

Interviewed January 13, 1984

SIDE ONE

Let's start from the beginning. Before you came to Lafayette, where did you live?

- H. We lived in St. Louis Missouri. We came to Colorado in 1931. And I was employed by Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company which was A&T at the time. And of course those were in bad years that was in 1929, something like that. So they laid off a bunch of us, and I went back, we went back to Columbia Missouri and I got a job in Columbia MI. And Mr. Davis' son who was cashier at Citizen's Bank in Sturgeon MI that I knew and knew his wife. He came to me one morning and he said, "I'm going to Colorado". His father at that time had three stores, one in Erie, one in Lafayette and one in Louisville. And he said to me, "Would you come to Colorado and manage a market for us?" And I said well, I would, yes if we could agree on a price and things like that. Course, this is in 1931. I don't suppose it was more than a week or ten days until he told me that he'd arrived and they would like me to come. And so we come to Colorado and we arrived in Lafayette on the 24th day of January. The anniversary is almost coming up. And we drove down the street and stopped in where the apartment house is there on the North side of the street and that was a ((Ford??)) agency. And there was a young man standing in front of it by the name of Elmo Lewis, I don't know if you know Elmo Lewis or not, but Elmo Lewis was the first guy I spoke to in the town of Lafayette. And I asked him where the L.M Davis store, grocery was and it was right down on the next corner, so I thanked him and we drove down there and we parked and I got out of the car and I met Mrs. Joe Brown, I found out who she was afterwards coming out of that door at the time I got. . .so mother, Alma was raised in the same town as the Davis children and of course their families knew each other so they were no strangers to her. So they recieved us, I would say very graciously. And they gave us a house to live in. Now this is 1931, I worked for them for a hundred dollars a month, they furnished me a house and paid all the utility. And I stayed there with them, I guess about six years. And then the Swift and Company asked me to, they invited me and offered me a job as a sales representave with Swift and Company. I first went to Salida Colorado and we were there maybe six months. Then I worked the Salida territory, the Leadville territory, Gunnison, all that country. And then they had a salesman that was discharged or quit, I never really did know what happened, but then they asked me to go to Grand Junction ,so we loaded up and started for Grand Junction, and when we got to Grand Junction, well, we had to live in a hotel, the Court Hotel for about a month, I guess, before we could find a house there. In Grand Junction. So we stayed in Grand Junction about. . .now this is what you wanted aint it?

Yes.

So we stayed in Grand Junction between three and four years, I don't remember exactly the date. But in the mean time, the Davis' kept at me to come back, they just kept after me, and after me , and after me to come back. And finally they came over, the old man, L.M. Davis, we all called him Pap Davis, cause he, that's what he was known as in Lafayette.

Pat?

Pap. ((laughter))

So, we came back and, I don't know, I must have been with them another year. And I decided, I had a wife and a small son, and if I was going to make any headway in the commercial business, it was time for me to go into business for myself. So, across the block, down here where the Launderette is, I rented that building and on the 20th day in September ¹⁹⁴¹ I went into business.

Mr. Davis, the young Mr. Davis, said to me, "I'll break you within six months." Well, I lasted almost forty years. And they went out of business probably two or three years after that. But, I said many of times that was the second best day of my life, because the first day of my life, the greatest day of my life was when I met her, and the second day, the second great day was when I decided to stay in Lafayette. Well I'll be real frank about it, I didn't think I'd stay here a month when I first hit the town, you know what I mean. Cause I wasn't used to the environment here. I came out of St. Louis where it was busy and things were going on and here was a coal mining town, and another thing was that my mother died and I had to go back home, Daddy enhanced the desire to go back, you know what I mean. But we came back and we've been here 52 years, the 24th of this month. So we lasted pretty good. ((laughter))

Yes, I'll say.

But anyhow we stayed, to go on with that commercial story, we were in that little building for about four years, three or four years.

Now, this was the company store?

