

Evelyn Stroud Frazier, 1909-  
Colorado College Class of 1931

SIDE ONE - CASSETTE ONE

FINLEY:

This is tape recording number 37 of the Colorado College Archives Oral History Project. Cheryl Coleman, a Colorado College student, is interviewing Effie Stroud Frazier, at the latter's home at the Satellite Hotel in Colorado Springs. The date is May the 30th, 1980.

Mrs. Frazier is a 1931 graduate of Colorado College, one of the first black women to attend. She was one of seven members of the well-known Stroud family to go to Colorado College, and the first recipient of the Sachs scholarship.

COLEMAN:

How did you come about attending Colorado College?

FRAZIER:

I attended Colorado College because education was a main goal of my life, taught to me by my father, who prized education to the extent which is almost unbelievable. So that naturally was my desire. However, I did not see any way financially that I could make it. Colorado College at that time was way beyond my ability to pay.

Now, I always studied hard, and during my high school years, I was always one of the top scholastically in the high school. Now I won, oh, several honors in Colorado Springs High School. For example, I believe I was the only student who ever got an A-double-plus in anything, and practically all my grades were A and B, except math, which was always my Waterloo. That was in the C's.

But to get back to how I was able to attend college, there was this wonderful man, Henry Sachs, who attended the graduation exercises which were held that year at our new Colorado Springs Auditorium, the City Auditorium. He had, I learned, followed my progress through high school, and became interested in the fact that I had been at the head of the class, and in so many things, and had won a state prize, for example, in an essay contest which the American Chemical

Society had given. And several other honors.

He was there that night, and when we students who were at the top of the class were expected to sort of give a little bow, when we were handed our diplomas, he came up to the platform, after the exercises were over, and asked me how I was going to attend Colorado College. I told him of course I would have to work, perhaps a couple of years, before I would have enough money to go to the school for a year.

He said if I would made the same sort of marks in college as I had made in high school, then he would pay my tuition that first semester. Naturally, I burned the midnight oil--I mean literally, because we only had coal-oil lamps in those days--and naturally, I did make the same marks, or similar marks in college that I had in high school that first semester.

Each semester I made the same marks, and each semester, Mr. Sachs renewed the scholarship, until I had finished the four years of college, and my tuition paid entirely by Henry Sachs. I understand now that this angel was, is the cause, or the reason, for any number of black students being able to attend Colorado College. I understand at present there are 50 black students at that school--I'm not exactly sure of the number but I believe that's correct.

COLEMAN:

I'm not sure what the number is, either, but the Sachs Scholarship is also good for students all over Colorado.

FRAZIER:

Yes--no, I understand it goes even further.

COLEMAN:

Oh, yes, out of state, too.

FRAZIER:

I understand that it is now out of state, and somebody told me that they were even being given professional help, a person going into medicine, law, and other professions of that type, might be helped by the scholarship, in addition just to the undergraduate work.

COLEMAN:

What were your impressions of CC when you first came to the college?

FRAZIER:

Well, when I first came to CC, of course I won't say that it was altogether CC's fault, because by that time, the attitude of Colorado Springs towards its black citizens was completely, astonishingly, negative. We weren't even allowed

on certain streets in this town! You cannot believe that, but this is absolutely true. Going over to the west of Colorado Springs, there were certain neighborhoods where we dare not go, because we were chased; we were stoned; dogs were set on us.

COLEMAN:

Were there certain places on campus that you were not allowed to go to?

FRAZIER:

No, not really not allowed to go to. But what was the use? For example, we were expected to buy season tickets to the athletic contests. I never shall forget going to see a football game at our stadium, and I arrived a bit late. Usually, I had to, because I always had to work after school. And as I entered, well, my school, naturally, was seated on one side, and the opposing one on the other side of the stadium.

There was a black player on the opposing team. Just as I entered, my school was all chanting, "Kill that nigger! Kill that nigger!" And those words ring in my ears to this day! To this day, I have not learned as yet to like football, because that is the impression I got from my own school.

I was isolated, my brother and I, from everything. We were the only two black students, most of the time. There was one girl who came up there for perhaps a semester. Two girls came up there. One, one year, and the other, the other year, just for a semester. I guess they couldn't take it either, because you were completely alone. People just let us alone.

COLEMAN:

What about your professors--do any of them stand out in your memory?

FRAZIER:

The professors, yes. Miss Bramhall does stand out. Miss Bramhall was a political science teacher, and that was my brother Dolphus's major. My brother Dolphus, two years older than I, and I were in the same class, because although I started just after my graduation from high school, because of Henry Sachs' scholarship, my brother Dolphus had to work and save enough money to go. So Miss Bramhall was extremely fond of my brother Dolphus. Of course, he was always at the head of every class, and being a political science major, she did so many things for Dolphus.

