because it's not the same.

GRANT: It's just gone.

SALAZAR: It's gone.

[00:09:30]

GRANT: Do you have recollections of playing in the orchards as a kid?

SALAZAR: Oh yes. Oh gosh, yes. And getting to climb up on the ladders and try and pick cherries and apples and peaches, you know, everything. And I mean, I thought I was a big help.

GRANT: You're probably a big help in eating the cherries.

SALAZAR: Yeah, which I'm allergic to the majority of them now.

GRANT: Oh really?

SALAZAR: Yeah.

GRANT: Do you think that's because you had an overload as a kid?

SALAZAR: I don't know, but it all started when I was about a junior in high school, and I started getting just a lot of allergies, you know, so.

I'm prepared now. I know what I can eat and what I can't eat.

[00:10:25]

GRANT: You had said that your great grandparents lived with you?

SALAZAR: Yes, they, they had come up from Texas, just to visit. But, oh, they must have been there for about six months, all together. And I was five years old, just turning six, when they came to live with us. At that young age, every evening my great-grandfather would have stories to tell. And a lot of them were stories about Indians, because his father was known as Old Yellow Hair. He had yellow colored hair. He grew it real long. He had two braids and he tucked the braids inside his belt.

And any Indians that he met up with, he would dare them to scalp him. Nope, no one was scalping. He was a friend of various Indian tribes in Texas and Oklahoma. Yes.

GRANT: As Rangers, did they pursue Indians?

SALAZAR: You know, I have no idea. I don't know, because after my great-grandfather, when he got older, then he became a minister in the Presbyterian church. And that's what my whole family was. And that's what I was raised as too. But there was just one bad thing about my great-grandfather and his preaching, and he would preach from the pulpit. And my mother always hated it and she used to tell him so. But he preached from the pulpit that God made Black people Black because that's what they were supposed to be.

GRANT: Huh. Meaning subordinate?

[00:12:53]

SALAZAR: Definitely. Yes. But grandpa just grew up that way and that's the way he stayed. But my grandmother, his daughter, she was the same way. Because we used to go back to Washington every summer for a two week visit. We moved here in '39 and then we would go back there for a visit.

And my brother and I went into Yakima with my grandmother one time and we went to, I think it was Woolworths. We were going to have lunch at the counter. So it was my grandmother, then me, and then my brother on the other side of me. And we were at the counter, we had ordered. And a Black lady came in and she sat on the stool next to my brother and I thought nothing of it. And my brother thought nothing of it.

My grandmother kept looking and looking. She finally called the waitress over and she said, 'are you going to let that Negro lady sit next to - that's my grandson'? And she said, well, 'is she bothering him'? And she said, 'I don't know'. So the waitress asked my brother. Oh no, he was okay. No.

My grandmother said, 'we're not staying'. We had ordered lunch. 'We're not staying'. Nope. We got up. We didn't get to eat in town. We went home. Grandma fixed lunch. And it just, my mom was furious. She was furious about it. Oh boy. Yeah.

[00:15:14]

GRANT: What impression did that make on you?

SALAZAR: Well, you know, here I was a kid. At that time I was probably seven or eight and I just, I couldn't understand it. You know, it wasn't the first Black person that I had seen. I didn't really see anything different, you know? So, I don't know what my grandmother would have thought in my family, because my son married a Black lady.

GRANT: My how times change.

SALAZAR: Oh, definitely.

[00:15:57]

GRANT: Back to Old Yellow Hair. Are there any photographs of him, or have you done any research about him?

SALAZAR: My grandson, Eric, that lives in, well, he works at Quantico. They live in Virginia. He's gone back to a lot of history, but there was never a picture of him. I don't know if he has gone back any further to see, but, I don't really anything about them.

GRANT: And so it was Yellow Hair's son that came to live with you all when you were a child? And do you recall other stories that he told in those nighttime sessions?

SALAZAR: He used to talk about the little papooses and, I don't know. It was just various stories, you know. But grandpa, my great-grandpa, he was really losing his eyesight. And I don't know what was wrong with his eyes, but the one thing I remember was every night, my mom would have to bring him a bottle of Vicks. And to soothe his eyes, he would rub the Vick's in his eyes.

GRANT: Whoa.

SALAZAR: I know. And he always wore a nightcap to bed. Tracy has the nightcap. My mom had kept that in one particular drawer, she kept the nightcap and I was the one that ended up with it and I gave it to Tracy. But every time I would see that nightcap, it just seemed like I could smell Vicks. And you know, my mom said 'it doesn't smell like Vicks'. And I said, I can just remember that from grandpa wearing it.

GRANT: So at what age did you come to Butte then? Did you come from Yakima to Butte?

[00:18:14]

SALAZAR: No. We went to, it was called the Boaz mine.

GRANT: Okay, over by Norris?

SALAZAR: Yes, it was about 15 miles out of Norris. It was predominantly gold, a gold mine, but there was copper and other things in it too. But after my dad got there, then they started building their own mill. So they had a big mill.

They had three different boarding houses. They had one particular cookhouse where everyone ate. But they had three different, big houses for all the miners that - a lot of people came from Butte and they would be there. And those particular miners always had weekends off, you know, so they'd come back home. But they came from various places and they would stay in the boarding houses. And then eat at the cook house. It was a big production.

[00:19:37]

GRANT: Is that where you all stayed too?

SALAZAR: We had our own homes there. We had our own homes. And we were there for at least eight years, maybe longer. And then -

GRANT: Starting in '39?

SALAZAR: Yeah. And then finally the mine closed, you know, and my aunt is the one that ended up with it. And then she would lease it out to various fellows that would come and mine. Just around close to it and stuff. And then she finally sold it, I don't know, there's no mining that goes on now, you know?

[00:20:30]

GRANT: Your dad was employed there basically because he was a Jack of all trades?

SALAZAR: Yes, he was a hoist engineer. He was a mechanic. He started out as one of the mechanics in the shop. And he was a hoist engineer, and he was a diamond driller in the mine. He could do anything. He could make something out of nothing. And then they used to say that about my mother too. She could sew anything. She could sew and crochet. And one time there was a fellow and he said, 'how many tons of steel wool would I have to get for you to crochet a stone'?

She said, 'I don't know. And I'm not doing it'.

[00:21:25]

GRANT: Any idea of how the two of them met?

SALAZAR: You know, they didn't live that far from each other. But I know my dad was engaged to someone and my mom had a different boyfriend at the time. They were both in their twenties. Well, yeah, my dad was about four years older than mom. Because when they got married, my mom had just turned 25. In fact, they got married on her 25th birthday. I think they got married maybe just a few months after they started going together. And I don't know - because she knew his family, she was

familiar with others in the family. But then my dad, he would go wherever there was a job. Because he always wanted to help my grandparents out, and he did.

[00:22:50]

GRANT: What year would he have been born then?

SALAZAR: 1901.

GRANT: Okay. I knew it had to have been close to the turn of the century there.

SALAZAR: Yeah. In 1901. And he was born in Chilhowie, Virginia.

GRANT: So he came away from home.

SALAZAR: Yeah, they did. My grandfather knew someone that had gone from Virginia to Washington. And I think about maybe the first four or five of their children were born in Virginia, and then they moved to Washington.

GRANT: Do you know how they made the trip?

[00:23:37]

SALAZAR: Oh gosh. You know, they always used to talk about riding on trains. They never mentioned the covered wagons.

GRANT: That's what I was wondering.

SALAZAR: I would have been very interested in that.

GRANT: Yeah, absolutely.

SALAZAR: But, I would say it was probably by train. And I remember my grandpa - one of the girls met a fellow from Wolf point Montana. And so she moved to Wolf Point. And my grandpa came to visit one time on to train. Well, he said that would be his very last visit to Montana. Well, I mean, Wolf Point is where he was. That's all he saw was Wolf Point, and I mean, he came from, you know, a very green place. And that was sage brush. No, he didn't have anything good to say about Montana, and oh, he was really disappointed. Then when we moved to Montana, yeah, that was the last place on earth.

GRANT: Do you have memories then, of Norris? Did you go to school there?

SALAZAR: Yes, through the third grade. And then, Norris still had - they didn't have a high school when I was there. It was through junior high and then everyone would go to Harrison, or Pony still had their high school at the time too. Then all of us from the Boaz, they started taking us to Harrison.

