

MIDDLE SCHOOL INTERVIEWS

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MIRANDA HURT, 12/2/87 Tape #1085

We're here with Mrs. Hurt and what we're doing is we're just going to ask you a few questions.

The first one is, how and when did your family settle in Lafayette? I came here in 1924 - 63 years ago. And how did they come to be in Lafayette? I came here to teach school. Where did you teach at? In the school. Well, did they have like a special -- ? No, I taught second grade. The high school was connected with the grade school; it was right over here.

What occupations were your family involved in? My husband was a dentist.

Where did your family come from? My family? I was born and raised in Boulder County at Hygiene.

What was Lafayette like back then? It wasn't like it is today. It was typically a small town and it was just before the Depression and there were many vacant houses in Lafayette. People had gone away to find work someplace else.

Do you remember what the governing body was, like of the town, like the mayor, and stuff, do you know what it was like? Yes. Will you tell me about it? They had a City Council and they hired one man. He was the Water Commissioner and Street Supervisor. He was everything - Town Clerk.

Do you remember about the miners' strike? Yes. Will you tell me about it? Well, I can remember the strike, I think there were six men killed out at the Columbine. I didn't even know about it. It happened on a Saturday morning, I believe and Monday morning, I started to walk downtown and the whole town was so quiet - it was just kind of spooky feeling, it was so quiet. There were no cars on the streets or anything and no people on the streets. Then I found out what had happened.

What part did the women play in the community? Well, considerable. I don't know just how to tell you - the church organizations were women. We had a Library Board; I helped start the original Library Board. We met over in what is now the, well they have a theatre there - it was the library there and then it moved someplace else downtown and then it moved back, the library did. (3rd & Simpson). And I worked in the library for many years.

What was the social life of the community? Well, there were lodges and clubs, different things, garden clubs, study clubs. I don't know how many lodges, and church organizations.

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Do you remember what businesses were here in town? Do you want me to name them? Sure, all you can. Oh, my. Well, all the businesses at that time were down on Simpson, East Simpson Street. The businesses up west of the highway, all along the highway, were all saloons at one time. The woman that donated the land for the city (Mary Miller) that was the specification that there would be no liquor sold east of that highway (287). So there were no saloons east of the highway. When prohibition came into effect, those saloons were all empty. So that's what happened but then after prohibition was repealed, then they started opening up. At one time when I came to visit my sister here, when I was 14 years old, the school had been condemned on account of settling from the mines underneath. It had been condemned and the kids were going to school in other places. They went to school in churches and some of the empty saloons. Imagine, all going to school in saloons.

Do you know how the Methodist Church started in Lafayette? No. Do you know a lot about the Methodist Church? Well, it's been here for a long, long time but I don't know how it started. Do you when you came to Lafayette and started going to the church? 1934.

Do you remember what community projects and things or like the women or even ministers of the Methodist Church had; going on at the church? Well, the Methodist Church wasn't very big potatoes when I came here, I'll tell you, they had eight or ten people went to church and that was a good crowd. No, I don't know. Were you here for the second fire that they had; do you remember where the church was held after that? Sure. Where was it? I think it was the building where the laundromat is now. They've changed those buildings down there; I think that was the building. It was on the end of that building that's been renovated and restored, you know; it was an old store. So we held church down there until they got the basement finished of this church. You were here then weren't you, Gracie? I came after the building was built. Oh, well we had church in the basement over here, I don't know just how long, until we finished the top. How did the church affect the peoples' lives that went through the hardships? Well, I don't know. The ministers that we had were ministers that were students at the Iliff School of Theology and we didn't pay them very much because there wasn't any money to pay them with. But they were doing this, sort of like student teachers do now days that go out to schools and teach school. And so they'd come here to preach. And that's the way it was when I was a kid up at Hygiene. The preacher would come from Denver out on the train and he'd nearly always stay with us every weekend and he'd preach and then go back to Denver on Monday morning.