I remember, however, once he went to a movie. Now in those days, black people were not allowed to sit on the first floor. She told him that he had a right to sit on the first floor, and that's what he should do. He followed her advice, and was arrested and put in jail, because he sat on the first floor. Miss Bramhall later got him out.

COLEMAN:

Were there any other professors that you can remember?

FRAZIER:

Of course, there was Dean Hershey. Dean Hershey was head of the education department, and of course, I had two majors, English and education. I had planned to be an English teacher, for which I was qualified. I loved English and it never gave me any trouble. I never spent over five minutes in preparation for English, where I had to spend about 50 in preparation for math, and never did get anyplace in math! [laughter]

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

But of course, all my marks were very high in English. Now Dean Hershey, of course, was the dean, and I worked for him in domestic work, too. After school, I would, every time they entertained, I was always there to do the domestic part of the job.

Now Dean Hershey and Mrs. Hershey liked me personally, but they were influenced also by this anti-black--in those days, it was anti-Negro--attitude, because when I was in my senior year, or was it the junior year--I've forgotten which it was, where one was supposed to have practiced teaching, I was not allowed to take a course in practice teaching.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

Not only was I not allowed to do the actual practice teaching, I was even prevented from going into a classroom and observing a lesson being taught. Now, Dean Hershey should have protested that. Although he seemed to like me very well, and all that, that still I can not say that he followed through, and should have done his job.

COLEMAN:

I see.

FRAZIER:

My being prevented from taking practice teaching also preventing my having a decent retirement income. My pension would have been exactly twice as high as it is now, had I been allowed to take practice teaching, and being permitted to take the examinations in New York City for teaching. One had to have had--that was a prerequisite--you had to have had practice teaching in order to be a teacher. Well, that seems natural, but I was not permitted. And therefore, I had to take extra courses. In New York City at that time, it was in the heart of the Depression, and those examinations were given about five years apart. Now, by the time I got to teaching in New York City, I was 40 years old.

COLEMAN:

I see.

FRAZIER:

And to have taught the number of years required to get a pension in those days, I could not have made it.

COLEMAN:

I see.

FRAZIER:

So therefore, I just missed out.

COLEMAN:

At the time you were taking classes at CC, did any professors practice any racist theories?

FRAZIER:

Oh, I shall never forget one teacher of educational psychology, I believe he was, required us to use his own book, the book which he had written in this field. Now what I shall never forget is that one of the chapters dealt with the inability of black students to achieve at the same level as white students. He said that we could achieve up to the time of puberty. After that, however, our educational ability declined, and we actually jut could not learn after we became adolescents.

COLEMAN:

Well, how did he explain your presence in college and competing in college?

FRAZIER:

Well, one of the students in the class actually said to him, "Well, how about the Stroud family?" Because at that time, our family had scored as the highest, as having the highest IQ's in this whole city, except for one family.

Now this one family had one daughter, and that was the only person. She was extremely wealth--you would know her, if I were to call her name, we were good friends in Colorado Springs High School--and during that time, her family was the only family which outscored our family. But as you can see, one person, and with all that wealth, just had an inside track, when there were 11 of us, and all of us had to be counted.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

Now, my baby sister had the highest IQ of any child in Colorado Springs at the time she was tested. There were four in my family who broke the scale, the IQ scale.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum. And did your professor at the time know of this?

FRAZIER:

This other student--I've forgotten who it was--asked him, "Well, what about the Stroud family?" And he said well, that just happened, we happened to be just the exception to the rule, but generally speaking, this was not so.

Oh, but worse than that--I shall never forget. Since I had argued with him about this, and he wouldn't accept it, he put this question on the final examination. Now, I never did have a high IQ--mine was 125--he put this question on the final. And as I say, I didn't have a lot of brains, but I did have a memory, and that's the only way I got through. I memorized everything.

So when the final examination came, and this question was there, I said, "The book states thus" and I quoted every word that he had in the book, his whole paragraph, on this topic, there was no way that he could say that I did not pass this final examination! [laughter] I said the book said it, and it did!

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum. Well, I think at the time you were attending CC, you were considered a fairly good student. What happened with the Phi Beta Kappa incident?

FRAZIER:

Oh, Phi Beta Kappa, that's another problem. That's a question. This is something I just cannot believe, because,

see, to start with, my brother and I had never heard of Phi Beta Kappa. You know, you do need some socialization when you go to college, to know what it's all about. Nobody had even mentioned the word; we didn't know anything about fraternities of any kind.

So after our class was ready to be graduated, President Mierow phoned my home and told my mother that my brother Dolphus had made Phi Beta Kappa, and he also volunteered the fact that I had missed it by one fraction of one percent.