No, that was the little place where the Laundrette is down there. So then, the Rocky Mountain Store used to be where the building that they've remodeled and put the solar thing in. And that building was in a state of, well, it was almost ready to be torn down the front was pushed in, the windows, some of them were pushed out. So I decided, and the Oddfellow Lodge, IQOF Lodge, owned the building at that time, and so I propositioned them to rent it, because it was more space and the business was getting good and we at that time employed one or two ladies to work for us. I rented the building and remodeled the front; put a new front on it, and cleaned it up and put in electricity, lights and so forth. And we moved in there, that was about 1944, I think. And we stayed in there about four years, and growth just kept coming, we just kept doing well, business kept good for us even though it was in time of war and we were working on ration slips and everything of the kind, shortage of merchandise, shortage of paper, shortage of coffee, shortage of sugar. And really, if you sold anything you didn't have anything to put it in or wrap it up with, you see. We even wrapped up merchandise with old newspapers and things of the kind. You couldn't get sacks and everybody had to buy with coupons. And I remember during that period when we were in that store, there was a great meat shortage, and of course everything had to be bought with stamps. If you didn't have stamps you couldn't buy. When the population, the citizens of the town saw a meat truck come through town, they knew it was coming down to our place, and they would load themselves up in the car and take off for the store. But, anyhow, we survived that. And then it came to me that I had to move again. And one of the reasons was, just like the situation in front of the library today, the city would never clean the snow and stuff out of those gutter lines, and it was getting to be a dangerous situation there. And sometimes, with that high building there, it would stay that way all winter, even though you cleaned the walks, you never could get it out. So then I, down here where Marv is now, that was a vacant building there and it was in a state of needing repairs terribly. It was a two story building at that time, and one of the oldest buildings in the city. So I propositioned this guy by the name of Roy Clausen, he lived down in the Southern part of the state, to rent the building. So, he remodeled it for me, I had a five year lease, but in the lease, we had a paragraph where we was to let one, each other know, contact each other a year previous to the expiration of the contract what our desire was, to stay or not to stay. So, I contacted him, and he told me, he said, "I'd be glad to have you" he said, "but I'll have to raise your rent a hundred dollars a month." So I said well I don't think so. So then I went up there to where the Dairy Queen is, not the Dairy Queen. . .ah. . .

The Dairy King?

No, over on the corner there, Baseline and 287, Dairy Freeze or something it is was there, and I leased the Conoco filling station with the idea that I would build a store on the

corner, that was before the motel and all them things was in there and there was plenty of parking. I got that done and then I went over to Boulder to the bank to see about getting a loan to make a building and they said you go right ahead, how much of your money do you want to put into it, And I don't know, I think I said well maybe 50% of the cost. They said you build any kind of building you want, we'll loan you all the money you want. So, I kept that station two years, and I hired people to run it for me, cause I wanted to be sure to hold that ground. IN the meantime Mr. Clausen says to me, then I propositioned him to buy the building, and so we delt, of course I employed an attorney to look at the papers and so forth and so on. And he said yup he'd sell it, then we agreed on a price, and I bought that building. We moved into that building on October the 4th, 1949, and we sold out in 1971, first time. And then I had to take it back a year later in 1972, because the young man became incapacitated, I think he was in the Korean, ah, a veteran, and he had some troubles with his physical body. And I took the store back. After I had run it a year, mother and I were both tired, we were breaking down a little bit, so I decided I would sell it. In the meantime why Hales, from Brighton came along and they bought the store. So in 1972 I went out of business. That's the commercial part of the business. And of course, I've been active in practically everything Lafayette has done, intended to do, or participated in the last forty years. I think while I was still in the little store, in the early forties, a couple gentlemen came to the house one day I was ill, they came to the house one day, it was getting along about election time, and in those days why we elected the City Representatives in April, no, in September, then after the charter they changed it to April. And they took about an hour and a half and they tried to persuade me to run for council. So I didn't, as I remember, that day I didn't promise them I'd do it but I thought about it. And so I thought to me, if you're going to be a businessman, and you're going to be a part of the community and participate, you got to get in there and do something and so I did, I was elected. I was a councilman for ten years. And then I was elected mayor and I served five terms of mayor for the City of Lafayette.

Oh, really. Consecutive terms?

No, not consecutive terms. Something would happen and I'd get back in the race. ((laughter))

I see. When were you first elected mayor? What year was that?

