

Oral History Project: Summer 2015

Interview Questions

Record a lead to start the interview: your name, narrator's name, date, and location

1. Please state your full name, your date of birth, where you were born and where you grew up.

Judi Katz Kiernan 1/15/48 Frisbee Memorial Hospital in New Hampshire, just outside of Boston.

2. Tell us about when you moved to Telluride. Why did your family move here and when?
I moved here in April 1972 with my boyfriend later my husband, we had heard about a place where they were thinking of building a ski area where you had to look up to see the mountains. We were living in New Hampshire, another ski area, and Fred Libby told us about this place. We took a side trip to Aspen and when we got here quite frankly for me, it was love at first sight. I just felt like I was coming home.
3. What was it like when you moved here? Was the ski area opened at that time?
Ski area had not been built yet, a lot of people in town to see if there were going to start construction. It was pretty quiet, but there were a lot of people who had come here on the off chance that they would build the ski area. They did not start the construction until July. We were living at a ski area in New Hampshire so yes, we did come here to ski. That is not the reason I stayed.

Can you tell us about the:

- **People and culture There was an awful amount of drinking, because there really was not a lot to do. My first job was a cocktail waitress at the Sheridan Bar. They didn't need them anymore than they do now. I would fight my way to the bar with my tray through 5-6 men deep. Nobody really knew what I was doing there. It didn't last long, but I got to be a bartender which was a lot safer. The Roma, The S & S Café, The Alpine, which was a 3.2 bar then were all here then. There wasn't much, it was pretty quiet.**

What were some positive aspects of the ski area opening and what were some negative aspects?

We covered the positive aspects already.

For the negative aspects I really didn't see any. For the people that had lived here for a long time, there was a new economy. For the people that just moved here, there was the potential for their future. Not everybody worked for the ski area, but there were restaurants and shops that were opening because of the ski area. And of course, Real Estate.

6. Tell us about some major changes that occurred in the community after the ski area opened.

What I felt at the time was especially that for women it was an amazing opportunity for them. The men came here to get away from something and the women came here to start something. I remember walking down main street in the late 1970's and I would say 90% of the businesses were owned or operated by women because they saw this vacuum and they just moved into it. It was an amazing time if you had an idea to do something, Nobody stopping you or telling you that you couldn't do it. I am not speaking as a "women's libber" as they were a very angry group of women and these were not. These were women who had a good idea and an opportunity to make it real. I feel it was a very positive time for a lot of us.

7. What were some challenges that the community faced in the 1970s or 1980s. (Jobs? Housing? Prices? Homelessness? Poverty? Crime?)

Housing was a major problem. Our first house we rented was outside of Placerville and the rent was \$100/month. 600 acres with an old house, we had to invite 4 of our friends to share it with us because we did not have \$100/month. I was working nights so during the day I would fish and we ate a lot of fish. The big splurge was I would buy a can of mushroom soup to cover up the trout. We didn't have anything, we didn't have any money. When we got married, we moved into town, and again housing was a problem. Our landlord would come home in July for a month and then between Christmas and New Year's. So we had to go somewhere else and that was tricky. Shopping; you had get there the day the fresh produce came in as they had no refrigeration. If you got there after that, everything was withered and dried up. You really had to plan your shopping. The trip to Montrose was kind of an adventure. I went every two weeks. I can remember the closest junk food was Grand Junction, if you knew someone going there you would say "Bring us back a Big Mac" and we would cut it into 8 pieces so everybody could have a taste. That was a full day trip

10. ~~8~~ How did the community react to the opening of Mt. Village? Was it accepted positively or negatively by the Telluride community?

I think it was perceived as the best thing that happened to Telluride. Historic preservation was under threat and there was a need for big homes and life style. This was a way that upscale lifestyles were met and Telluride could stay funky. It was the best of both worlds.

Whenever I traveled and I ended up traveling all over, I was always happy to come home.

What major changes did this bring about? (Economically or culturally).