Eleanor Bliss

Photo by David A. Goetze

A great deal has been done, but there's more to do.

By Lana Webb

Although she hasn't lived her whole life in Steamboat Springs, Eleanor Bliss has done a great deal in her lifetime and contributed much to the community. As Eleanor told her stories, I couldn't help but wish that my life would be at least half as exciting as hers has been. She was a very close friend of Marjorie Perry of Perry-Mansfield and played a very important part in getting the Arts and Humanities Council started in Steamboat Springs.

Her tales unfolded from the beginning, "I was born in Jamaica, Long Island, which at that time was a suburb of New York City, but was later incorporated and is now a very big bustling part of the city. It was a little country town when I was born, way back in the horse and buggy days. I went to school in Jamaica until high school. When I was in prep school at your age it was war time, the first World War, and things were different then. Life was serious and difficult, and everybody was terribly patriotic. Our whole lives were wound up in war. I think that made us much more serious than perhaps you are now. Life wasn't a bowl of cherries. Then I went to a college preparatory school in Cleveland, Ohio, the Hathaway Brown School which is a very famous preparatory school even now. I lived with an aunt in Cleveland at that time, and she was the one who sent me to Hathaway Brown. From there I went to Smith College and graduated. It was as a graduation present from Smith that I went with my family to Alaska that year, which was way back in the early days when Fairbanks was a little hick town with boardwalks and one small hotel. That would be in 1924. Then as part of that trip from Alaska I came to Steamboat Springs. That was my first experience in the west.

"I came as a student to the Perry-Mansfield camp. My aunt whom I had lived with in Cleveland was a very famous dancing teacher. She was internationally known and she wanted very much for me to become a dancer. She was the one who financed my summer at Perry-Mansfield camp, thinking that I would be a dancer. She had already financed much of my dancing education which had been with some famous Russian masters in New York.

"Also ever since I was a little girl, I had my own horse and I loved to ride. So when I got to Perry-Mansfield, I naturally went to the riding department and got acquainted with the head lady, Marjorie Perry. Marjorie Perry was Charlotte Perry's sister and in the early days Marjorie had charge of the riding department. We struck up an acquaintance and she became my lifelong friend. I ought to tell you something about Marjorie because she was so great. She was the one who stayed home with her father after she got out of school. She was a graduate of Smith College too, as were Charlotte and Helen and Portia, all of them were from Smith, but they were way ahead of me. Marjorie was her

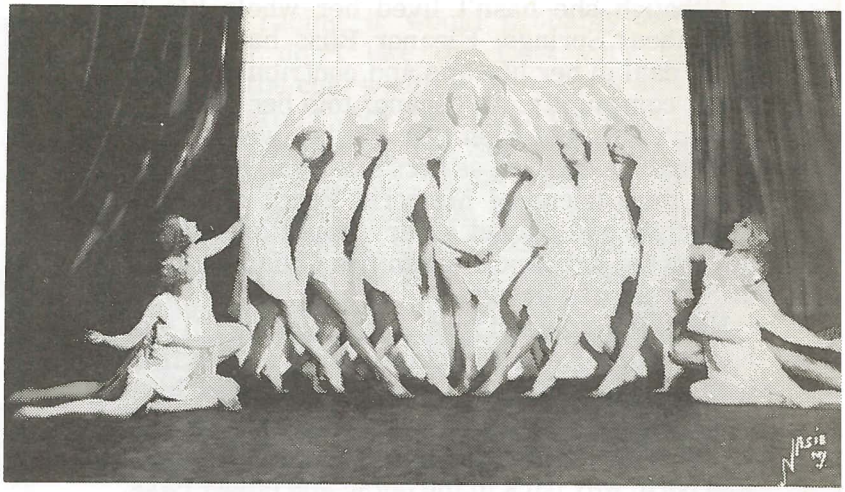
Eleanor about 1919.

father's chauffeur back in the early days, and his companion. He was a marvelous man. They lived in Denver, and he was head of the Moffatt Coal Company here in Oak Creek. He was also connected with the tramway company in Denver and was involved in the early development projects of Denver. Aurora was one of the places he developed. Marjorie's father was a great hunter and went hunting at least twice a year. Back in those days, hunting was really something. You went early with a wagon and horses over Berthoud Pass. It was something that took two weeks to do. It was a serious business, and really interesting camping because they went, not so much for deer and elk, as for bear, lion, and things like that. She had many experiences with her father. Also her father had very fine horses and they had a stable in back of their house at 1140 Grant Street in Denver. She went to the mountains, and her father taught about trails and how to find her way when she was lost. So she brought all that to Perry-Mansfield when she took over the riding department. She would teach the girls not only how to manage their horses but how to be self-sufficient in the woods.