Now later on, too, I learned from one of the members of that particular class that this chapter of Phi Beta Kappa had sat up all night discussing whether or not they should admit my brother. My brother happens to have been the highest man to be graduated from Colorado College that year. There were four women students who were ahead of him, but he was the highest man.

Now when you consider one fraction of one percent, I really have a feeling--I just will never feel any differently about this--that since they found, they were trying so hard to find a way to keep my brother out, and I, of course, was probably--I know that I was the next one on that list who should have been admitted, they could easily then say that I had missed it. But by one fraction of one percent?

And especially when you consider that I was not allowed to take certain subjects. I was not allowed to take practice teaching. The teaching, the practice teaching I did was teaching older, well, almost illiterate black adults in my home one at a time. Now, can you consider that practice teaching?

COLEMAN:

No, that's not really working in a classroom, which is required.

FRAZIER:

All right. Now, Dean Hershey was the teacher. He didn't even come to see my teaching, and yet I was given a mark. How do I know what my mark would have been?

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

How do I know whether that may have been more than a, let me see, perhaps it might have been ten percent higher.

COLEMAN:



Uh-hum. Yes.

FRAZIER:

Because just one fraction of one percent just does not satisfy me.

COLEMAN:

Part of the standards for Phi Beta Kappa is taking certain classes. You have to take all your courses at CC. Were there other classes you were kept out of, besides the education requirement?

FRAZIER:

Well, of course, the gym was held out at the Broadmoor Hotel, which I don't believe I could have gotten in the back door at that time, let alone taking the gym, which consisted of swimming in their pool, riding horseback--no, I wasn't allowed to do that either. But this thing about not being allowed to take practice teaching is the worst, since that was my major, my major subject.

COLEMAN:

Well, academically, it sounds like you had a pretty rough time at CC. How about socially, what was your life like in that way?

FRAZIER:

Well, there just was no social life at all--just forget that! Now, although I maintained that college should teach you just as much socialization and knowing how to get along in this world as it should facts from a textbook, which I learned very well in the Colorado Springs High School, I shall always admire and remember the fine things which were done for me in Colorado Springs High School. But in the college, I was completely isolated.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum. Were there any social events you ever attended and felt left out?

FRAZIER:

To start with, they just ignored the fact that I was there, except that I shall never forget, the dean of women invited all the senior girls to her apartment to an afternoon tea. So, since I had an invitation, I decided I'd go. I went, and rang the doorbell. They opened the door and saw who I was, and closed the door. And then they discussed for awhile whether or not I was to be let in. They had told me just to wait awhile.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

So they finally opened the door and told me I might come in.

COLEMAN:

And what was the tea party like, once you joined it?

FRAZIER:

Oh, well, they were just talking, you know, and being friendly and nice, but I could feel this stiffness. I really wasn't welcome.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

And I remember that there was one girl there from Texas, of all places. My father had warned me about Texans, because he had been one, and he said, well, if you owned heaven and hell, just rent out Texas and live in hell! That's what he thought of Texas!

But this little Texan took me up to her room, when she saw that I was just being practically ignored there, and she made it pleasant for me in her room. So--sometimes you find that all people aren't alike!

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum. Well, how did the Depression affect your college years?

FRAZIER:

Well, the Depression, of course, was something that I had learned to live with from the time I was a baby. You see, when my father came out to Colorado Springs to avoid the segregated school systems in the South, he had been a professor in Oklahoma and Texas, a professor and a minister.

But when Oklahoma became a state, you see, it also became segregated--terrible thing to have to say about your government, that it was all right so long as it was the Indian Territory. That, by the way, was where I was born, in Creek Indian Territory, and that was where he met my little mother, who was about three-quarters Creek Indian. So when it became a state and was segregated, he then moved us all out to Colorado Springs. But there was no way they would allow him to do any kind of professional work here. All he could do was the hardest, lowest-paid work there was.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

And so from the time I can remember, we were segregated, and we were in the Depression, in the heart of the Depression. My father used to carry a hundred pounds, I guess it was, those huge--they called them tow-sacks in that day--they were these huge burlap bags. And he would carry

one of these bags over his shoulder five miles from Roswell, where he worked just shoveling coal, so that we could be warm. You know, we had the heating stove, naturally, in the living room.

COLEMAN:

Well, you lived at home during your college years, and so that was around the time of the Depression. So was your family undergoing any major changes during that time?