Oh, our school bus was something else. It was probably one of the first city buses. With tires instead of you know, that Butte used to have the tracks that they ran on. And it was probably one of the first buses with tires that Butte ever got, because that was our school bus.

In the wintertime we all had blankets. It was - those winters were terrific. Especially up at that mine. There was snow unbelievable. There were tunnels from people's

houses to others and even up in the mine yard. One of these days I have to go through a bunch of old pictures I have in a trunk downstairs because there's a picture that my mom took of my brother and I, standing on top of our clotheslines. And we're, we're on top of this huge pile of snow.

GRANT: Oh, wow. Tunnels between houses?

[00:26:52]

SALAZAR: Yeah, to get around. And like I say, even in the mine yard, they had tunnels. And I saw that later on too, when my daughter Kelly went to teach in Swan Valley.

Yeah. She taught at a school outside of, well, it was in Condon, and they had kindergarten, elementary, and junior high. All the buildings were there close, but there was so much snow that they had the tunnels to go through. The only problem with those is when it starts to warm up.

You have to get out and get the tops off from them. So that no one would be stuck in there, you know, like in a tunnel avalanche, I guess.

GRANT: Wow. Did you enjoy school at that time?

SALAZAR: Oh gosh. Yes. I always liked school. Yeah. I always did. And up at the Boaz, we used to have - when we started going to school in Harrison, there was always some kids in the wintertime that wanted to come home with us on weekends, because we had a skating rink. And our skating rink was the tailings pond from the mine.

And about 10 years ago, I ran into a girl. She was about three years older than me. And she - we were visiting, we were at a reunion out in Norris at this one kid's place. And, she said, 'what would people think now if we told them we used to skate on the tailings pond from the mine'?

I said, yeah, I kind of liked the Berkeley pit.

GRANT: Yeah. The EPA would swoop in now. Right? Maybe not.

SALAZAR: We all lived through it.

GRANT: Did you have a sense then of what the mine was? I mean, as a really young kid.

SALAZAR: Oh yes, once the mill was done, then it would be maybe once a year, they had kind of like a catwalk and the family members could go up and watch when they were pouring gold bricks.

GRANT: Whoa.

SALAZAR: Yes, and I mean, to me, it was just a gold brick. And my dad would haul them to the train station in this old truck that he had. I mean, he had a gun with him, but I think my brother used to get to go with him, but you know, it wasn't an armored vehicle.

GRANT: Sure. So your dad was pretty trustworthy.

SALAZAR: Oh yeah. Oh definitely. Uh huh. And he was a great electrician. Like I said, he could do anything and he was pretty much self-taught. Of course, like I say, he read a lot of books. In fact, I don't know - well, he did teach my grandpa a little bit about reading. I think grandpa used to read. But he taught his mother reading and, and printing. Yeah. Grandma could print.

[00:30:58]

GRANT: At what age did she learn, you think?

SALAZAR: Well, probably, maybe by the time he was starting in like the third grade and through the eighth. Yeah, they were an interesting family.

GRANT: Do you have a sense of what his pay was at the Boaz?

SALAZAR: I don't know, but I'll tell you it was a lot better than what he was getting - because in Washington, when we came in the thirties, like I was born in '33, and we were still in the Depression, you know? It was still the Depression then.

And, I can remember in the fall, mom and dad both worked in packing houses, you know, packing the fruit. And my brother and I would go with them and other people's children would be there too. And they had a little play area for us outside the packing houses. And, yeah, we made a lot of different friends. I mean, to us, it was great.

GRANT: So you recall your parents talking about the depression or did it affect the family directly?

SALAZAR: Well, they never used to talk that much about it, but I'm sure it did. I'm sure it affected both families. But they all came out on the upside, you know?

GRANT: I guess you're bound to make more in a gold mine than you are packing fruit, right?

SALAZAR: Definitely.

GRANT: Plus it sounds like his skill set was better put to use there.

SALAZAR: Oh yes, yes. Uh huh. Because my dad had a lot of different jobs. At one time, we lived at the fairgrounds in Yakima and he was the caretaker of the fairgrounds.

And, he brought a couple of little cub bears to us one time. I mean, to us, it was like puppy dogs, you know, except they were black and they were furry and - because I tell the kids, well, I used to play with bears. Well, they were little.

GRANT: Did you keep them for awhile?

SALAZAR: Uh, no. He, he would just bring them, you know, different days for us.

GRANT: And how long at Norris, you said it was five or six years there?

[00:34:08]

SALAZAR: Well, it was longer than that, because then from there we moved to Pony. Yeah, we were there for at least eight years. It was after World War Two. And then, my dad had gotten a job at a garage in Whitehall. We were in school in Harrison and by then my sister was born too. And we all went to school in Harrison, except my sister. She was in grade school and Pony still had their grade school. So when we moved to Pony, she went to grade school there.

And that was a fun time, living in Pony. Yeah. I mean, I. We lived in Harrison longer because then my dad bought a garage in Harrison finally, when he'd worked and got enough money ahead.

And we lived there longer than in Pony, but I just, I don't know, I've just kind of always considered Pony as my hometown.

GRANT: Really?

SALAZAR: We go out there on the 4th of July every year to the park, which I tell the kids, the park now was the city dump when I lived there.

You know, kind of like Copper Mountain, now? It's on the old city dump.

GRANT: That's right. What are some fond memories of Pony?

SALAZAR: Well, of course we went from the Boaz where there were no kids at all anymore, and went up to Pony and there were about five families of us, you know, in our age group. We all rode the bus, and it's a paved road now, but at the time it was a washboard road.

Yeah. Oh boy. And it was not as old a bus as what we had when we went from the Boaz. But, it was an old school bus, but at least it was a school bus. It wasn't a city bus. We felt more like we were going to school. Yeah.

[00:36:38]

GRANT: Yeah. Did the mine just play out?

SALAZAR: Yeah, pretty much. And there were a lot of small minds around there too. You know, close to the Boaz, there was a mine called the Josephine. And I think, well, it didn't have the gold that the Boaz had, but, it probably had copper, lead and zinc. And then maybe about three or four miles down the road, there was a silver mine. Too. I don't know - there were not very many people that worked that, and they didn't work it for too long, you know?

But, yeah, the Boaz - at the time it was a big production. Made a lot of money for a lot of people.

[00:37:39]

GRANT: Living in Pony and around that area, did you roam around much or did you mostly stay near the house or in town?

SALAZAR: Oh, no. We've roamed all over. And of course we had Potosi to go to, and they had a swimming pool up there with natural water that came down. They, in the years then when the hippies came to town, they blew the swimming pool up.

GRANT: The hippies did? How's that?

SALAZAR: My dad always says he doesn't think the hippies did it. He thinks the people that owned it did it because they were sick of the hippies. So I don't know.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM:: WHAT YEAR WAS THIS?

[00:38:33]

Oh gosh, it was, I mean, it was after I was married. Oh it was in the sixties. Yeah, it was in the early sixties.

GRANT: It was another thing that hippies ruined.

SALAZAR: Uh huh. But that whole area Potosi is really pretty up there. And it's a lot different now that you have cabins and human habitat. Not just the animals, you know. And pony is where I killed my one and only rattle snake.

GRANT: Wow, with what?

SALAZAR: A big rock. I had my friend Bonnie, and, we were probably 14 or 15 at the time. And Pony used to be a big mining town too. Really big. And, because I think in the town, at one time there were 3,500 people.

GRANT: Oh wow.

SALAZAR: You know, that lived in the town. Not when I was there, but when all these mines were going. And so we were going to go up and check out one of the mines.

Bonnie had never seen a mine, but of course I had. And so we were walking on this trail behind our house and we didn't get too far and it was in August. And I could hear a rattlesnake. And we were on - at one time, it was probably a road, but now it was just a trail. And there was just a little bank up.

And I looked and I told Bonnie, I said, 'Oh, I think it's probably a rattlesnake, 'cause I think that's rattlers. 'What?! Let's leave'. And I said, 'no, I just wanted to look a little closer'. So she was on the trail. I got up on the embankment and yeah, I said, it's a rattlesnake. I said it can't see me because they're supposed to be blind in the month of August.

Now, I don't know if that was an old wives tale or what. Anyway, can't see me. And, she said, Bonnie, see that rock? She said, this boulder? And I said, 'yeah, pick it up, bring it to me'. 'No! No', and anyway, she picked it up and she came around and I hung on to it and she said, 'what are you doing'? And I said, 'he's coiling'. I'm going to drop it on his head.