"In 1925 when I came back again to Perry-Mansfield, I came as Marjorie's assistant in the riding department, instead of full-time dancing, and this didn't please my aunt and it didn't please Charlotte Perry who was the Perry of Perry-Mansfield.

"They had a lot of horses and the riding department was very important back in the early days. I can remember one trip we took over the Five Points when Marjorie and I were conducting the riding department. We had 42 in line on an all day trip. Marjorie and I were the only ones who conducted the trips. We were the guides. One of the first things we taught was how to take care of horses. They all saddled and bridled and curried their own horses. They couldn't go on a trip unless they were able to look after themselves and the horse.

"But we did have big trips and three-day pack trips into the high country. The students and staff made up the pack trips, and some of the riding teachers went along. But mostly we danced all morning and rode all afternoon.



The dancing company went on the road and played in the best theaters.

Perry-Mansfield camping trip at Mica Lake.

"They had a strong theatre department and Charlotte Perry was very interested in that because, back in those days, they had 'the company' that went out on the road, the dancing company. They were professional dancers. The dancers played on the Keith Vaudeville Circuit back in the early days and traveled all over the United States in the best vaudeville theatres with their production, which was really great. It played in New York and Chicago in the best theatres. I continued dancing, but not the way they wanted me to, in the company, and actually I wasn't that good.

"The theatre thing that they put on was a series of dances. If I remember correctly, vaudeville acts usually lasted about 20 minutes, and then they'd have another act. Their act of 20 minutes would perhaps be a series of five dances, each one very different from the other and involving different people, each of them very well costumed. They made their own costumes and they made their own scenery, and they'd cart them around from place to place, on railroad trains. That was the only way they got around. One night stands often and pack up their stuff and get on the train at three o'clock in the morning. It was a hard life but was very good and very well received. I don't remember what the pay was, but it was absolutely minimal and most of the time they stayed in cheap hotels with four or five girls in a room and had ham and eggs for a meal. They really had to love it, but they were getting trained all the time. The girls were simply terrific, as a matter of fact they had a reunion here recently of some of the girls from the old company and they came back here during our Arts Festival. I think there were seven or eight of them that came back and they were all just great. They had really had good lives and had done interesting things and had married good men. They were a very interesting bunch of gals. Of course some of them I knew from way back, and it was nice to renew those acquaintances.

"We did all kinds of dances. There was ballet and what they used to call rhythmics which was kind of like the modern dance and tap dance, all kinds. I loved to dance, but I wasn't meant to be a dancer. My feet wouldn't perform and I didn't have the right makeup. I never could kick high. But that was not what my aunt wanted for me. She wanted to turn over her school to me and that was an entirely different matter. A great deal of her work was teaching ballroom dancing and etiquette. **In other words she taught the** socialites of Cleveland on how to behave in company and be gracious. Mv aunt's name was **Eleanor T. Flinn, and she had the Eleanor T. Flinn School of Dancing for many many years. She had as many as a thousand students a week and a very famous school. She was a very great person.**

"I was her favorite niece. I was the only girl in my family. I had two older brothers, so she kind of took me under her wing and did a great deal for me. She was a big influence in my life, a wonderful person. Also having this school she studied a great deal abroad in the summers. She only had her school from about the start of October till April, and then she had the rest of the year to do what she wanted. She would go abroad very often and study in France, Switzerland, and England. Often she took me along. I went many times to Europe.

"She was an 'old maid' and I took after her because I saw what a great time a person with no family ties could have and what an influence they could be in their community. She was such a strong person that she influenced many, many children in Cleveland. They would keep coming back to her to thank her for what she had done for them. When it came time that I should have taken over her school and one year I was her assistant, the year I got out of college, I found out what it was all about, and I just didn't like it because it was too social.