FRAZIER:

Well, the changes, so far as I said, at that time probably were even for the better. We were on such a low socio-economic--such a low economic state--I won't say socio, because my father really, yes, he--maybe it's bragging, but we were one of the leading families in this town. Our closest friends, and I mean friends, were millionaires.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

The Hagermans lived right next door to us. My mother had always known enough to get in a good neighborhood. Although we had this little four-room shack, it bordered right on the estate of the Hagermans, and Hagerman Hall was named for one of the Hagermans, Laurie Hagerman, Lawrence E.

COLEMAN:

Did your neighbor ever help you?

FRAZIER:

Well, the Hagerman family, you see, after they met us, allowed us to go onto their estate--they had this beautiful estate at that time, out on Mesa and Walnut, and we lived at 810 North Walnut. And so we were allowed to go into their garden, and pick these beans. And we had nothing that whole year to eat but beans. And after they knew us better, then we were allowed to take anything from the garden, so that then we got to eating pretty well.

But we were always in the heart of the Depression until we grew up older, and we could always--and then we could all work. I worked practically every day after school. When I was nine years old, I started working.

COLEMAN:

Could you still find jobs, though, during the Depression?

FRAZIER:

You see, the jobs that we got were always service jobs. Everybody--this was a tourist town; it's the only way it existed, and so there was always something for a maid to do. I mean, when I was nine years old, as I was going to say before, I started working in a boarding house, and it was hard work.

But every year, during the summer, we'd all go out and knock on doors, and find out who needed a housemaid, and there was always, in the boarding houses, especially, there was always some--they had to have somebody to, you know, clean up the rooms, so that we had that.

And the boys always worked on my father's truck. He hauled everything. After he left the coal chute, he went into business for himself, first with one horse and wagon, and then with another horse and wagon, until he was able to buy a truck. And then eventually he ended with having four trucks and four men working for him.

Now he went blind 12 years before he died, and the year I got my degree from Colorado College--this is the saddest. I don't know, maybe this is why I feel so bad about Colorado College is that my father had sacrificed everything wanting to see my degree. That's what he lived for, but he went blind the day I got my degree!

And then right after that, when he learned that I was not going to be given a job except in the kitchen, and washing the basement floors on my hands and knees, the same as if I had never seen a school. After my poor father learned that, I saw him just cry like a baby.

And perhaps this is why the negative aspects of Colorado College stand out in my mind more than the positive, because I just really cannot think of anything positive that happened to me at that school.

COLEMAN:

Well, what happened once you graduated and you couldn't find a job in Colorado Springs?

FRAZIER:

Well, since I--since they would not let me teach, my president's wife phoned me one day and said well, since they had not been able to place me in any professional work, although they had never had a colored girl working for them as a maid, they would try me out. And so that's what I had to do.

This was when my father broke down--I remember that.

That I then had to go to the Mierows, and I'm not exaggerating when I said I had to wash up the basement. In fact, I was scolded because I didn't realize that was part of my job, too. Because I had to do all the bathrooms. They did have a young white girl there, a student, who worked as sort of an upstairs maid. She was going to college at the time I had been going, but she did not have to do any of the bathrooms. I had to do those.

COLEMAN:

Well, how long did you stay in that capacity?

FRAZIER:

Well, I stayed there until dear Henry Sachs rescued me. That was for about six months. And he came over one day and said, "Well," he said, "Effie, you're not going to use my scholarship in the kitchen." And he said he'd been working with the Rosenwald people, and the Rosenwald Foundation had agreed to give me a fellowship, provided I would change from teaching to librarianship. Because in those days, in the heart of the Depression, it was much easier to find work as a librarian than as a teacher, because the librarian's position was a very, very young--it was a very, very young profession. So that you could almost pick your job as a librarian. And on this fellowship I went to Hampton Institute in Virginia, to their library school, and that was my first degree, my first graduate degree, down at Hampton Institute.

And then after that, I was able to get work under that--oh, I'm getting ahead of myself, because--yes, that was right. After the degree from Hampton, I was able to get work in New York City, but the Depression was still pretty strong, and I was given work under what was called the FERA. It was one of those governmental positions, Federal Education--something like that. But I worked there a year, in the 135th Street Library, which is now County Cullen Library, and that was on the corner of 135th Street and Lennox.

COLEMAN:

Well, overall, what benefits could you say you derived from going to Colorado College?

FRAZIER:

Well, of course, having a degree from Colorado College did mean something, because in those days, Colorado College had a very, very high rating, very high standards, and I did get the academic work. Although I owe most of that, also to the high school. The high school in those days was second to none, and we really learned.

But in the college--I hate to say it, but they really

held me back. I can't help telling the truth. If they had just allowed me to just take practice teaching, I'd never have another financial worry, because I'd really be well off, because New York City paid her teachers very well at the end of the--well, I'll say, just a year before I had to retire, because my health broke down. If I had been allowed, if I'd been able physically just to have stayed there another year, I'd have no more worries.