And I did. I dropped it. But I dropped it just right, and I chopped his head right off.

GRANT: Wow.

SALAZAR: Anyway, there it was. And I looked and I thought, Oh my gosh, there were a lot of rattles on that. And anyway, Bonnie said, 'we're not going any farther. If there's one snake, there's gotta be another one someplace.'

And I said, 'well, probably'. I said, 'but it might have heard when I dropped the boulder. It wasn't a boulder, but it was a heavy rock. I will say that. Yeah, it was probably heavier than Bonnie.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM:: Did you make a necklace out of it?

SALAZAR: No. Anyway. So we started walking back to my house and I said, 'okay, Bonnie after sundown is when you're supposed to cut - now, this is probably an old wives tale - that's when you're supposed to cut the rattlers off from a rattlesnake. You don't take them until after sundown. 'You come back with me after sundown?' 'No'. She said, 'you get your brother'. I said, 'I'm not going to tell him what happened, he'll tell my mom and dad'. You know when my mom and dad found out? After I was married.

GRANT: I was going to say...

[00:43:10]

SALAZAR: Yeah, uh huh.

GRANT: They probably wouldn't have liked that you're out there fighting snakes.

SALAZAR: Oh Gosh. Yeah. I would have been grounded. That would have been the end of my summer vacation of doing anything except sitting in my house.

GRANT: Did Bonnie ever get to see a mine then?

SALAZAR: You know, I'm sure she probably did because she stayed in Pony, lived in Pony longer than I did then.

And there were a lot of old mines up there and her dad used to do a little bit of mining on his own. But I mean, not unless she ever went down in any here, I don't know. And I've never been down in a mine here, but gosh, I was in the Boaz a lot. It just, it wasn't real deep.

It went down 500 feet straight down and then another 800 feet on another - you would get on, you know. If it was a different one. And then it had a lot of tunnels that spread out all over.

GRANT: 500 feet is not very deep to you?

SALAZAR: No, well, I mean, here they're a mile deep.

GRANT: Sure, sure, but still. Can you describe what it's like to go underground, even at that one?

[00:44:47]

SALAZAR: You know, probably a lot of people wouldn't like the smell of it, but I did. I mean, well, you have all those metals, you know, that have been cut in two and everything. But one time when I was down there with my dad, and of course I had on the hat with the light on it, you know, the battery strapped around me.

Anyway, I happened to look and I said, 'dad, is this a piece of - because there was a lot of wire gold - and it's really gold - and it would be wires of it, wires in the rock. You know, and one time I shined a light and he said, 'yep, that's wire gold. Yeah.

GRANT: Were you tempted at all to grab a piece?

SALAZAR: Well, I wish I could have, it was in the rocks.

GRANT: And does it smell wet? Did they have to pump there?

SALAZAR: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I mean there's, you can always hear water. You can always hear water coming down. Yeah.

[00:46:09]

GRANT: You weren't scared?

SALAZAR: No. From the very first time I went in - uh huh. And I don't think - I'd been down in mine a few times before my mother ever found out. It was a secret that dad kept alone with me and my brother.

She knew my brother had been down in the mine before, but yeah.

GRANT: We've talked a lot about your dad, but not as much about your mother.

SALAZAR: She was a hardworking woman. And like I said, she could make anything. She made all my clothes. All the time. All my brothers shirts. Oh gosh, she could sew. She could hardly wait for Montgomery Ward catalog to come and she'd start - because we would get to Bozeman in good weather, you know. And she would always get a lot of materials and everything then. But she used to order a lot from Montgomery Ward catalog, you know, material and stuff that she'd make things out of.

And I mean, she made everything. She made all of mine and my sister's clothes. And my sister turned out to be just as good as a seamstress my mother. And then when my mother was sick, before she was dying, she said, 'Gin, I want you to take my sewing machine'. And I, 'well, mom, what am I gonna do with it'?

She said, 'well, Ilene has her own and it's newer than mine'. And I said, 'okay, I'll take it'. So I brought it home. And then when my son Tim was in the top 16 at Butte High, they had the - it was a music group. They were really good. But all their outfits all had to be homemade.

Well, okay. We went and got a pattern for these shirts and pants that I was supposed to make. I didn't even know how to read a pattern. We had the lady that ran the little store next door, Carolyn. Carolyn Campbell. And she was a sewer. Anyway, I got a pattern. I got the material. And I said, 'okay, Carolyn'. She said, 'your mother and your sister sewed, and you never sewed'? And I said, 'no, I didn't'. I said, 'I didn't'. I said, 'I was too busy studying'.

[00:49:23]

Anyway, she showed me how to read a pattern. And so I took off. Pam can tell you. I made a lot of things after that. Made a lot of clothes for the kids and, yeah.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I could tell you two Power Rangers...

SALAZAR: Yep, I made all you guys Power Rangers.

GRANT: Wow.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: This was only two hours before Halloween.

GRANT: I want to see pictures of that.

What about your mother's education?

[00:50:07]

SALAZAR: Well, my mom went through high school. But she didn't graduate until she was 20. When she was 16, she got the flu. And because of that, she had a heart murmur. And so the doctors told my grandparents, she's going to have to have to stay home'. Oh for, you know, they thought weeks, months. And he said, 'at least a year. We'll check then, she might need another year'.

But mom, from the time she was really young, belonged to book clubs. And so, of course, she was busy reading the whole time, and then she went back to school. She was 18 when she went back her junior year. Yeah, and she graduated when she was 20. Then she went to a business college for a little bit, and then she went to a beauty school.

So that was another thing she did when we were at the Boaz. People would order the home perms from the catalog and Mom would give them perms.

GRANT: Perms.

SALAZAR: Yeah.

GRANT: I didn't realize those went back that far.

SALAZAR: Oh yah, uh huh. But I'll tell you, the equipment and the curlers that they used, people looked like someone from outer space.

Yeah.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: And I bet it just reeked too.

SALAZAR: Oh yeah. Yeah. And of course it was usually always at our house. And, everyone would give mom their scraps of material, old clothes, anything. And she made braided rugs. Oh, she made beautiful, huge braided rugs. Our house, has always had the big braided rugs in them.

And then I, after she and my dad died, then I brought the braided rugs from the house in Pony. Because when they retired, after they sold the garage and they retired, then they moved and bought a house in Pony. So anyway, these kids, our kids were very familiar with going to Pony and seeing mom and dad.

[00:52:49]

GRANT: That's really what she was known for then...and sing?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: She had a beautiful soprano voice. She did funerals and weddings.

SALAZAR: Oh, she sang at everything.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: And I have a developmentally disabled sister, and my grandmother always sang to her when she was a baby, and that sister has that voice.

SALAZAR: Ya, and Jenny had the same type of voice as my mom. Yeah.

GRANT: You said eventually your dad had a garage in Whitehall, it seemed like...

SALAZAR: Well, he worked in Whitehall. As he was a mechanic for this one garage. And then he bought a garage in Harrison. Yeah, it was Ted's Texaco service. Because it was Texaco gasoline.

And so when was the first time you set foot in Butte?

[00:53:56]

SALAZAR: Well, of course the first time was when we came through Butte in '39, in fact we stayed, we had to stay overnight in Butte. Because I mean, it was the old highway. Harding Way. And they still had dead man's curve, you know. That wasn't taken away for several years.

And well, my aunt and uncle lived here for four years while he went to - it was the School of Mines, at the time.

So I would be in here to stay with them sometimes in the summer, and visit. But then when I graduated from high school, the day after I graduated, my aunt and my cousin and I took a trip to West Yellowstone. And I told her, I said, 'I'm going to pack some clothes, just in case there's a job up there or something'.

Yeah, I got a job in the coffee shop in West Yellowstone. So that's where I was for the summer. \$5 a day. And, oh my hours, they were horrendous. I would have a two hour break in the afternoon. And there were just two of us waitresses that worked at this coffee shop. It had 17 stools in it.

That was all, just 17 stools. It was the busiest spot in town. It's where all the smoke jumpers ate. Oh, there, they had a lot of telephone operators. It's where all of them ate. And I mean, it was just a busy place.

But I'd have to go early in the morning. I had to be there before six. And then I would get off from two until four, and then I had to go back at four and we closed at eight. And, I had, I got a room in a house. There were, three upstairs rooms that the people rented for \$90 a month. Well, my tips, of course. I would never been able to afford it, but no. Tips were good.