"A great many of her classes were made up by what they called chaperones. Mothers would get together and make a list of children to go in the Thursday afternoon four o'clock class. That list would be the one that was invited to join that class. Anybody else, though they might be simply great, would have to go in the Saturday afternoon class because that was an open class with no chaperones.

I just didn't like that because I saw the heartache it brought to some of the children whose classmates and playmates were in the Thursday afternoon class, the one they wanted to be in. But this was not to be because of the chaperone system. Of course, it made it very easy for my aunt because she didn't have to recruit her children; they were all invited by the mothers. To be frank, it was a match-making arrangement. The wealthy people in Cleveland supported her so that was what she had to do, to have her classes the way the mothers wanted them. She did a fine job of it, but that wasn't for me. She wanted to retire but didn't, because I didn't fall in with it, and it was a great disappointment after all she'd done for me.

"I tried to make it up in other ways, but it wasn't quite the same. When she finally retired and got someone else to take over the school, it was not such a great success because she was the one who made the school possible.

"Perry-Mansfield was great fun back in those days because we did more things I think, than they do now. They used to have breakfast rides on what I call Crawford Mountain (Emerald Mountain). We'd get up at three o'clok in the morning and steal through town trying to be very quiet on horseback. We'd get there and have a big fire and scrambled eggs and bacon and what not, then ride back. When we came back from the ride, we always sang as we came through town, and there'd be a whole crowd. Then we'd have supper rides to Buffalo Pass and more picnics than now. The riding was simply great and not professional in any way.

"I can remember when I first came to Perry-Mansfield, I had ridden, as I said, all my life, but I had ridden English back East. I had never been in a Western saddle until I came West, and oh, I didn't like it at all. Charlotte and Portia were trying to be very good to me when I came to camp because I was the niece of this famous person. My aunt sent many students to them, so they were looking for their own bread and butter when they were trying to be nice to me. So I was kind of a privileged person when I came, and they asked me if I didn't want my own horse, not one that I bought, but one that I could ride as my

"Ever since I was a little girl, I had my own horse and I loved to ride."

"We always sang as we came through town."

"I thought it would be very nice to have one horse and I could get to know it. Well, Portia was trying to be nice to me and said, 'I'll give you Zenoza'. Zenoza was her horse. I learned later that Zenoza was a mean one and it wasn't all that great. But anyway, the very first day I was there, I was detained for some reason or other and didn't get down to the barn when I was supposed to start on a ride that was going to Copper Ridge. Camp had been in session for a while because I came late. So when I got down to the barn, my horse was there but all the riders had left. So I slapped on a saddle and said, 'Which way did they go?' They said, 'They headed out this way', pointing to Copper Ridge, so I headed out that way. Zenoza was smart and I tracked them very easily as they left the barn. Everybody knows that you can pretty well track a bunch of horses when they first leave the barn. But as we got along a little farther it was very confusing. I could see some tracks, but I let Zenoza have her head and she got down there with her nose on the trail and followed them. About an hour after they left I picked them up on the top of Copper Ridge. I came up, of course, at the back end of the line and fell in behind and didn't say anything.

"Marjorie was always up in the lead, and some of the good girls would be at the tail end to see that everybody got along. This girl turned around and saw me there and said, 'Where'd you come from?' I said, 'Well, I was late getting started, so I just followed you.' And she kind of raised her eyebrows and didn't say anything, but passed the word up to Marjorie that I had followed them. When the word reached Marjorie that I was back there, she sent word for me to come up to the front of the line, which I did. She said, 'How did you find us?' I said, 'Well, I just started out and let my horse take the trail.' She said, 'Don't you know any better than that, you can get lost out here. You should never start out like that unless you know where you're going.' I said, 'Well, my horse knew where she was going, so that was all I needed.' Anyway, that made her know I knew something about a horse.

"Another thing that happened the next weekend was an overnight trip to Long Lake. I had never been on an overnight trip, never slept out and I wanted to go on that trip very much. But, of course, Marjorie didn't know how much I knew about a horse. So she told Charlotte that I couldn't go along because I didn't know anything about a horse, how to tie it up or anything like that.