I think the first time I was elected mayor was in 1952, something like that. And then up until 1980. I served in and off there as mayor. So this is what happened, we come to the conclusion in the mean time that our banks had worn out, given up, you know. And we was without a bank all those years and we needed a bank and we needed a lot of things. So we decided we needed home rule to do the things we wanted to do. We needed paved streets, we needed gas, we needed new water things, and we needed a bank and we needed a post office and all these things. I decided your gonna need these things you got to get in there and do it. So I went back into the city business again. And I was in there on and off until. . . well my last year as mayor was 1980. And I didn't want it anymore because we had achieved those things we wanted to do. We'd gotten new banks, we'd gotten a new post office, we'd gotten home rule, we got a new sewer, we'd gotten paved streets, we got an improved water department and all those things, and so I said "So long." And I've been out since 1980. And I've enjoyed it. In the meantime I had to fire only one city manager, we've had five, see. It's been a great life, I'm sure glad I came because I've had every, and I don't say this boastfully, I say this more in a state of gratitude, I've had every office that they've had to offer. I've had the mayorship, I've had the council, I've had president of the bank, I was on the board of directors at both hospitals in the city of Boulder, I've been the president of all the service organizations, I've been the king fish in their lodges, their Lions Club, their service clubs and there's nothing more for me to have. You know what I mean? In the time has come for an old man to step out of the way and let an younger men, you get oriented in a type of life that you're always wanting something or you always want to do this or do that. And there's a lot of things I see every day that I'd like to see accomplished in the city of Lafayette. I'd like to see a greater commercial community than we've got. And it can be had, but you've got to get out there and be willing to work and to strive. And in the doing it, you're going to step on somebody's toes, and

hurt somebody, lose a friend. But if you're doing it for the betterment of the community, you got to do it. It's like I've said a many a time, and I've tried to use this as a watchdog to what you do, if you've got two holes in a street, and you only have the financial ability to improve one of them, you've got to improve the one that accomadates the most people. And that's just the way of running a business or running the city. The city is a business. I've been criticized some that I try to run the city like I run a business, well there's no other way to run a city. You've only got so much money coming in, and you can only spend so much, you've got a payroll of so much, everything is already set for you. Because you make a budget each and every year, you got to stay within that budget whether you're a town of 20,000 people or a town of half a million, it's still the same. Because if you don't, the first thing you're going to have is trouble and then it's going to take a long time to get straightened out. So, that's the story.

O.k, I want to go over some of this again and get some more details. Ah. . .so you were never in the company store?

Never? I was in the company store for three or four years, I don't know how long, is that what you mean?

The Bermont building?

The Bermont building? The Bermont building is the one over here on the corner. The company store is down here in the block where there's the new building they remodeled. That was the Rocky Mountain Store. Rocky Mountain Fuel.

I see, Rocky Mountain Fuel.

You see, when we came here in 1931, the mines were working. Now there is no working mine in Boulder County. We had the Vulcan mine, the State mine, we had the Columbine mine, we had the Centennial mine, we had the Highway mine, the Imperial mine, all these mines was working. But now, a miner only worked four months out of the year. That was all they made, and they made about a hundred dollars a week. Paydays were 10's and 29ths. or 25ths, and the 14ths and the 29ths. And some of the mines, we always had a bulletin board in the store, and the mines would call us with the days they would work from this time of the year, and especially from February on they would probably work two days a year ((??)) you see we had a soft coal and they had to move it and they couldn't store it and let it sit around and ((char??)) and things. But that was the payroll in this area, it was a coal mining town.

Did you find the business in your store to fluctuate with the working. . .?

Not very much, cause this was in the day of credit.

Ah, that's something I wanted to ask you about. How did you work your credit, and compare it to credit today.

I think mother will. . .mother was the credit man.

Was it your job? O.k.

H. She took care of everything.

A. I took care of credit.

H. If you had a family that came in and you had children, say two or three, whatever it is. Pay days as I said, was on the tenths, and fifteenths, twenty-fifths and twenty-ninths. And you came in and you paid your bill which most all of them were on a two weeks basis, and your bill was thirty dollars, or forty dollars, whatever it was, we'd always give you a big one pound sack of candy. Now our girls who worked for us would spend maybe a half a day sacking candy and getting it ready to give away. The candy was cheap. It was marvelous the ammount of good will that that little pound of candy built.