[00:56:52]

GRANT: Yeah. Did they exceed your pay?

SALAZAR: Oh yes. Oh, by far. And then after Labor day, then they all closed up. The people that owned the coffee shop, they were from Boston, but she had family that lived in the area, you know? And, so then they would go back to Boston. He was the cook and she was the overseer of everything, you know. And she would help us out in a pinch, but their food was wonderful. Just - yeah.

GRANT: Is that place still there?

SALAZAR: No. Nope. West Yellowstone looks completely different. And then of course after the earthquake, it moved the mountain from one side of the highway to the other side. And formed a lake.

GRANT: Quake Lake?

SALAZAR: Yeah. I was trying to explain that to - we took my grandson Marky, from North Carolina, and Casey. Max and I took those two on a trip with us. We went through the park and, and Tracy was living in Sheridan, Wyoming then, so we went over the hill and into Wyoming to see them. But I was trying to explain to them, you know - I think they thought I was crazy.

[00:58:46]

GRANT: Did you need us to pause or anything? Uh, we're just recording.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: No, but I think you were standing outside the radio station this morning.

GRANT: Did you wave?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: And then I waved, but then I thought, he doesn't know who I am. But it looks like Clark.

GRANT: It was funny because three different cars - I was just standing there for a minute - and three people waved, and I thought, what's going on? Who are all these people?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: KBMF lovers.

GRANT: Yeah, I guess so.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: No, but I brought you some soup, so. And what time tonight do you think?

SALAZAR: Oh, I like to be up there like seven. Would you like to go somewhere for dinner first? I don't think so. No.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I would. Okay. I didn't realize you guys were going to go see Carol King. Oh, I don't even know who we're seeing it.

SALAZAR: We're seeing the Hitmen. They sing everything.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: Oh, it's not Carol King?

SALAZAR: No, that's a different one - on page - open it up. 'Cause there's an article in there. Yeah.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: Clark, can you believe that 15 kids grew up in this house?

GRANT: We haven't gotten there yet.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: Terry bug, who lives at the group home, would be crawling around on her arms. You know, dragging her legs behind her.

SALAZAR: Well, she was in a body cast.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: Well, I know, but still, on top of braided rugs. Did that register? Some of us have waffle marks from that.

I'll go to the kitchen and visit with my little sister.

[01:00:40]

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: And, the smell of it for breakfast.

SALAZAR: Well, this was in October. Yeah, I finally, well Tim got up and he went to the bathroom. And he said, 'mom, I'm going to bed'. I said, 'Oh Tim, I think you better sleep on the couch'.

'No, I'm going to bed'. And I said, 'I don't know if you'll make it downstairs'.

Well, anyway, I went in there. I said, 'okay, Tim, sit down. Now sit down'. And I had him by the arms and I said, 'and just go down one step at a time.' Well, he hit the one step and I don't know what happened, but I wasn't hanging on to him.

And he was bouncing down the steps. All the way. He got up and went to bed. I spent the night cleaning. Yup, Max wasn't here.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: Well, he wouldn't have been helping anyway.

SALAZAR: Oh, well, no.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: He would have been yelling. 'God damn it! Who did this! Jesus Christ, Gin, clean it up!' We know how he talked.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: So my mom went into labor one night...

[01:02:10]

SALAZAR: ...with Patty...

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: No... I thought it was Jenny.

SALAZAR: Oh, well, what were you going to say?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: My dad was sitting there watching TV. Anyway. And my mom came in. 'Max, I think I better go to a hospital'. 'I, Jesus Christ - the fight's just starting'!

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: No, one time, one time it was...Mom said, 'Max, I think we better go to the hospital'. 'Can you wait till My Three Sons is over'?

SALAZAR: Yeah it was My Three Sons and that was Patty...[indiscriminate chatter]...

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I want to say it was Jenny.

SALAZAR: It probably was...with Jenny.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: We never knew when she was pregnant ever. She never wore maternity clothes.

[01:03:12]

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: The only one I ever knew was Jenny.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I knew Steve, because we had waited four years between Mark and Steve. That was the longest stretch. And we came home for McKinley School, singing 'the baby's home, the baby's home!' And there was no damn baby.

SALAZAR: Well, yeah, but I mean, after all, look, the last four girls I had were all three pound babies.

GRANT: Wow.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I weighed 2,11.

SALAZAR: She weighed 2, 11 and Terry weighed 2,8, and Tim weighed 2,12. And Mark was a four pound baby.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: You know, now they send you to Missoula or Salt Lake neonatal...

SALAZAR: But with Patty, and My Three Sons, he had to watch My Three Sons. And it was winter. It was November. There was so much snow out there, we got to the top of the hill, Excelsior, and there was some kind of an accident. There were cars - we couldn't get through. I was ready to get up and run. It was the old St. James, not this hospital. Yeah. I got to the hospital and got in there and said, 'I need a wheelchair'. 'Oh, your information?' 'He's here. He can give it to you'. I said, 'I've got to go to the delivery room'.

Well, no, they wanted me to go, into the labor room. I said, 'I'm already in labor. The delivery room! Yeah.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: What, mom's in the hospital, what, you had another baby?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: We came home from school. And my mom wasn't here. She was in the hospital.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I'll cry. I knew Dad was going to cook.

[01:05:18]

SALAZAR: You're the one that cried when Jackie was born.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: I remember, Rick and I came up to the hospital. 'Mom, can you stop having babies?' This is embarrassing, I'm a senior in high school.

GRANT: Embarrassing.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: Well, and Tony went up to tell you that Vicky was pregnant, right? Was that with Jackie?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: No Max, wasn't it?

SALAZAR: No. Vicky was pregnant with Sean.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: She said Max.

SALAZAR: I don't know what she was thinking.

[01:05:50]

GRANT: Well, so where we left off, you were waitressing in West Yellowstone. So something occurred between that and having 15 kids.

SALAZAR: Yeah, well then when I came home, my friend Bonnie and her family, they were living here in Butte at the time. And, so I came in to visit Bonnie and, I said, gosh, I wonder, there's probably some jobs in Butte or something.

And her mom was looking through the paper. Uh, they need help at St. James hospital. I said, 'but I'm not a nurse'. 'No, but they need nurses aides'. And I said, 'Oh'. So I go down to St. James and yeah, they needed nurses aides alright. My gosh, the mines were going full blast. Oh gosh, there must've been at least four miners wards.

One of them had 10 beds in it. These were big. And there was one that had eight. And I know two had six. And then there were miners in other rooms too. But those were some that - well, mostly broken bones. You know, and then the older miners with consumption, and at the time they didn't have rest homes. So they lived at the hospital.

So anyway, and my pay was the same, \$5 a day.

GRANT: What?

[01:07:48]

SALAZAR: \$5 a day. But, I could have breakfast when I got there and I could have lunch. And, so I got a room at the Fox hotel. Gosh, I think I was paying maybe \$30 a month, you know?

Ya, anyway, I went to work at St. James and that's where I met Max.

GRANT: Okay. Was he a patient?

SALAZAR: Yes.

GRANT: He was injured...

SALAZAR: Yeah. He had a broken leg. Oh, it was a bad one. It was when his knee was completely ruined. And that's the one he kept breaking in later years.

GRANT: Kept breaking it?

SALAZAR: Yeah. He broke it a couple more times. But yeah, that's where I met him and then he got out of the hospital and it was about a week after that. It was my birthday, and my Aunt Lucille has a birthday close to mine. My mom was having a dinner for us.

So I went out to Harrison, that's where the folks lived in, and my aunt came in and we all had dinner. And then I was coming back. And well, I was wearing high heels. And I just walked out of the garage and I don't know, I guess I stepped on a rock. Anyway, I dislocated this knee and I dislocated it backwards and the knee cap came up like this. Oh my God. I was in pain. Oh, that was horrible. And my dad got me in the back of the car and we went right to the hospital, the emergency room. And, I told him to call Dr. Rotar, the bone doctor, and he came and he says, 'well, we're going to have to take you into surgery.

So, went into surgery and then ended up with a big cast. So, that was the end of working at St. James, because I had about three casts - that was in March. And, then finally, I went back out to Harrison then, and Max came out a couple of times and then he went back to Utah. Oh, you know, and we kept in touch. And I got my cast, the last cast I got off, it was the end of June or maybe the first part of July.