What kind of church organizations were you involved in and what do you remember about that? Not very many, I was raising a family. I did belong to, well, it was the Ladies' Aid in my day. That was all I belonged to.

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Do you have any pictures that you can remember or how this town started, did you keep any pictures? I have a school picture taken in 1925; it was taken of the whole school. It was quite a large school, you know, with the high school and the elementary school combined. Would you like to see it? Sure, if you could find it. Do you know, just east of what I call the vocational building over there, there's quite a bit of green place, kind of a practice field, isn't it? Well, it was directly north of the cleaners. Oh, yeah, didn't it burn down? My grandpa graduated from the high school in 1937 and he just had his reunion this summer. Who? My grandpa. And what was his name? His name was Frank Venette. Oh sure, I remember those Venette kids. Is this the same picture? This says '24 so it must be the same picture. The strange thing happened in this picture - my grandmother came up and she's in this picture here someplace. She came to visit me and she's in this picture. She's back in here someplace - she has a hat on. Oh, I see her; she's right here. Do you see her? Must be. Yeah, she's got a hat on. That's my grandmother. Where are you? I can't remember. We're sitting down here on the ground; we were second graders. Did this school have all 12 grades in this one building? Yes. The high school was on the top floor and we were in the basement, the lower grades. These pictures are really, really neat. I'm going to give this to the Historical Society but I never got it over there. Do you want to take it? Sure, I'll take it. We'll try to keep very good care of this.

Do you remember what part agriculture played in the community? No, I don't; I don't remember. Your husband was a dentist and you didn't do anything like farming or mining? No farming; I was raised on a farm but I don't remember anything much about farming around here. I knew a few farmers, but ---.

Was your husband in Ripley's Believe It Or Not? Yes, he was. Could you tell us about it? Well, I don't know. We had a friend who was working for the government in Washington, D.C. and he thought that would be funny to put that into Believe It or Not. At that time, there was an organization of dentists that called themselves Painless Dentists and most dentists, at the same time, were painless as far as inflicting pain on their patients because they used anesthetics at that time. And he was a member of this Painless Dentist organization. What did Ripley say in his little--? Well, he just gave the name of Dr. Hurt as a painless dentist. I think that's the way it was.

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Do you remember what kind of social gatherings there were like in the church? Not as many as there are today, that's for sure. No, I don't know.

Do you remember about a State Fair that they had and different things like that that they had here in Lafayette. Do you remember things that went on like that? No.

Thank you.

Do you have any favorite recipes you might share with us? Yes, I have one, I just finished writing it down. I have a Dill Bread recipe; would you like that? Sure.

DILL BREAD

2 packages dry yeast
½ cup warm water
2 teaspoons sugar
2 cups cottage cheese
2 tablespoons minced onion
2 tablespoons dill weed
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 eggs
4 to 4½ cups flour

Dissolve yeast in water; add 2 teaspoons sugar to yeast water. Combine cheese, onion, dill weed, baking powder, salt, 2 tbs. sugar, and eggs. Mix thoroughly, then add yeast. Mix well. Add flour to make a stiff dough. Knead on lightly floured board until smooth and elastic. Place in greased bowl. Turn over to bring greased side up. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°) until double in bulk (1 - 1½ hours). Turn out on floured surface and knead a few times. Divide into two equal portions. Shape into loaves. Bake in well greased pans at 350° for 30 minutes or more or until done.

Was your family originally from England? No, from Scotland. Well, they came here from Ireland but they were Scottish people. They had gone into Ireland; they were still having religious wars in those days. My grandfather came to Colorado 1859 and had a mine up at Gold Hill. And then they couldn't get their ore to a mill easily and so he decided to give up and go farming so he went to Hygiene. And homesteaded a farm there; he had about a thousand acres out there that we farmed after I grew up. What was his name? McCaslin. Just like the boulevard? Yeah, that was named after my grandfather and my father and my brother; they had all been County Commissioners and the boulevard is named after the family.

Do you have any recipes that might have come from Scotland? I sure don't.

Thank you.