



Pillar & Post

From Sopris to Trinidad State—With a Goodbye



Gloria Maupin (nee Skufca) graduated from Lincoln High School in Sopris, Colorado in 1948. She was given a four year scholarship to the University of

Colorado, but decided it was cheaper to go to TSJC and live at home for two years. She never regretted the decision. She made lifetime friends and had very good professors at TSJC, and all her credits transferred to CU. While at TSJC Gloria belonged to most of the clubs and was President of Phi Theta Kappa and the Newman Club.

During the summer of her last two years of high school, and four years of college, Gloria worked as a Law Secretary for Mr. Franklin W. Azar, who hired her back every summer. He said she was the only one who could spell and use shorthand, and he knew she needed the money.

She decided to become a psychiatrist after reading a paper in high school that discussed professions. On the first day of college she was told that she had very high SAT scores, and was asked, "what did she want to do?" It was a surprise to her when the professor said, "great, we will enroll you in Pre-med." The article did not discuss getting an MD to become a psychiatrist. Because it was very difficult for a female to get into med school at that time (only 5%), she got a BA in Psychology as well as pursuing the Pre-med curriculum. If she did not get accepted into medical school, she could still make a living.

Gloria did her internship at the Medical Branch Hospitals in Galveston, Texas. While there she heard the



Picnickers banish sad thoughts over a table laden with all kinds of good things. The place: Sopris. Date: July 4, 1970.

On July 4, 1970, the citizens of Sopris, Colorado gathered their belongings and said their final goodbye to their community. Over the next several years the Purgatoire River would be dammed to form Trinidad Lake, forever changing the landscape. Flooding had plagued the region for decades, something the new dam would stabilize. But a piece of Colorado history would also disappear.

United Mine Worker Union was sending the first specialists to the Trinidad area, and they wanted her to practice with them. They were all men except for one pediatrician. Much to the surprise of the head surgeon for the Colorado and Southern Railroad in Denver—who thought none of the men would go to see her—the fellows said either she goes or they would leave. So Gloria went to work for the Colorado and Southern Railroad, the Santa Fe Railroad, and United Mine workers. Gloria was happy to say, she had no problems. The men all came to see her.

While practicing in Trinidad she also became the Aviation Medical Examiner for Southern Colorado. She also became the flight surgeon for the commuter airline where her husband was President and Operator for eight years. Unfortunately, the FAA at that time would not approve the airplane they needed to carry freight and passengers over the Colorado mountains, leading to the airline's closure.

While practicing, Gloria spent a good deal of time electing a new City Council, getting Hill Burton Funds for a new hospital, and fighting the Colorado Medical Society to secure more doctors. Gloria was happy to say she won all the political battles, even one with a State Senator who once practiced medicine in Trinidad.

As a doctor Gloria did a tremendous amount of charity work, since the patients were taken into the office 'ad lib' and never paid a bill in advance. They would get billed later, but many did not pay. As such, Gloria delivered a lot of babies free of charge.

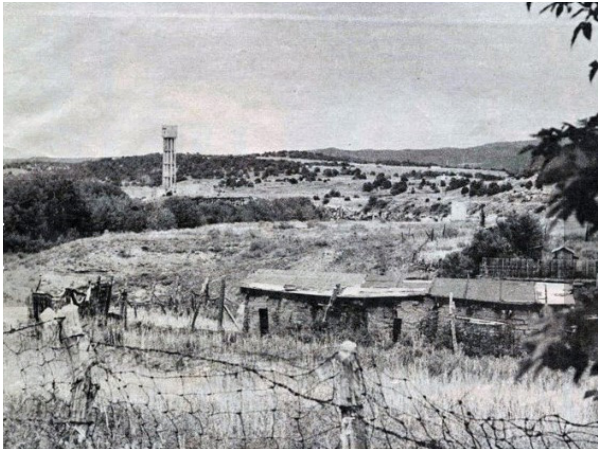
Gloria made a lot of good friends at TSJC and knows she received a very good education there. She highly recommends the College to anyone who wants a good college education. Gloria has included TSJC in her estate plan to pay for scholarships for future students.

Trinidad State is honored by Gloria's decision to include a legacy gift in her estate plans. Her scholarship will help support future generations of students as they pursue their educational dreams.

Sopris Remembered

Although the town of Sopris may no longer exist, it remains alive in the memories and spirit of those who were there.

"Sopris has many fond memories for me," Gloria said. "We were poor in money, but rich in families, love and friends. We had no parks—no swimming pools, no tennis courts and no golf course, but we had much, much more. If the weather was bad, we could play cards, fiddlesticks, jacks, color or cut out paper dolls. Nobody had to entertain us or plan our entertainment. We used our imagination and whatever was



on hand. We could play anywhere and be safe.”

“Our parents were all very hard-working people who were determined to give us what they didn't have,” she added. “They taught us love of God, love of country, honesty, compassion and the importance of education. We could play all day with tin cans pounded on our shoes, old tires to roll around, wooded stilts to walk on, go wading in the river, slide down the flag poles, jump rope, slide down waxed cellar doors, or play ball.”

“Sopris could be used as a model to prove to politicians that poverty is not the source of crime,” Gloria added. “All the kids in Sopris turned out very well. It was a real blessing to grow up in such a place with such good people.”

Trinidad State College is proud to remember Sopris and its residents. Predominantly built by people who came to America in search of a better life—the mining industry created economic opportunity. Parents prioritized education so their children would have new opportunities. The town and its people remain in our hearts and minds for all they brought to our local community. The ‘Sopris Spirit’ remains a part of who we all are.