[01:10:53]

And then he sent me a ticket to fly down, to meet his family. His mom and dad lived there. And his sister and her husband, and they had a little boy and Max had a son. He was, Mike was not quite two years old. And his mother had left him when he was just a few months old. And well, she was - anyway, she had left.

And so my mother-in-law was the one that was raising Mike. And then Max and I got married and he turned two and so, I mean, I'm the only mother he ever knew. He did meet his own birth mother when he was in the Navy. You know, he met her once and I don't know, they got into some big argument or something.

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: And here's the crazy part about that. So then after this woman leaves dad with Mike, she goes and hooks up with his older brother. And they have a daughter. So not only are Mike and Penny, half brother and sister, they're cousins. We always wondered. We really liked Penny. Why does Penny come to see Mike?

GRANT: Oh, terrible.

SALAZAR: Yeah, it was. This woman was about, oh, she was at least seven or eight years older than Max. She was very pretty lady, I will say that. But she had four sons before she had Mike. And then they found out Penny and another one of Wanda's kids - I think they found out all of them, and she had nine kids altogether. That were scattered all over.

And, 'cause I know, one time when Mike was here and Penny wanted him to come to Seattle, because some of the other kids were going to be there. And I told him, I said, 'you know, you should do that'. And he said, 'no, mom. They're not my family'.

He said, 'Penny's the only one I know'. He said, 'I saw Wanda one time, just briefly'. And he said, 'she didn't mean anything to me'. And he said, 'no, you guys are my family'. So he never wanted to go and meet any of them. That was up to him, you know.

He was stationed in Big Sur at the time, and the only reason he found out that his birth mother lived close by was because my husband's sister in Salt Lake had written to him and told him he should go see his mother. She never told me, or she never told Max. He would have had a fit. To me, I wouldn't have cared, you know? But he went to see her and I don't know, they got into some big argument and that was it. He left and, yeah.

[01:14:56]

GRANT: When you first entered the hospital, were you surprised at the number of injured miners?

SALAZAR: Oh gosh. Yes. And that's where I worked, was on the miners wards. That's where I was on the miners wards.

GRANT: And what sort of work do you do as a nurses aide? Do you change bandages, or?

SALAZAR: Of course you've got bedpan service. And, you gave them baths. You know, you gave all the bed baths and changed the beds. And, oh boy, I could make a bed and bounce a penny off it.

And you served them their breakfast, you served them their lunches. You did all the dirty work, all of the dirty work. Take temperatures, you know. And, sometimes the doctors would have you go in with them just to show you various things that they were doing. I know Dr. Rotar was really good about that.

You know, having various ones of us, you know, go in and do a few things. I worked with one gal, her last name was Beaver. And that's - everybody called her Beaver. And, she and I were working together, and there was one order we had to have this guy go on the bed pan. The lab, well, the doctor, needed a warm stool.

Okay. So we were the culprits to take this warm stool to the lab. So there we were the bed pan all covered and then a heating pad underneath the bed pan.

We get on the elevator. The elevator gets stuck. Do you think we'd take that heating pad off the bed pan? No. To us, it seemed like an hour and it was probably five minutes that we were stuck.

But we walked into the lab, and about three people were sitting there at a table, eating lunch.

Beaver said, 'we're delivering your warm stool. Not money!'

Oh, oh my gosh.

GRANT: That's good.

[01:18:15]

SALAZAR: We went back and told everyone, Oh, everyone laughed. They were so happy it was us and not them.

Anyway, when I went down to Salt Lake, then yeah, Max decided then, yeah, as long as you're here, we're going to get married. Oh! So I called my mom. And she said, 'are you sure'? I said, 'well, I guess so. They're already...

I'm sure my mother-in-law was ready. You know, a little two-year-old kid was a handful for her, after she had raised her five kids, you know? So. Anyway

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: See you tonight.

SALAZAR: Okay. See you gal.

GRANT: I'll wave next time.

[01:19:28]

I just wanted to go back to the hospital real quick, if I may. Because I'm curious about miner's consumption and how much of that you saw?

SALAZAR: Oh, there were a lot of old ones, a lot of old miners that were in there. And then finally they started building the nursing homes, you know. But before that, there were some people - that this Beaver, she took, she and her husband took one of the older guys home, with them.

They had a spare room. You know, because the hospitals were trying to get them out. And they were building the - what was it called? The community hospital, I think, when they started building this one. And then the Sisters of Charity ended up buying it.

GRANT: Were they on oxygen?

SALAZAR: Oh gosh. Yes. Yeah, they were on oxygen. I used to feel so bad for, you know, the old ones. You knew they were going to be there until they died. And so many of them were foreigners, you know? There were a lot of them that had come from the old country. They'd always tell you stories about the old country.

GRANT: Did they miss it?

SALAZAR: I think they did. Yeah. You know? 'Cause they could remember their childhood there, you know.

GRANT: Did you get the impression that they thought it was worth it, having mined? And?

SALAZAR: Well, you know, they made good money. I mean, miner's wages were good. The only problem with that was they would go on strike about every three years. Because the company wouldn't give them raises.

So they'd go on strike. And boy, we lived through a lot of strikes. A lot of men - finally Max went to work for the state. But yeah, and the state was really low pay. Of course he did become an officer in the miner's union. You know, after one of his leg breaks.

Yeah, he went to the union and he was the financial secretary for the union. You know, that was good. But then, you know, the mines were closing, kind of one at a time. Because they were going to have the pit. So anyway, he went to work for the state, as a state mine inspector. Yeah, but all the kids were raised here.

[01:22:51]

GRANT: Were you reluctant to marry then?

SALAZAR: In a way, I was. 'Cause I kind of liked working different jobs, you know? So once I got married, I had a job. I had a two year old kid.

GRANT: Right off the bat, that wasn't yours. Became yours.

SALAZAR: Yup.

GRANT: So 15 children total? Does that include Mike?

SALAZAR: Yes. Mmm hmm.

GRANT: Okay. Would you mind naming them, maybe from oldest to youngest?

SALAZAR: Mike, Tony, Tracy, Tim, Terry, Pam, Peggy, Patty, Mark, Steve, Cary, Jenny, Kelly, Max and Jackie.

GRANT: Wow. And how many of them are living today?

[01:23:43]

SALAZAR: Well, Tim and Mark and Steve all died. The rest of them. Mark was in the army. He'd been in for 21 years and he and his family were stationed at Fort Bragg, at the time. They'd been in Germany and all over. But they were at Fort Bragg. But he was spending two years in Okinawa and that's when he was in an accident in Okinawa and he died.

And then Tim died from a cerebral hemorrhage in his sleep. Let's see, Mark was 38 when he died.

Tim was 42. And Steve was 25, and he was in a car accident in Colorado.

GRANT: So young.

SALAZAR: Yeah, he was the first one to go. Yeah.

GRANT: Was it a joint decision between you and Max to have that many children?

SALAZAR: Uh, no. The doctors used to say 'you are the most fertile woman we have ever seen'. And I said, 'and do something about it'. 'Well, we can't. You are in a Catholic town'. Yeah.

GRANT: But you're Presbyterian.

SALAZAR: Yeah. That doesn't matter.

Things have changed over the years. Yeah, they've changed in all the hospitals. Because you know, there were big families. We had the 15 kids. Lazzaris across the street had eight. And there were some people on the corner at the time that had six. And just all up and down the block.

GRANT: Can you talk a bit about where we are? The significance of the street, Granite Street, this house for you?

[01:25:56]

SALAZAR: You know, this block had the most amount of kids of any block in this area. And the kids from all over Broadway Street, Park Street, and up, both ways, they would come to the 1,000 block of Granite Street.

There would be kids out here, playing all kinds of ball, up and down the street, you know? And then one time my dad came in, outback where we have the patio. He made playground equipment and he had horsey swing and, a climbing thing. And then another swing. And our yard was a playground.

I mean, we had playground down here, but when that filled up, then it was the Salazar's house.

It was a great neighborhood.

GRANT: Was?

SALAZAR: Yeah. I mean, it's not the neighborhood it used to be. No, not at all. I mean, we all had help raising each other's kids. We all raised our kids the same way.

I mean, they all could have been brothers and sisters, you know, because it was just that way.

[01:27:32]

GRANT: What were some of the tenets, you know, of raising kids then?