COLEMAN:

So overall, Colorado College helped you academically to raise you up a lever, but in the end, a lot of the problems that you had attending there are still in your memory.

FRAZIER:

Oh, it's so hard to say it. But I believe if I had gone to any Negro school, as they were called in those days, in the deepest South, that I'd have been about ten times better off than going to one of these very fine schools, but still not being allowed to have any social life at all.

Now remember, in those days, I was the only black student, and the whites simply ignored me. I didn't learn anything that you expect any human being, let alone a college person, to know--things about life. I just didn't know them. I wasn't even allowed, for example, to go into the dime store and sit down and eat a meal.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

You see, things like that, you can't learn in books. So it did give me the degree, and that meant something, but-- . And I certainly appreciate, of course, having gotten that degree, because I never could have been admitted into anything in professional life if I had not had it.

COLEMAN:

Well, at the time you received your degree, were you looked upon as being extra-special at the time, or anything like that? Because you were a black student, one of the few that attended Colorado College, and you got your degree from CC, so were you given any special treatment by the students or anything?

FRAZIER:

[chuckle] Special treatment going down to be a housemaid? If you call that special treatment, yes.

COLEMAN:

I see. Well, what are some of your personal interests or hobbies?

FRAZIER:

Well, you know, I have to say something else, though, about--I'm going back to this other question you just asked me. I knew that in a library I could at least, say, go down in a basement and bind magazines. You would think that I could be allowed to do that.

Now, we had a librarian there--I can't remember her name--who had always been very, very nice to me when I would come into the library, you know, to ask questions and get books. And this day I went to her and asked her if I could get a job in the library, and I said I'd be willing just to go down in the basement and bind books and magazines and that kind of thing.

Now this lady gave me what is, at least was called in those days--and you probably don't know what I'm talking about now--but she gave me the hate stare! Now, white people in those days, when they felt that you were getting beyond your place, would just look you straight in the eye, and wouldn't bat a lash, just look at you! And that was what I got as an answer to my question, might I be allowed just to go down in the basement and work.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum. Well. Back to what your personal interests are, and hobbies--what might they be?

FRAZIER:

Well, you see, this is a thing you miss out on, too, when you've not been allowed any socialization all through life, now, this was for me. And in college, you should get it, you just need to get into hobbies and things like that. I am just now beginning to get into hobbies, because all my life, all I've had to do, all I've been allowed to do was something very hard academically.

What I really, have learned that I really love, is really good music, I mean classical music. Now that's not letting my own people at all, because some of the most beautiful classical music is the spiritual. But ourselves are letting ourselves down in this, because we don't even know what they are, now. It hurts me when I say I would love to hear a spiritual and they come out with something called gospel, which is many cases is just a euphemistic term for disco, with a few religious words added.

But the real spiritual--the first time I herd one sung



was when I went to Hampton, because in those days, there were only 35,000 people altogether, and only 900 negroes, men, women and children, and they simply did not know how to sing spirituals. I had never heard them. So I went to Hampton.

Now Dorothy Maynard was the leader down there at that time. She was in my graduation class, and the students all were forced to go to chapel every evening, and the students would all just sit there in the chapel and they would start a spiritual, just the way it was normally done in the South. I didn't know this. Now Dorothy Maynard was an excellent singer, she was along about the time with Marian Anderson. She was a soprano, however, and Anderson, of course, was an alto. But Dorothy Maynard came out here and stayed in the Broadmoor Hotel while she was here.

COLEMAN:

And what year was that?

FRAZIER:

Let's see, oh, dear!

COLEMAN:

Would it be the thirties?

FRAZIER:

It would be in the thirties, and this is something rare to happen in Colorado Springs. You see, if we had known these kind of things, we would all be aware of this. But this is the kind--you see, you have to know about her being, her coming here and staying in that place, that she must have had some kind of quality to her voice.

Now, that kind of person leading your spirituals--no wonder they were so great! And the students had beautiful voices. But at that time, even they resented singing spirituals, because a number of the white people from the town would come to our chapel, and sit up in the balcony and hear us sing. And they thought, "Oh, they're just looking at us singing these old slave songs." And it's just too bad, because they are classics. There's nothing like those beautiful spirituals.

COLEMAN:

Well, around the year that you came to CC, toward your graduating year, Shove Chapel was built. I think it was in 1931. Did you ever attend chapel services on campus?

FRAZIER:

Let me see. I don't believe that we attended them in chapel, in that chapel. Of course, we--every morning I came

to chapel, but it was in one of those, in one of the halls there on the campus. I can't remember just the name of that hall, but we attended chapel there. And I always had sort of a religious inclination, but I was so weak and tired after working until midnight most of the time. I shall never forget, one day there I came in, and they were singing a beautiful hymn before we let out. See, we had to go to chapel before class, and I just fainted--I fainted away. And hearing that beautiful music, I thought this was heaven! [laughter] And I was very disappointed when I was awakened with a pail of cold water being thrown at me!