Charlotte insisted that I go, so Marjorie said, 'I'll take her to town on a trip and see how she does, and if she does alright on that trip, okay, she can go on the trip.' In those days we had to ride our horses into town to the blacksmith, old Johnny Williams. We rode in the 'back way', down Soda Creek. Somehow or other along life's way I had learned about a barbed wire fence and gate. We rode to those gates and I said, 'I'll get the gate'.

I got off and let Marjorie through and closed it behind us, got back on my horse, and we went on our way. I was riding Zenoza, and one of the tricks she had was not walking, she jogged all the time. Now I didn't like a jogging horse, so I spent the whole time going into town and coming back trying to get the horse to walk. When we got almost back home, Marjorie turned around and said, 'What did you do?'

"I said 'What do you mean, what did I do? She said, 'how did you get that horse to walk?' I said, 'Well I just worked with her until she walked.' She said, 'I've never seen her walk before.' So I got through to Marjorie and that impressed her. That was the beginning of our friendship that lasted all our lives, and the reason I came to Steamboat to live. I lived with her for 21 years here in Steamboat and in Littleton and in a

Eleanor about 1932.

summer home here. We went back and forth between those two until she died in '69, then I stayed full time in Steamboat.

"I wasn't here in Steamboat during the depression fulltime, I just came in the summertime to visit Marjorie. I came as often as I could, but that wasn't every year. The depression was part of why I didn't come every year. By that time I was working, trying to earn a living.

"My father was in the real estate business, a builder, and he got into financial troubles and lost all interest in trying to do anything to bring us out of the hole. So I was elected to see what I could do, which I did. I jumped into the real estate business which I had only known from what my father did all those years and took over his business and salvaged what I could from the wreck. This was the very first of the depression. The banks that held the mortgages that were on my father's properties put me in charge. Then I managed all those properties, and there were many of them. Finally it came to the point where I needed to do outside business besides the things that my father owned. The banks helped and gave references to me. I went into the real estate business and got a brokers' license without ever having to take an exam because I had done this for the banks and for my father. That was back in 1932 in New York when I got my first license, and as of this year I am on the inactive broker list for the first time. I have always had a brokers' license all these years.

"I have really been inactive for a number of years but I have just never gotten on the inactive list. I've made a good thing of the real estate business. I've done many many things. I always had my own office except once. I decided to give up my office on Long Island at one time. I got a job with a big real estate firm in New York City. I was with them a number of years and ended up as their office manager. It was a big office. It had a whole floor on the 33rd floor of the Squib Building which overlooked Central Park. It was a beautiful office and I was the office manager. That was real fun. I had charge of all the brokers and there were many. Most of their business was done on the telephone. I had the job of assigning all telephone calls to the different brokers. When a call would come in and they didn't know whom to speak to, I would get the call and by just screening them I would find out what kind of apartment, house or business they wanted and I knew the specialties of the different brokers and I would assign those calls. That was an interesting job. I also did all the hiring and firing of the secretaries and so forth.

"I decided I'd just about had it, so I resigned from that job and I was about to take a little rest and perhaps do some traveling before I looked for another job, but the vice-president of the concern that I was working for came to me and asked me if I would consider taking a job at the Explorer's Club. I said, 'Well, I don't know. What is it?' He said it would be a very interesting job, but he couldn't actually tell me that I could have it because according to the by-laws of the club, a woman was not allowed inside of it. They would have to interview me to see if I was what they wanted, then if that was it, they would have to change the by-laws so I could get inside of the establishment. This is what happened and I got the job and went to work for them.

"The Explorer's Club is an international organization. There were many foreigners and many enemies that were members of the club, just as there were Americans. There were Germans, Russians, Japanese and Hungarians and whatever. They were all members of the club, it was a very touchy kind of a situation. This was during the second World War, which was the reason they asked me to take the job because they had always had a man executive secretary, which is what I was to be, but during the war they couldn't get a man to take the job. The club was located on the first floor of a large apartment building on Central Park West and Seventy-Second Street. When I went in I was more or less overcome by the odor of the place because it hadn't been cleaned ever since they'd moved into it and they'd been in there for years.