SALAZAR: Well, the Lazzaris were our age and the people on both corners were. And it was an older couple that had the house across the street, but they always had a lot of grandkids that came.

And then we had an older couple that lived on this side. And one on this side. But then there was a little house in the back and, the Hanson's daughter and her husband and two kids lived in the back. So there were kids there.

It was, well, all up and down the street - there's a brick house and it was an older man and he had three, I think it was three old maid sisters.

They all lived in the house. He was a banker at the time. And you know, they were old when we moved here. So none of them were working at the time. I don't know what the sisters ever did, but they were nice people, you know?

But now there's two of us that live here that are the originals.

GRANT: The originals.

[01:29:06]

SALAZAR: Yeah, Curly, she has a house across the street, the second one from the end of the block. And, let me see. She just turned 90, and I'm 85.

And then, the fellow that lives here, he's been here now for about oh 30 years, anyway.

GRANT: New kid.

SALAZAR: His mom and dad died. And so he's over there. He's in his sixties, early sixties. And of the Lazzaris, there's just one son lives there across the street now.

And it's college kids that live in the house directly across the street. And then where the store was, a fellow from Billings was buying that because he had three daughters and a stepson that were all going to Tech. So he bought that and was paying on it until all of those kids got to school. And then he gave it back to the people that had owned it.

So there'd been college kids living in it ever since then until this year, and the people that own it - I think they lived in a house up above Walkerville - anyway, they moved back here to this house and said they were going to stay there for a year.

[01:30:57]

GRANT: And so how did you come by this house?

SALAZAR: Boy, I'll tell you there wasn't a house in this town to buy. Oh gosh, we looked for a year - we lived in a housing, it was called the urban street housing. Nothing is left of it now. And you know, it was a pretty nice place. And it was - well what's down there now? You know, the Safeway that's on Front street, it was back in behind that.

There's various things that are there now, but it was a big unit. There were a lot of apartments, you know. And yeah, we were living there, and God, looking at houses, houses, houses, and we were getting it on the GI bill. And at the time they only allowed you \$10,000. That's as high as you could go.

Just very few years later, after my brother had been in the army for two years, they bought a house that was \$30,000 in Billings, on the GI bill, but we couldn't. So we got this one.

[01:32:22]

GRANT: Was Max in the military then?

SALAZAR: No, he, well - he was in the military just right after his 15th birthday. He lied about his age. He went to the Navy, and he was in the Navy for 19 months, I think. He was in the South Pacific, cause he was in Enewetak and Kwajalein and Guam and just all those places. And he got some kind of an infection in his foot or something. So they sent back to Utah for his medical records. Well, the doctor sent a letter back to him and told him, get him out of there. He's 16 years old now.

So, yep. They sent him home on a ship and they guarded him very, very well and gave him anything he wanted, sent him back to his house. And he went to school and they put him in a freshman class. Well, all they had him do is tell stories about the war and the cruel and vicious Japanese and everything.

And, he got bored. So then he joined the merchant Marines. And that's when he saw more action, and that's when he was missing an action, there was a bomb struck their ship. But there were several of them that ended up on this island, and they were only missing for, I don't know, a month, two months, something like that. And they found him.

You know, he said they broke a lot of coconuts.

[01:34:47]

GRANT: Can you tell me more about that? Do you know where he was vaguely?

SALAZAR: No, not that much.

GRANT: That was after the war?

SALAZAR: Well, this was during the war. Then when he got out of the merchant Marines, then for a couple of years, after the war, he sailed for army transport.

Because the kids said, 'Oh, well, yeah, he had tattoos all over. Well, yeah, we knew you were in the Navy'. He said, 'I never got tattoos when I was in the Navy or the Merchant Marines'. He got him when he went to Japan, when he was working on army transport, that's where the tattoos came from.

GRANT: So he was on a ship that was bombed and then he was stranded on an island?

SALAZAR: Yeah, but it was just a little island. I don't even know if it had a name. And it's kind of strange because the kids never knew any of these stories. And I remember my grandson, Sean, he said, 'I never knew until after grandpa died that he was a war hero'. Well, he did get a presidential citation for saving his commanding officer, you know, 'cause he was in burning oil. And Max still had scars on his back from that. You know, on his back and his legs. But, yeah.

[01:36:36]

GRANT: Was he very vocal with you about those experiences?

SALAZAR: No. I heard most of it from friends of his in Utah and from whatever he told his family, you know. No, he never talked about it that much. He talked about it to some of the guys from here, you know, that had been in the military. You know, they'd all get together and tell stories, but yeah.

GRANT: Is that what's up here?

SALAZAR: Oh yeah, let's see - the one on the right is my son Mark's flags. And in the middle is my grandson, Mark Jr.'s. And then Max's is on the left. And then Steve

has a daughter and I gave his flag to her. That's why I don't have his up there anymore.

[01:37:51]

GRANT: So by the time you all came to this house, did you already have children?

SALAZAR: Yeah. Let's see. Mike, Tony, Tracy, Tim and Terry. And then we moved here and then Pam was born after we moved here and then all the rest of 'em.

GRANT: Quite a few. Can you give me an idea of a typical day in this household?

SALAZAR: Oh man. It wasn't really as noisy probably as what a lot of people would think. At least I don't think so. But, I know my son in law, Dan, at the last he saw, he's always saying, 'Oh my God', he said, 'how did you raise all those kids'? And I said, well, sometimes I don't even want to think about it now that it's all over with.

But, I said, 'I'd get up in the morning and put one foot in front of the other and start in'. Cook breakfast. I mean, maybe I would get in the bathtub at midnight, you know, the only time I could ever take a bath was when everyone was in bed.

Yeah. Oh gosh. And then getting them off to school. Of course, they all went to McKinley, walking distance, you know, right to McKinley school. Along with all the other kids in the neighborhood and come home for lunch.

And I always had a good lunch with a dessert. Come home from school. There was always a good snack. I never made so many cookies and brownies. I had recipes for so many things. Oh my gosh. And we used to, we bought eggs from, there was an older couple whose children had chickens out in Whitehall and this older couple would come in with eggs and we would, Oh God, I can't, I can't remember how many eggs we'd get at a time, but we always had a lot of eggs.

Always got flour and sugar and potatoes and pinto beans, everything like that in big bags. Yeah.

[01:40:37]

I mean, I baked a lot of bread, you know. And then when frozen dough came out, oh God, that was like heaven. When cake mixes came out. That was wonderful. And I can remember the first time, you know, I made a lot of puddings, but I would buy a lot of jello pudding, you know, and make it. But they came out with a pudding, it was called Amaze-o. And it was a pudding that you would put in a bowl, pour two cups of milk in it, and stirred it up. And it thickened. Well, of course, Jello has that pudding now, but this - Jello didn't have it at the time - it was called Amaze-o.

I saw it at the Safeway up here. We had a Safeway on West Park, on East Park and on Harrison Avenue and on Front Street. Yeah. Yeah, East Park, West Park. And then finally they built the one - was that on Granite or Broadway? I mean, I'm trying to think what's there now. It's something else, 'cause Tony started working at the Safeway here and then he went to the one, it was Granite Street.

Pam was that Safeway on Granite? Yeah. Pam worked there too.

I tried that pudding and, oh my gosh, I had to tell Jerry Lazzari about it, and all up and down. Everyone was reading and buying Amaze-o pudding.

[01:42:47]

GRANT: And what about this store? Just two doors over.

SALAZAR: Yeah, it was wonderful little store. Oh gosh. The big sale was penny candy. But it was great. When we came a couple, the Martells were the ones that had the store. He was, he worked in the assay office, I think, for the company, for the Anaconda Company. And his wife ran the store and they had one daughter. They were godparents to our daughter, Peggy. Oh God, they were great people.

And then they moved, he got a job in New Mexico, I guess. And they moved to Albuquerque. And then Carolyn Campbell, she had a little store up on Main Street and this one was bigger. So she bought this one, so she had the store. And, you know, she carried everything. It was, it was a good business.

Yeah. She had a cat and God, I can't even remember the cat's name. But it's funny, she'd come over and get me to go and watch the store if she had to take a run someplace. And that cat would come and sit in the front window, and as soon as she heard Carolyn come, that cat would say - Carolyn. Everyone used to laugh about Carolyn's talking cat. Now, that's the only thing anybody ever heard.

