

Oral Histories

Number: OH45

Date: Oct. 13, 1982

Condition:
Good

Holdings:
WPL

Initials: DP

Interviewee: William Ranta

Interviewer: Vickie Ranta

Abstract: Side A

00-46 Early history of Bill's life and his parents. Parents were from Finland. Mother came to Telluride to find a husband. Father worked at Red Lodge, Montana before coming to Telluride. After parents married, and Bill was born, he and his mother went back to Finland for two years. He had a brother and sister that died as small children. One brother (Elmer) 11 years younger than William survives.

46-111 Father was working for the Power Company when the dam above Trout Lake Dam broke. Father worked at Smuggler most of his life as a carpenter. Bill helped his father build the tram towers for the Pennsylvania Mine. Father died in 1958 and mother in 1957. Mother took in laundry for the miners. Speaks of the serious accident at Ballard Mine that father was involved in.

111-144 Father worked at Blue Lake for 1 winter. Describes the tunnel that was drilled under the lake and the explosion that caused the flood, which flooded the East End of town.

144-163 Bill speaks of his many years of working as a carpenter at the mines. Describes working conditions and salary.

163-200 He played on the high school basketball team. Describes childhood activities. He played a lot of baseball. Collected scrap steel for money to buy baseball equipment.

200-282 Speaks of the different nationalities in town. Memories of school days. Describes the Finnish customs and celebrations. The Finnish people took care of their own when there were deaths or accidents in the Finnish community. Tells stories of Christmas Tree John and Macaroni Jim.

282-337 Memories of the Cornet Creek Flood in 1914. Describes the damage to the town and how it was cleaned up.

337-449 Talks of the early transportation by ox teams over Last Dollar Road. Memories of the train and their schedules. Train hauled all the freight into town. Speaks of the mule trains and how they hauled supplies to the mines.

449-607 History of Smuggler and Bullion Mines. Describes process of mining. Talks of the big fire at the Bullion mine. Describes the avalanches at the Liberty Bell.
End of Side A

Side B

00-05 Blank

05-42 Talks about World War 1. Speaks of the first soldier that died in the war. His memories of World War 11.

42-76 Memories of the 50's. Only one mine operating at that time. Speaks of the way the cost of living went up because of the ski area starting up in the 70's. Speaks of his hopes for the town.

Description: sound cassettes (57 minutes)

Subjects:

Side A;

Early history of Bills life

Trout Lake and Blue Lake Floods

School Memories

Finn Customs

Cornet Creek Flood

Railroad

History of Smuggler and Bullion Mines

Side B:

Memories of World War 1 & 11

Ski Area