"They had always had the house man do the cleaning. He was an old man and didn't know much and his idea of cleaning was to take a broom around and sweep up the center of the

Eleanor when she was working at the Explorers' Club, 1942.

room. The main room was a very large room which could be converted to a kind of lounge area and auditorium when they had lectures, a big room. It was hung entirely with pictures donated by explorers and heads of trophy animals. There were elephants and rhinoceroses and the biggest things they could come up with. The explorers would come home from an expedition and had no place to hang them so they gave them to the Explorer's Club. The pictures had been taken in remote areas of the world; unusual Aborigine tribes. The pictures were fascinating, but they had never been taken down and dusted. The smell came from the mold and dust on the animals. There were a lot of furry animals, so I had to go to the natural history museum to find out how to clean these things. Of course, the club was broke at that time and most of the men were out in remote places in the world, on missions in relation to the war. Our main job was to get the place clean without any money. The first thing I did was to go out and buy a bunch of airwicks and stash them in the corners and under the chairs so that they would absorb the odor. I found out from the natural history museum how to clean the heads, so the houseman and I did it. It was quite a job and went slowly.

"The job proved to be fascinating because it put me in touch with many very unusual men. It was also a very important job because, as I said, the men were in all sorts of places on war duty. One of the things that proved very advantageous was when a man applies for membership in the Explorer's Club he had to be proposed by several members, but he had to have done something very special, adding to the knowledge of the world, either geographically or scientifically. All of this information was on the application blanks that they submitted. The applications were very secret, not for anyone's use, except the admissions committee. The Army and Navy wanted this information definitely. They wanted to know who had been where and what he had done and what he'd written about that area, especially in the South Pacific where much of the activity of the war was. None of that material had ever been catalogued, so I devised a scheme for collecting material from all of the applications (and there were hundreds of members) and cross filing so it was either scientifically or geographically catalogued. Any man who had been to a particular island was put on that island's catalogue, and anyone who had done geographical work anywhere in the world was put on a geographical card. It was scientifically and geographically cross filed, so that it became very valuable information for the Army. By sanction of the Board of Directors, they allowed this information to be given to the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force. If they wanted to know something about a particular area that no one knew anything about, they found it through the Explorer's Club.

"I was the only female, though I didn't really feel out of place. I worked a great deal alone. I couldn't keep up with all of the work, so I finally did hire another secretary, who worked under me, and after the by-laws had been changed, they could let other women in. That made it a little easier. For a long time though I worked entirely alone."

Eleanor told us about one of her funnier experiences from her job with the Explorer's Club. "We had an endowment fund that was collected to provide a new home for they had outgrown the place they had on 72nd Street, which was a rented place. They wanted to buy a place of their own. Lowell Thomas, a news broadcaster, was head of the endowment committee. He would invite well-known intellectual men to get them to help with the endowment fund. He arranged a dinner with the endowment committee and some other influential men, to be held at the Harvard Club in New York, which was also an all-male organization. The Harvard Club had one little section which allowed women, just a small dining room and meeting room where the members could meet their wives. The dinner was held in a banquet room upstairs. Lowell Thomas made the arrangements and forgot he had asked me to be there to take notes. When it came time for me to go, I went to the ladies' entrance, and they refused to let me in. I called for Lowell Thomas and told him that they wouldn't let me in. He got ahold of someone who came to help. Since the Harvard Club is located on a side street right off Fifth Avenue, I think 44th Street, they took me out onto 44th Street and around Fifth Avenue and up to the next street and came in a back entrance, the servant's entrance of the Harvard Club. I went in and was taken up a freight elevator up to the floor where the meeting was. I was kept in the elevator until the man with me checked to see that nobody was in the hallway so that I could dash from the elevator across the hall and into the room where I was supposed to be and nobody would see. I finally got to the room and they had a place for me just a couple of seats down from Lowell Thomas. I sat down and next to me was one of the old-time members of the Explorer's Club whom I knew well and they served the dinner.