We used to tease Carolyn, how long did it take you to teach that cat? She said, I never heard the cat say that. I said, no, you haven't, but I said a lot of other people.

[01:45:09]

GRANT: Butte had a lot of stores like that. When did you start to see them phasing out?

SALAZAR: Oh gosh. Yeah, there were a lot of them. 'Cause there was one, oh gosh, two or three that were up North of us. Hmm. Gosh, I don't know. I'm trying to think. 'Cause after Carolyn had it, then she sold it to Bonnie Gay.

Pam who had the store after Bonnie?

DAUGHTERS TRACY AND/OR PAM: ...I don't know.

SALAZAR: I don't know, because the people that are in it now, when they bought it, she had it as an antique store. But the little grocery stores - 'cause there was my McGylnn's down on the corner of Park. And Carolyn's, and it just seemed, I don't know, like one by one, you know, they were just closing up.

GRANT: You mentioned that earlier about the mines too. That that was one by one. What do you recall about when the closures started?

SALAZAR: Well, when they started, of course the pit was going. You know, 'cause Tony was the only one of the kids had ever worked in a mine. And he could hardly wait until he turned 18.

He was out of high school and his birthday's in November. And so in high school, and when he was out, he was working at Safeway and then as soon as he turned 18, he said, well, I'm going to go. He just thought it sounded so good. When Max would tell stories about something happening down in the mine.

So he went out and he was getting diggers and things to go in the mine. Well, by that time, Max was at his office in Helena, the mine inspector. And he always said, 'no kid of mine's ever going to work in the mines'. So I called him and I said, 'Max, Tony's getting his card'. 'What card?' 'To go work in the mine'.

[01:48:18]

'Oh, I'll be in'. So he came in, so he preached to him all night long. 'You don't want to do this'. 'Yeah, I do. I do'. So he, anyway, Max stayed home the next day then. And he got ahold of a couple of his friends that were contract miners and he said, 'would you guys take on the kid'? He insists he's going in the mine.

'Yeah, we'll get him'. So that's where he went. He went with the two guys that Max knew and he liked it. You know, he liked it. He worked at the Steward mine. He liked it. You know, that winter was horrible. God awful winter. It was one of those 40 below winters. Probably at the Steward, up there on the Hill, it was probably 50 below. Who knows.

And then, well, let's see, by the time the Steward closed, that's when Tony went to work at - just for a time, but it was during the holidays - went to work at Hennessy's. 'Cause we had Hennessy's here. And he was there, like their cop. He caught so many people stealing. Oh my gosh.

The one lady. Oh God, I can't even remember her name, but I mean, it was a lady that had money. And she was well known in town. Oh God, he caught her with a bundle of clothes. And then, ohh God, there's one girl - he had to run out on the street and wrestle her down, you know? And then he caught a couple of young girls, one time.

[01:50:33]

'Hey, you guys come with me. We're going up to the office'. 'Why, why'? Well, they were walking in front of him and he says, God, they had clothes hanging down from their coats and their pants and everything. But he said there was one time, this little boy, he had been in there earlier and his dad was always at Maloney's bar.

Anyway, the kid was in looking at winter coats. He kept looking and looking, and finally he came back in one day and Tony was in there and the kid was gonna try on a coat. Tony said, 'I just turned my back'. Yup. The kid had a new coat. And he needed it. He went out with it.

GRANT: It sounds like you instilled good morals.

SALAZAR: Well, I tried, you know, you do the best you can. But yeah, a lot of times the kids had friends who came home from school because they knew there were good snacks at the house.

Aometimes it was kids that didn't really need it. You know, both parents worked, but other times it was kids that could use it. Yeah.

GRANT: Did Max enjoy mining then?

SALAZAR: Yeah, he did, you know, he had worked in tunnels when he was in Utah, you know, and for Kennecott. He'd worked in a lot of tunnels, his whole family worked at Kennecott.

GRANT: And where did he work here?

[01:52:45]

SALAZAR: Oh, God, he was in several different mines. But the Belmont was his favorite and he was the first Hispanic that they ever had as a boss. Before the Belmont closed, he was one of the bosses. Yeah.

GRANT: Did you worry?

SALAZAR: No. You know, I didn't, there were a lot of accidents, I'll say that. Yeah. And his partner, and they were friends of ours, the Woody's, and he and his partner were at work one night and a slab came down and got his partner.

GRANT: Killed him.

SALAZAR: Oh, he was a mess then. Well, he could never go back. They were contract miners. They were really making good money. But, no. He couldn't go back in that same part at all. He tried it a couple of different days, but it didn't work.

GRANT: Do you recall him coming home that day?

SALAZAR: Oh yeah. Yeah, they were working night shift. And God, all I could think of was, oh my God, his wife. They had, I think they just had four kids - just. Two girls and two boys. Yeah. They lived at 3006 Dixon.

So we went to see her a lot, you know, 'cause I mean, her kids were, they were grown enough, so they were all in school, you know? And so she went ahead and went to work herself.

GRANT: Difficult. You mentioned the strikes earlier. Could you give me a sense of what that was like?

[01:55:12]

SALAZAR: Well, in fact, when he went to work for the state and, he was at the union at the time. So anyway, the union, they couldn't be paid either, but they would get unemployment. And so that's when he decided to go to work for the state because that strike, it started in July. And it was January when he went to work for the state.

GRANT: What year was that one? Do you recall?

SALAZAR: Oh, let me see. I'm trying to think who was born? Oh, gosh. You know, I can't even remember. And then I know 1959, that time of the earthquake up there, they were on strike then. Oh yeah. And that one was the one that lasted through Christmas, you know. It seems like so many of them went right to Christmas. Some of them through Christmas, some maybe just before Christmas and it was settled. It wasn't fun.

You know, but whenever the three years would come, we would always get a loan from, there was a place called Commercial Credit. You know, it was a loan company, and we would get a loan so that, you know, we could get through. And we always managed, you know.

GRANT: You look tired as you say that.

SALAZAR: Yeah. Oh gosh. Yeah, it could be tough. Well this one nurse, Joan Shannon, she used to say, 'one good thing that the strikes did for the town of Butte - at least all of the kids that were in school would get shots and vaccinations free'. Yeah. That was one thing. They would have sometimes have big clinics. You know, and people could take their kids. I can remember one time, gosh, it must've been for the polio shots or something, and they had it down at the civic center instead of doctors having tons and tons go to their offices, they just set up at the civic center.

That's the only good thing.

Well, I mean, this was a union town at the time. It was definitely a union town and all unions helped out other unions, you know, all the time. Yeah.

[01:59:22]

GRANT: And what about Max's role as an officer, there in the miner's union?

SALAZAR: Well, that's when he was very busy, but then see, it got to the point where they couldn't take wages either. They would get unemployment, but you know, they couldn't take their wages because, you know, if the miners aren't working, you know...

GRANT: Did he have a say in the negotiations?

SALAZAR: Oh yeah, he was always on the negotiating committee even before he was an officer.

GRANT: Okay. I could imagine a guy that had seen combat, I wouldn't want to stare him down.

SALAZAR: But, you know, between him and Barney Rask, oh boy, they could negotiate. But Max had a lot of the company guys that were, that were friends of his. You know, through life. I mean, like Ed Renoir, he was one that was, yeah. There were a lot of them. And then after he was out of the mines and stuff, they were even more friends.

GRANT: When he was an inspector?

SALAZAR: Yeah. Mine inspector. And the mine inspector, it's strange because it meant you inspected everything that had to do with rocks. All gravel pits and everything. Yeah. You checked out everything. But he did run into a lot of people that, oh, we're up in the mountains and making their own booze and stuff. It was unreal. A lot of that going on.

[02:01:23]

And then when my mom was really sick, my mom had cancer. And they were living in Pony. Max always made sure that he would have a lot of work out in that area. He would make sure mom was out of the hospital and home, you know, with my dad. And so he could go and visit with them, keep an eye on them and everything.

'Cause then right after my mom died, then my dad had...She died in May and it'll be 50 years. And my dad had surgery for a hernia. He'd had the hernia for quite a while, but he couldn't go and have surgery until my mom was gone.

You know, he had the surgery on the hernia and then he was going to take a trip back to Yakima and spend the holidays with the brothers and sisters that were left, which were still quite a few of them. And he got back there and that's when he got sick and went to the hospital and they found out he had cancer of the lungs.

