

1. Introduction



Earl to Jo: “You were beautiful standing there. Do you know the reason I like to hear you review a book? It’s one hour I can just sit and look at you.” This was said in 1940 in Grand Junction, Colorado. Earl and Jo Shaeffer had been residents of that town about 14 years by then, where they had worked hard bringing up two children in the face of the Great Depression.

Earl was employed by Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company and Jo, the stay-at-home-mom, kept busy in those early years by reviewing books. Her popular presentations were more than just “reviews,” they were dramatizations of the books, with Jo acting each part, memorizing lines and all.

Jo was born in Denver, Colorado on the 7th of July, 1906, the third child of Dallas Jonathan and Mary Pearl Oak Miller Osborne. They had come from Ohio to Denver for the high, dry climate, more healthful, it was hoped, for Dallas’ illness. Perhaps the climate helped a little, but he lived only until 1913, leaving a wife and four young children.

Earl was born in Farnham, Lincoln County, Nebraska on the 24th of September, 1903, the third of eight children born to William Martin and May Ellen Suttle Shaeffer. The family moved thereafter to Colorado where they settled in the growing city of Denver.

Jo and Earl married in Denver and lived most of their lives in Colorado until their retirement in New Mexico.

The story of their lives which spanned most of the 20th century is truly a quintessential American saga, and it is dedicated to their loving family and their many friends.



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