COLEMAN:

I see.

FRAZIER:

Let's see, what else did you ask me just before then, and I wanted to elaborate on it, and forgot it. [pause] It was just before you mentioned the chapel.

COLEMAN:

I more or less asked you what your hobbies or interests were.

FRAZIER:

Oh, yes, I just started with the music. That was just one of them. I love good plays. I love good painting, although I have none of these talents at all, but somehow I just recognize them, I enjoy them.

COLEMAN:

Were all of these things--

FRAZIER:

I love ballet. What is it?

COLEMAN:

Were you exposed to all of these things once you left CC?

FRAZIER:

Well, you see, I was exposed to these things in New York City. You cannot help being aware of them if you live in New York City [chuckle] unless you live in the heart of a ghetto! Well, then you can't help being, because there is the Harlem Theater, for example. And people think of ballet as being just a white form. It's not. Some of the most beautiful ballet you want to see is performed there by Negroes.

And actually, we could see some of these things right

at the church where I attended in New York City. Riverside Church was the last church that I attended, and of course, everyone--well, I found out a lot of people here don't know what I'm talking about when I say Riverside Church, but it's a cathedral there on Riverside Drive. And, well, Bill Coffin is the pastor there, now, and certainly everybody has seen him on television, with this Iran situation.

And they have, well, all kinds of cultural things going on there. For example, I love Leontyne Price. In my opinion, she is about the best singer now in this world. My husband and I went clear over to Milan, Italy to hear her, you know, sing Aida in La Scala, which is their, which I would say is their Metropolitan Opera, you might say. It's one of the best known in the world. We got to hear her at Riverside church for nothing. She was just there one day, singing at Nelson Rockefeller's funeral. I heard her there, then.

And Andy Young came and talked, you know, at one of the services. I mean, you'd get that kind of thing there. So you couldn't help being exposed to these things. You'd go to Lincoln Center, and then there's where the Metropolitan Opera House is, and there's where your Concert Hall is--I can't remember the name of it. And of course, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and well, just everything. You just can't live in New York without being exposed to these things [chuckle] and you just learn to love them.

COLEMAN:

Well, after being exposed to all these things, did you ever come back to CC and see it differently, or what?

FRAZIER:

Well, you see, since I've been here, I have not been well at all. My health broke down there in New York City, so that I really haven't been able to go to anything at CC. I'm getting so much better, I hope eventually to start going to CC to see a few things there.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

I find that there are some very fine things here. For example, when I first came here, I stayed at a place called Winslow Courts, and they would give us transportation to some of these cultural affairs. Now, I had just left New York when they took us to hear the Messiah at the Air Force Academy. There were three different choirs that sang that night, and it was magnificent. And of course, they also took

us out to the, for the skating in . . .

COLEMAN:

At the Broadmoor, possibly.

FRAZIER:

At the Broadmoor, yes, the Ice Capades. And I haven't been able as yet to get to the Art Institute, which I just must do. That's the school at which my baby sister Bobby studied art, and she won an art scholarship from Colorado College when she was only 11 years old. This painting she did was of a beach scene, and she had never seen a beach.

Her painting now is over at my house in Village 7, and this thing was included in one of the issues of the Journal of the American University Women, and can still be seen there. And some of her paintings are hanging in South America. She was a brilliant girl. She also taught many of the children here in Colorado Springs piano, and she gave her recitals there at the Art Institute.

COLEMAN:

Did she ever attend Colorado College?

FRAZIER:

You know, I'm not sure. It may have been four or five--I know that our family had more siblings attending Colorado College. I think there was one other family who had the same number. But you see, I have been away from the city so many years, and three years ago I went to the 50th anniversary of my high school graduation class, so you see, when you think back that many years, it's very difficult.

COLEMAN:

Do you perceive any social changes at CC?

FRAZIER:

Oh, my goodness! Oh, my gracious! I wouldn't know this town that way! There are some things that have changed in the town that have really hurt, like knocking down our beautiful Antlers! Oh, dear me! That Antlers Hotel, and making it into just a glass cube, trying to imitate New York City. Nobody should try to do that. This--Colorado Springs has a beauty that is so unique, it just breaks my heart to see it change. But of course, you can't help it--I suppose they call it progress.

COLEMAN:

Right.