So he came back home to Pony. And my aunt, who lived in Alder at the time, she would go over just about every day, you know. And I'd get out there on weekends and, and then some of the kids would go out and stay with him. Then he ended up in the hospital, in Innocent. So he died. My mom died on the 4th of May, the year before, and he died on the 4th of July. Yeah. The next year. I would love to have kept the house in Pony, it would have been great. But you know, there were medical bills. We had to sell.

[02:04:11]

But like I say, we still go out there all the time. Well, they're buried in Pony. And that's where Max is. And my son Tim, and my son, Steve, cause Mark is buried in Arlington.

So I've been to Arlington a few times too. And then my grandson, Eric he's goes to Arlington quite a bit.

Now I think they put wreaths on just about every grave, but in the beginning, all of them, didn't get one. Eric went out there one time just before Christmas and, 'Well', he said, 'I had to steal a wreath from another grave. Put it on Mark's. Well, I said, 'I'm sure Mark saw you doing it'. Yeah.

[02:05:14]

GRANT: Do you miss Max and miss having a full house?

SALAZAR: Uh, I don't miss having the full house. No. Oh, Max was in such bad shape when he died. Because all of his organs were shutting down. See, he was very stubborn about going to the hospital. I told him, 'I said, you have pneumonia. I can tell you have pneumonia'.

We had a recliner in here. And for about three weeks, that's where he was sleeping because he couldn't lay down flat in bed, you know. Reclined with his legs up and reclined a little bit, you know, and then he'd holler at me to help him into the bathroom. And then finally, this one day, I said, 'I can't keep doing that. You're going to the hospital'.

Called Pam and Tony and, yep, took him to the hospital. And he had been a heavy drinker for most of his life. So he had kind of destroyed his organs on his own. He

kept saying, the day we took him there, 'I did it all to myself. I did it to myself'. And I said, 'yeah, you did'. But yeah.

GRANT: We're getting close to the...go ahead...yeah, that's difficult.

SALAZAR: Well, let's see, Jackie was the only one I had living at home at the time and she was going to Western, you know, getting her teaching degree. Because Max was in Spokane, he had gone to ITT, and then he was working at the Quality Inn that they had just built over there, and he was going to the community colleges. And then finally, the last two years, he went to Cheeney? then graduated. And got his degree in software engineering and went to work for a good company. It was a really good company in Spokane, traveled the world for him. And the guy - it was called Monaco's - and he was one of the Monacos from Anaconda in fact.

Well then his daughter married this guy, I don't know if he was from Iran or Iraq. He let that guy take over the business. Well, he did a lot of wrong things and Max and these other two people blew the whistle on him. You know, he was getting money from the government, he was getting federal money for jobs that he claimed they had done. And they weren't jobs they had done.

So there was a big lawsuit, Max was in - there were two different ones. Max was in on both of them. So he got a pretty good chunk out of both of those, you know? And then he went up to Alaska to work for my son-in-law, who has a big business up there.

[02:09:18]

And Jackie and Kelly, they both graduated from Western and so did their husbands and they're all teachers in Nevada.

GRANT: Pretty spread out.

SALAZAR: Yeah. There's two families in Fernley, Nevada, and two up in Alaska. Because my daughter and her husband, they live in Anchorage and Max and his wife and kids, they live here in Eagle River.

But I used to have them all over. I'd have 'em in Wyoming, had 'em in Michigan, Arizona. Every place. Yeah.

GRANT: Well, one thing I wanted to ask you too, as kind of a wrap up - you talked about Yakima. You talked about Norris, about Butte, about all these places that are now to you, unrecognizable.

I'm just curious if you can speak to the overall feeling you have to the changes you've seen in Butte over the years, from the closure of the mines, to the fires Uptown, to what it is today.

[02:10:33]

SALAZAR: Oh, you know, I don't like the changes in this town. I mean, you look now, we don't even have a department store. You know, it's gone. I mean, I remember the first time, when my kids in Nevada, they first went to Winnemucca, and I remember going to Winnemucca. And like my daughter, Kelly said, 'their shopping center in Winnemucca was Walmart'.

Well, guess what? Butte, Montana. I mean, they had little shops around town, like there are here in the Uptown area. They have great little shops, you know? I mean, you can get quite a few things, shirts mostly and, you know, things like that. But, I said, 'Butte is getting like that'.

I mean, there's no Kmart. There is Maurice's. But now I talk to my grandson Eric last night, and he's the one in Virginia. And Pam had talked to him, it's her son, talked to him the night before. And, who's the gal? Yeah, Alana Lerock. She was on the news back there in DC, and talking about the Butte mall, and how great it is, how it's so prosperous. Going on and on.

And Eric wanted to know, and I said, 'we've got Bath and Body Works, and we have, and they have Maurice's'. I says, 'I think they have some kind of a game thing'. I said, 'I don't even think they have a food court. They got the old theaters'. That's what's in the mall, go to the parking lot. I mean, why was she saying that?

We got a call center coming, that's what's happening.

[02:13:23]

GRANT: Right. Do you think Butte's decline is over?

SALAZAR: Boy. I don't know. When they get people in to do surveys, and they're supposed to be bringing businesses in, well, I don't know where they're getting these people. Because no one's bringing businesses in.

Used to be the BLDC was always, 'Oh, we've got this one coming. We've got that one coming'. And they never came.

GRANT: They're still doing that.

SALAZAR: Yeah. And that's exactly what they're doing and getting paid a heck of a lot for doing it.

[02:14:19]

GRANT: Um, what do you hope for, for Butte?

SALAZAR: Well, we definitely need a department store. Before there was ever the flat area, you know, all of that, there were a lot of good shops, Uptown. We had probably four good shoe stores at the time. We just had - shopping Uptown was good. Everything was Uptown, you know, and it was good.

Then you build a mall, and you charge too much rent. And you always had leakages in the roof, all over the place, whether it's in the theaters or in stores, wherever. I don't know who built the mall but could have done a better job.

There's a lot of money wasted in this town. There's money wasted in the school district. Pam was a cleaner and they had to beg for supplies. And you work your bones off because we only have just very few people doing it. Yeah.

About a month ago, a little over, some of us went into Helena and we went to Target, because there was some stuff I wanted to get at Target. And I looked at that store and

I thought, gosh, something like this. It would go good in the mall, you know, and it's reasonable.

[02:16:48]

I really didn't think Kmart would close. Well, I didn't think Herberger's would either. And it wasn't that Herberger's here in Butte was declining, doing a poor job. It was the other Herberger's throughout the state. That was kind of the same when Smith's grocery store came to town, and they were down here where Eggers used to be, they opened a Smith's there, it was a very good business.

Then they opened another one on Harrison, and it was the one up here that kept that one going. I thought, well, they should never have opened one on Harrison. It was great to have something like that up here. 'Cause we shopped at Eggers, because our Safeway, well, all of them Uptown were closed. They were gone.

But we still got the Terminal Meat Market and Riley's Meat Market.

GRANT: And now up here on Excel.

SALAZAR: Yeah. I haven't been in that one. I used to go to Excel meat market a lot when those brothers had it. Of course they both died, but I haven't been up there since. Of course, I don't have to buy the food I used to.

GRANT: Not near as much.

[02:18:30]

SALAZAR: No. When Martels had the store and they had a teenage daughter and she had a friend that came with her one time. And, of course, she'd always come over here to visit because we had all the kids. And anyway, that gal, after about the third time she'd been here, she said, 'I've never seen anyone, except in restaurants. I've never seen anyone cook in such big pans and pots as you have.

GRANT: It was like a restaurant every day.

SALAZAR: Yeah. They ate a lot. Never ever had Mexican food in my life until we got married. I didn't even know what a tortilla was. Well, I soon learned.

GRANT: In some way, I feel like I'm the beneficiary of the Salazar influence because Matt's mom has fed me so many times, you know.

SALAZAR: Lot of Mexican food. Yeah. Uh huh.

GRANT: Well, I really thank you for your time today. I feel like there's so much we could still cover, you know. So if you'd like to have me back, I'd love to come back sometime, you know?

SALAZAR: Sounds good.

GRANT: Okay. Well, I'll pause this for now. But yeah, I think maybe we should schedule another time, in a month or so.

SALAZAR: Okay. Well, let's see. What have I got going?

GRANT: Yeah, we'll have to look at the calendar. I really enjoyed that. Thank you.

SALAZAR: You're welcome.

[END OF RECORDING]