"The first course was soup, and there were several waiters who set the soup down at everybody's place except mine. I was busy taking notes and hadn't noticed. Finally the man next to me looked over and said, 'Where's your soup?' I said, 'Well I don't know, they didn't give me any.' He called the waiter and the waiter whispered in my friend's ear. Nothing

happened! Then he called the head waiter and the head waiter whispered in my friend's ear. Finally, my friend put his fist down on the table and said out loud, 'I want two of everything!' The waiter came and placed the soup down in front of my friend and my friend reached over and gave it to me. You see, they had rules and regulations, and their rules were they couldn't serve a woman. They wouldn't dare do that these days and now, actually, Harvard admits women students, so I think they have relaxed very much. I haven't been in the Harvard Club for a number of years, so I don't know how it's handled now. That was a very interesting job. I resigned from that after my mother and father passed away. That's when I moved to Colorado!

"In 1948 I came west to be with a friend of mine, Marjorie Perry, whom I think I've spoken of before. I spent 25 years with her. We moved back and forth from Littleton to here in the summertime and always Winter Carnival in Steamboat. In 1951, I bought this old ranch, the old Hubert Young ranch and the house is where Bob Bear now lives on the north slope. Then, in '58, I built this house. (Eleanor presently lives on a hilltop above Steamboat in a comfortable home that views all of Yampa Valley.) I first moved into it in '59, but at that time I only used it in the summer and for Ski Carnival. After Marjorie Perry passed away in '69, I moved here full time. Since 1969, I've been here as a permanent year around resident. I don't even like to go to Denver in a car, I don't know what I would have done if I'd had to make the trip by horseback.

"Marjorie had her horses both in Littleton and here and got them back and forth by riding them. She always got someone to ride with her. I can't remember the year, but she rode back and forth with her horses (13 times in all) and once she asked me to come and ride with her. I did it one year in the 30's. It was late in the fall and I was staying on with her, waiting for good weather. We had a simply gorgeous fall. We didn't get an equinoctial storm which we were waiting for because we did not want to get caught in it. The storm usually comes the end of September. An equinoctial storm occurs with the equinox when it changes from summer to fall. So, we waited and the weather was simply gorgeous. We finally decided that the weatherman was pulling something queer and there wasn't going to be any storm so we went anyway.

"It was, I think, the 4th of October when we left Steamboat. We went by way of Oak Creek and Lynx Pass over to Gore Pass, then to Kremmling. We got as far as Parshall. Part of the purpose of this particular trip was that Marjorie wanted to go a new route that she had never been before. That was up the William's Fork from Parshall and over Jones Pass which comes in at the base of Berthoud on the east side. This was the way we planned to go. We spent the night at the old resort on the river at the beginning of the William's Fork Road. It's still there but it's under a different name now. Then we were to go up the William's Fork road to the last ranch house. Of course, as you are riding on horseback, how do you know which is the last ranch house? But we knew it was about 25 miles up the river. We judged our distances pretty well and found the right ranch house which was one of the Taussig brothers. There were several Taussigs that lived along that river bottom. They still have a summer home up there. We spent the night at this ranch.

"I came west to be with my friend Marjorie Perry."

"We traveled about 25 miles each day; that's a good day on horseback and the day from the Taussig ranch, over to the first place on the east side of Jones Pass, was 42 miles and it was 14,000 feet over the pass. It was our biggest day with the climb up and the climb down. We wanted to

get a real early start to get the 42 miles in. When we got up, there was a fresh fall of snow with seven or eight inches on the ground. The Taussigs told us we couldn't go because we couldn't find the trail. They had told us before that there was a good old mining road, a place where you could haul up a team to an old mine that was up fairly close to timberline. There was an old lumber road on the east side, almost up to timberline and they said originally that we wouldn't have any trouble finding the trail, but when the snow fell, it covered the road and so we couldn't possibly go alone or we'd get lost. If we didn't go that way, we'd have to backtrack all the way back to Parshall and go the regular route by Hot Sulfur which would mean two extra days. We telephoned around and finally got one of the Taussig brothers to say he would take us to the top of Jones Pass and show us where the road was on the far side. They said we'd have a well marked trail and wouldn't have any trouble on the east side if we went on the logging road. This Taussig brother said that he would take us up and point to the road at timberline and we could get down from there.