FRAZIER:

They had no business, I would say, taking our beautiful Seven Falls, which has such wonderful memories to me, all these beautiful tall pine trees, and all dark and mysterious and nothing but the moon up above these huge pines--taking that and lighting the thing up with neon lights like a carnival is enough to make you want to vomit! And I don't care who did it--probably the most important so-called person in Colorado Springs, but they ought to--

COLEMAN:

What about the college? Do you see changes there at CC?

FRAZIER:

The college. Well, of course, the buildings are all different. They have more to work with, but to think of, I believe it's 50 black students there, it's just--well, it makes you, your heart sort of leaps for joy, because, oh, I don't want to pat myself on the back, but I was the first student to get that Sachs Scholarship, and I think that Sachs Scholarship has paved the way for most of those students, at least many of them.

COLEMAN:

Scholarships like that, and more have really made a difference in black students going to college.

FRAZIER:

Yes. And then your being accepted into different positions. I understand you are in the library?

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

All right. I told you I wasn't even allowed to go down in the basement and just, you know, work with dirty books. There is a complete difference. And wait a minute--I met a professor!

My brother was not even allowed to play on the football team because the coach in those days told him that a Negro student on the team would spoil the morale of the team. Now my brother was a great athlete.

COLEMAN:

Now why is it, like in 1907, I think it was, and maybe earlier, they had black football players at Colorado College, around the turn of the century.

FRAZIER:

In 1907, I wasn't even born. I know I look awfully old to you, but I don't go back that far, and this is just it. You see, in those days, you see, my father came from the South up here because they did not have segregation up here then. Of course, wait, now, that was even later that that, because I was born in 1909 down there in the South, and he came up here when I was either six or nine months old.

So you see, those people were before Colorado Springs had Texans and Oklahomans, you see. They had--most of the people came from the East out here. This is a rich man's playground in those days. I think the Hagermans came from Boston. That's right, because Mrs. Hagerman used to take me

on her lap, I shall never forget.

This is where I started to enjoy beautiful English spoken, because she had the loveliest voice, and she would read to us, "Floppy, Mopsy, and Cottontail," you know, all these little books. And I remember she taught me a little tongue-twister, and she had me on her lap, and she was playing with my toes, and she said, "Moses's toeses are red as the roses, as Moses supposes his toeses to be. But I think that Moses supposes erroneously, because nobody's toeses are red as the roses, as Moses supposes his toeses to be!"

And even at that time, I wanted to be an English student. I just loved her English. And I wanted to know what that word, "erroneously" meant. Now, I had to be very young at that time, but I loved the sound of this beautiful voice.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

So yes, most of them were these people who came from the East, and when the Texans started coming out here, father said they just ruined Colorado Springs, which they did, because I remember that my father was going to this movie--I've forgotten which one--and the usher came to tell him to move upstairs, and he doubled up his fist, and the usher ran!  
[laughter]

COLEMAN:

[laughter]

FRAZIER:

And finally, this man who owned the theater also knew my father personally--I suppose my father did his work for him, and he said, "Now, we'll allow--Mr. Stroud, we'll allow just your family to come and sit downstairs. But you see, we can't do this because these Texans and Oklahomans are the people who support us." And that was true. "But now, if you'll just wait until the tourist season is over, we'll let your family come in. We can't let the rest of the Negroes in Colorado Springs." Of course, we weren't going to do that.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

No! They were going to treat us all like human beings, you see.

COLEMAN:



Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

Were there ever any incidents out at the Broadmoor, if you and your brother ever went out there? Did anything ever go on then?

FRAZIER:

Now, I never went to the Broadmoor in those days. Of course, my brother used to climb up and down Pikes Peak every morning before breakfast. That was how he was training in his long distance running, and I remember that he used to go up there every New Year's Day--he would get up there before the AdAMan Club, and he would greet them after they got there. I remember that.

I remember taking it closer to home when my brothers wanted to swim in the swimming pool in Monument Valley Park, they tried to drown them. That's why I never learned to swim--there was no place in Colorado Springs where a black person could swim, even out there at that Prospect Lake.

And they decided they were going to give us one little side of the lake and build us a little shack, you know, and the white people would have a beautiful bath house, of course. And my sister Kimball, she said "No!" She fought it like everything! And I suppose we'd have been happy with that little segregated place if she had not fought this thing. A lot of the Negroes didn't agree with her; they were going to settle for a little shack, and just one little portion of the lake. But she was a real fighter.

COLEMAN:

I see. You mentioned to me at one point, you and your brother went to a restaurant for some sort of special occasion--I'm not sure. It was an awards assembly, and you were turned down. You don't remember that? I'm having a hard time remembering what incident it was.

FRAZIER:

It's strange, I can't remember that at all.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

I don't think that we would even have been asked to an awards assembly.

COLEMAN:

Well, at the time your brother received Phi Beta Kappa, did he have any sort of assembly to attend, and awards ceremony?

