

## Oral History Project: Summer 2015

### Interview Questions

**Record a lead to start the interview: your name, narrator's name, date, and location**

1. Please state your full name, your date of birth, where you were born and where you grew up. **Lael Fruen 5/9/41 Minneapolis MN. Grew up in in Minneapolis, and then later a suburb of Minneapolis.**

2. Tell us about when you moved to Telluride. Why did your family move here and when?  
**We moved to Telluride in 1975. We came to ski. I was sick one day so my husband decided to see what places were for sale. Rose Victorian Food Market was for sale, the Hardware store was for sale. The Powder House was for sale and I said no. We bought the grocery store, went home and settled everything in 6 months and moved here.**

3. What was it like when you moved here? Was the ski area opened at that time?

**The ski area was already open, Dave had read about it in some ski magazine. We always went skiing in December and there was no one here. We really moved here because we like to ski. The town was deserted, old, dirty, and funky. We like it here. There were a lot of the old miners still here, the first person we met was John Micetic, we went over to the Silver Jack Company and we have been friends ever since, 1975. Harold and Grace Brewer who we bought the grocery store were really glad to get out of it. Mining was dying out, it took until 1978. The miners didn't buy anything from the grocery store, they just cashed their paychecks, that's all. When we bought the grocery store, there was not enough turn over for food to keep stuff fresh. Whenever I hired someone to work, they would move. When the newcomers started coming the old-timers were leaving, their houses were worth more. They sold their homes for profit and left. A lot moved to Montrose because it was so much cheaper. It changed the town dramatically.**

**When we first moved here, it was the old miners, they were still mining. The Elks were here and the Sheridan Bar and the Roma. Basically we didn't have TV, George Cappis finally did the TV. Every year when people would not pay him, he would threaten to cut off the Super Bowl. We thought that was pretty funny, pretty smart though. Our entertainment was going outside, there really wasn't that much to do**

6. Tell us about some major changes that occurred in the community after the ski area opened.

**The Festivals started happening. Blue Grass and we started the Wine Festival. All of us there started the festivals. There was a "them and us" atmosphere in the beginning of the festivals. We didn't like that. Dave and I felt we had to be on both sides because of our business. There were a lot of drugs that started to come in with the festivals.**

**It took until about 1985 until the economy started to turn around and the off seasons weren't so bad. It took a long time. And of course with the ski industry, no snow hurts. We had a few years where there was no snow and that hurts. One year the ski area was open one month. It was awful. The housing started to get a little more difficult, we had all these old houses and lots of people living in one house. That is what everybody did.**

7. What were some challenges that the community faced in the 1970s or 1980s. (Jobs? Housing? Prices? Homelessness? Poverty? Crime?)

**There were no homelessness, just a lot of "woodsies", people just living in the woods, we did not really consider them homeless, just how they wanted to live. There was some poverty but certainly not dramatic. There was not much crime. The miners that were left, did not really have any money, most of them moved to Montrose.**

**They ended up quitting the 4<sup>th</sup> of July due to the number of people and the "type" of people visiting, a lot of bikers (motorcycle gangs). It was unbelievable. That lasted one year. They decided they needed the money and tourism so we initiated to get the celebration going again. After we started again, the motorcycle group didn't come again. So maybe the one year we didn't do it was good. The parades were always good.**

8. What were some benefits to living in Telluride during the 1970s/1980s? (Besides the obvious beautiful scenery).

**Great skiing, good times, good people and friends. There are 200 or more people that still live here, I call them "the survivors". We survived the hard times and it was hard. We all worked really hard and that is why we started all those things. We started the Wine Festival because we wanted people. Dan Shaw come up with this awful slogan "Butts in Bed". That is really awful, we have to put Butts in Beds. But it happened and we did that.**

mitigation, etc. It was very contentious, but very exciting. I never thought it would turn into a world class ski resort.

What major changes did this bring about? (Economically or culturally).

It changed Telluride dramatically. We literally had the "Burying of hatches in the middle of Main St.". There were lots of opposing sides, people in town thought that Mtn. Village would be in competition with the businesses in town. It took a long time for us to talk about it. It was a big thing. You have to give Ron a lot of credit, he saw a vision. It worked.

There was no valley floor employee housing. It changed the town economically. Houses were being bought with a lot of money then. Something we had not experienced as of yet.

This is the one thing that still makes me mad, Mtn. Village is working to get everybody up here and the town is still shutting people down. We don't want another hotel, we don't want this, we don't want that.

It changed the town economically, the people that bought up there have a lot of money and think their kids are going to come, but the kids don't want to ski every year, I'm going to the beach instead. There are a lot of dark houses up there. There is still nobody up there, certain weekends but not all the time.

We are very selfish, we have had our own ski area ever since I have moved here. You can go up on the mountain and look around and think we are the only ones here.

Which is nice.

Employee housing is still very important.

We moved the grocery store because we had no parking. If you live in town you can walk everywhere, but a lot of people do not want to walk with 6 bags of groceries.

The economics are still very difficult, people in Mtn. Village say "You live down there?" "Yes, and you live up there?" It is a strange conversation when I get into it.