"It took us quite a long time to make these arrangements, so it was late when we got started and so we had to move fast. Both Marjorie's and my horse were shod and his horse was barefoot and that made a big difference in the snow. Our horses were slipping and sliding because the snow balled up under their hooves and they would turn their ankles, whereas a horse with barefeet tossed the snow out. We didn't dare say that we were having trouble because the Taussig was trying to make time at the bottom, when we weren't in such steep places. The snow was very heavy and we were showered with snow. It was not only coming down, but everytime we'd pass a tree we'd get showered with more. When we were in the trees it was a gorgeous snowfall, simply beautiful. As we got up toward timberline, the wind began to blow and the beautiful soft snow changed into ice and sleet. As we got up above timberline, we put our heads down against the lee side of the horses' necks, the only way we could breathe. The horses were having a terrible time because the ice was forming on their eyelashes and nostrils.

"Finally when we got to the top where the fellow was going to leave us it was snowing so hard and blowing so we couldn't see anything. It would be absolutely impossible for him to point out where we were to go so he said he would have to go all the way down to Glen Eden with us. Also we had trouble communicating because the wind was blowing so hard; our voices were just blown away. There was an enormous snowdrift at the top and I couldn't see how we were going to get through it. It was ten feet deep. This fellow got off of his horse and did something I'd never heard of nor seen anyone else do since. He got off his horse, tied the reins together, got in front and put the reins around his own neck. Then, he plunged through the snowdrift up to his hips and made a pinwheel out of his arms and threw the top of the snowdrift off by spinning his arms. As he plunged his horse plunged after him and packed the snow down so that Marjorie and I could come through a cut that was over our heads. When we came to the other edge of the snowdrift it dropped down about 50 feet. I thought that was the end, that we'd have to turn back. We were in this little cut so we could communicate because we were sheltered from the wind. Taussig told us to do exactly what he

did. He was already off his horse so we got off of our horses. He had his reins tied together on the saddle horn so that the horse was free and we did the same thing. Then, he sat down and slid down this embankment to a small ledge that was down below. He whistled to his horse and his horse sat down on his haunches and slid down after him. He expected us to do this. Marjorie was riding an old horse that she'd ridden back and forth on several occasions. That horse knew where he was headed, back to Denver for a nice long easy winter. I was riding a new horse that Marjorie and I had just bought together. It was a four-year old, half broken three quarter thoroughbred colt and had never been on this trip and didn't know where he was going. He was scared of cars and would jump on the bank or in the ditch when he saw one. I had had quite a lot of trouble with him. I had no idea what that horse was going to do. Marjorie slid down, then called her horse, and that horse sat down and slid. Then I was up on top and I slid down. We called my horse and he just stood there and looked at us. The fellow said, 'Well, I don't think there's any question about it, he's not going to turn back into that blizzard that we've just left.' We were on the lee side of the mountain and the wind was not as bad at that particular moment; we were somewhat sheltered. He said, 'We'll start to move off.' So when we started, sure enough, the horse saw us and wasn't going to be left up there on the mountain, so he followed down.

"We were so cold, really just frozen. We weren't prepared for this storm. We hadn't anticipated it being anything like this. It was the equinoctial storm that hit us on top. It was just late that year, that was all. After we got down a little bit lower and got into the shelter of the timber we walked. I can't tell you how far we walked to get the circulation going in our feet. It was a terrible thing because our feet were so cold we could hardly stand. It was really quite a trial, but we did make it. When we finally got down it was long after dark and we spent the night at Glen Eden Ranch. We told the Taussig boy not to try to go back the way we had come and we would pay him for the extra two days it would take him to get home. He said he'd wait and see what the weather was like and make his decision then. Of course when we got up he was long gone. We were hoping he would go back the long way over Berthoud Pass. As we went the next day from Glen Eden Ranch to Lookout Mountain where we spent the night in a ski lodge, we thought about him and wondered because it was still storming up on the mountain. We got to Lookout Mountain and decided to telephone to the ranch to see if they had had any word from him. To our surprise he answered the telephone. He said he had gone back over that same route and when he got to the drift, he had climbed up the side of the cliff and there was no sign of the place we had cut through. He also said he was the last one over the pass that year. That was quite an experience. It was a great thing to do, but we hadn't anticipated the storm. We were just lucky."