FRAZIER:

None that I know of.

COLEMAN:

I see.

FRAZIER:

I imagine he did well to grab that key and run!  
[laughter]

COLEMAN:

[laughter]

FRAZIER:

Oh, dear. I remember in Indianapolis, a place where I was working, that they invited all of us to go down to the Circle, which was the heart of Indianapolis, and see a Shakespearean play, and they sent me out my invitation, and I went there, and got on line, and when I got up to the ticket-taker, the manager came out and told me no, I wasn't to go in. I showed him my invitation, and he said no. I think that was what made me decide I'd go on back to New York City, because I'd gotten to the place where I couldn't take this stupid segregation.

Going clear back to Colorado Springs High School, I recall one day they were going to have an examination after lunch, and I had to run clear home to 810 Walnut--now, that's some distance--and come clear back to Colorado Springs High School. You know, I had to run home for my lunch.

And so I said, "I want to study for this exam, so I think I'll try to go to the YWCA"--you know that means Young Women's Christian Association. Now they had only a cafeteria that was on the top floor of this building which is just across from the new municipal bus station.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

There on Kiowa and Nevada, I believe that is. It's an attractive building, gray and green. Okay. So I went over there, from Colorado Springs High School, which is now Palmer High School. I went upstairs to the top floor, was their cafeteria, and I just got my tray and went along, you know, and picked out my things, and when I got to the end of the line, the cash register, you know, the lady took my money, and then I started to go on over and just sit down by myself, you know.

There were these little seats, little tables, you didn't have to sit with anybody. This great big burly white man just came and took me and pushed me and my tray right into the kitchen! Now you see, this was the Young Women's Christian Association!

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

And to this day, I wonder how we Christians can say that a Jew, like Henry Sachs, for example, won't be admitted to heaven! [chuckle]

COLEMAN:

That's an interesting thought.

FRAZIER:

Yes, I just--no, I just don't believe it. I am a Christian; I believe the Bible; but I think we are misinterpreting something! We call ourselves Christians, and perhaps a lot of us who say we are just won't be up there and some of these so-called Jews who aren't supposed to be admitted will be there having [laughter] having as much fun as we're supposed to be having! [laughter]

COLEMAN:

Well, Henry Sachs did make a big difference, I can see.

FRAZIER:

Oh, he made all the difference in my life! I just wouldn't have been--I'd still been down on my hands and knees washing everything for these people, although I had just as much education, and more than some of them.

COLEMAN:

And you can be seen as more or less a pioneer for black students at CC.

FRAZIER:

Oh, I had to pioneer every place I went! I even pioneered in New York City. When I first went there--New York City, it's a strange thing, was way behind when it came to school librarianship.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

They all laughed at me when I left New York City and took this position in Indianapolis as head librarian in this

branch, the branch library there was housed in the school, so they had both. They worked with school children all day, and the adults all night, so I got thorough training in the whole thing.

But back in New York City, I had to pioneer to get them to accept school librarians on the same level as school teachers. Now, the school librarian had to have more training than the teacher. You see, the school librarian had to first have her teacher's degree, and then go on to take the library degree, and in those days, the library degree was--there were two programs.

The new program--I took the old program. Now, nobody ever does the old program any more, because it's completely out, that is from Columbia University. The old program now would be the doctorate of education. But when I was there, it was only called the master's of librarianship, because you see, librarianship was so young. Now I had my degree from Colorado College. This is one thing Colorado College did do for me. It put me in line for this position, you see, because I did have my degree first, from Colorado College, and then I had this other one from Hampton Institute, you see, so I was in line to get this.

Okay. In those days, under the old program, you took, first of all, you had to have your bachelor librarianship, you see. I had one from Colorado College. Then you had to take another bachelor's in library, you see, to be admitted to the school system in New York.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

So that put me in line to get there, but they didn't accept us on the same level as the teachers. You had to have the word teacher in front of your name before you got the same salary. And we even had to go to court. You see, in New York City, I hate to say it, most things are not fair--it's what you can get away with. So that they even had the swimming attendants--imagine that--getting the status of teachers before librarians did, who had to have a year more of training than the teachers, to get in.

All right. So we fought that through the court. I was a pioneer in everything. Then, as I say, I took this, after that I went to Columbia University and took two years and a half more. You see, that's a doctorate in anybody's language, plus--you see, the two years were of academic work there in Columbia University library, and the other half-year

was writing your master's essay.

COLEMAN:

Uh-hum.

FRAZIER:

You see, that now would be considered a doctorate, but I took that. And then I went back to the school librarian. I transferred from the public library, in which I had been working first in New York City, for about five years, and I went to the school library. And after that, I had

[Tape runs out]