Eleanor told us about the schools she went to when she was growing up. "I think the schools today are very different from the schools I went to. We had very specific courses to take. I took a college preparatory course when I was in high school. We had to take college board exams to go to college. We had to pass English, math, a modern language, chemistry, ancient history, modern history, all those things. We took the exams over the four years in prep school. We had all the electives that you do, of course, phys. ed. and art, but we always had at least four or five major courses that we took each year that built us up to the requirements for a first rate college. Then, after we were in college we had specific courses to take. I had five years of Latin before I went to college, then I had another year in college. We had modern language, English, composition, and science. We didn't have all the choices to select and our major was not decided until we were juniors. My major was English and my minor was history. I always wanted to write but I never got around to it. I have a commitment that I want to do and I'm hoping I can write it in the next year. It is a biography of Marjorie Perry. I know when I was in high school my ambition was always to write. I know that I wrote and expressed myself better in high school than I have done since. I think it was because of the intenseness of what I was writing about. Part

of what I wrote was related to the war but were in the mood to be intense, to be serious, to be inspired. And it takes something like that. It's a queer thing, I've written much since then, but never professionally. When I was in high school, I wrote one thing that they wanted to put in the theatre in New York at that time. It was a short thing. It was something that one of the big producers in New York wanted to produce in vaudeville, short skit, very patriotic. Actually it wasn't my doing. It was made up of the words of various national anthems put together with the different countries speaking their words. It was the translation of the French and German national anthems and then the American national anthem. I still want to write."

Eleanor played a very big role in getting the Arts and Humanities started in Steamboat. "That was a big project and I didn't know what I was getting into. I was one of the ones who attended the organizational meetings, which were held over at what was then Yampa Valley College and I was not one of the officers the first year. Carol Finnoff was the president. The second year I was the president and I held that office for two years. Right when we organized the town of Steamboat Springs was given the old railroad depot by the Denver-RioGrande Western Railroad. The town didn't know what to do with it because it was in terrible shape. The roof leaked like a sieve. It hadn't been occupied in three or four years and the plaster was falling off the walls from the leaky roof. The floors were all buckled and the heating system was shot. The sewer ran out into the river and the water pipes were broken. It was just in terrible shape. The town didn't have the money to do anything with it, so we went to them and asked if we could take over. The Arts and Humanities at that time didn't think they could handle it, but I thought we could. I went around and got some estimates. I asked what it would cost to just get the place so we could use it. I think the estimate for the very immediate things was $30,000. That was in 1972.

The Arts and Humanities was formed in 1971. I thought we could raise that money if we put on a good fund raising drive. That was when it was dropped in my lap because I was optimistic. We went to the town and asked if they would give us the depot. Let us work with it. They said they would. They would lease it to us for a dollar a year for five years. I said, 'Nothing doing.' By this time we were a tax exempt organization and donations could be tax deductable. I said, 'We're going out to ask for donations on a tax deductable basis and in five years you'll come back and say, 'Oh, there's a very handsome building, we want it back.' No way. I said the I.R.S. is going to come and get on the people who gave the money because then it wouldn't be a tax deductable contribution for the town of Steamboat Springs. They finally came around and gave us a 30 year lease. Our $30,000 is nothing, though, compared to what we've put in it. We've put in lots and lots more. We've done a great deal but we've still got lots more to do. It doesn't look right on the outside yet because we've spent all our money on the inside. We're getting there though and the building is being used and being used well and I think everyone is thankful that we have been able to salvage a beautiful old building and make it work for the community."

Eleanor's community contribution has been long and varied with much concern for the Arts and Humanities in this area.

Photo by David A. Goetze

"The old Depot has come a long way in these last six years."

"In the past year the Steamboat Springs Council of the Arts and Humanities has received two major grants toward the restoration of the Depot, one of $10,000 from the Coors Foundation and one of $13,000 from the Gates Foundation. Recently the Council received an amount of $45,000 in funds from the Energy Fuels Corporation to help finance a repertory theatre which will produce four plays at the Depot the winter of 1978-79 with casts made up of professional actors and actresses together with local talent. It should be a great winter series. The old Depot has come a long way in these last six years!"