I remember one time, I drove in up here at the gas station to buy some gas. And the lady said to her son, Said, "Do you know Mr. Roberts?" and he said "yea, even my dogs don't bark at him." ((laughter))

So that's the way you establish yourself. You establish yourself, I think, by being nice to people, it may cost you and it may not cost you but it's the way to do business. And I think we've lost a lot by not realizing the customer is the most important thing. And then another thing business men have forgotten; they may run the business, but they don't contact the people. The people you employ is the people who keep the business, you depend on them to do that. If they're. . .listen, this is very important to me; we employed 169 people in the time that we were in business and there were only two that were ever discharged. And then we employed seventy-some-odd boys and girls in school that would work for us in the summertime and after school you know, as bus boys or as carry outs and so forth. And they were important people because usually, they was the last person connected with the organization to make contact with the people. If he put the groceries in the car in good shape, if he was kind and courteous to them, that was building good will. And that's how I run my business. And I don't care how good you are, how big you are, how important you are, just because you own the business, you don't run it. The people that you hire is the people that you depend on to run the business. If they're good, you have a good business, if they're bad, you have a bad business, that's it.

Do you think. . .well, let me just ask you straight, what is the reason, or do you think there's a reason Horace Davis's store didn't last but a few more years, was it this, or was it something. . .

A. It wasn't a grocery.

Oh, it wasn't a grocery?

H. I think the thing was that Pap died, Mr. Davis. The top man died, grandpa Davis passed away and Horace ~~xx~~ was a banker, he wasn't a grocer. And then the time had arrived, this was in 1941; when things was beginning to look up a little better. In the time of the recovery situation when Roosevelt declared the moratorium on banks and things which was what, thirty-two or thirty-three, I don't remember just what, but I remember we had a big parade that day here in town. And they had replicas of that great big blue wheel, cog wheel, and the eagle and everything on it. People seemed to have a new grasp of life when this come along. And it was a new grasp of life, because before mother and I left, we both banked, where we had our money, when we hit the city of Lafayette, we had less than fifty dollars. The bank went broke and we got around fifteen, seventeen percent off of the banks that we had. She was teaching school, saving money, and I was working trying to save money. They took it all, and they never repaid. You had no insurance in those days. And this is another thing, when this bank went broke down here, the night before that bank went broke, the president of that bank came to Davis' store and picked up a deposit of seventeed hundred dollars. The next morning, the controller of currency put a lock on the door. You see what I mean?

He knew it was coming.

So mother was feeding teachers at that time, weren't ya? And this old banker was rooming with the Davis' and he was eating with Mom. And these two guys came over here from Louisville and when he came out that night, they caught and beat hell out of him. The old man ran out when he was hollering, he had his arms around a tree. ((laughter)) But, it was bad times, you know what I mean.

A. This was guys from Louisville, wasn't it?

H. Yea, two fellas from Louisville. I don't know who they were or what the name of them was. But anyhow, this banker went broke and never really could do anything. Now this is something else. Now all this that I'm telling you is factual, and I've got all kinds of stuff. Now, I'm interfering with your questions.

No, in fact you're following right along with what I had down.

Well, anyhow, one afternoon in the store before we went out of business in nineteen thirty, or nineteen fifty, I think our bank was thirty years old. This year, I don't remember exactly. There was four fellas, four or five fellas, I think, nice guys came to me in the store down there and they said we want to talk to you. And they said, we have a man here who wants to open a bank in Lafayette. And he's willing to put in 75,000 dollars worth. Can we get a bank in? And I says you bet we can. That very night, I went out to sell another 75,000 dollars worth of stock. The next day by eleven o'clock, I had that 75,000 worth of stock sold. And we opened the bank and incorporated it on 150,000 dollars. Today, you see what the bank is. I was on the board of directors, Dr. Gordon was on the board of directors, Lewis McCorcalan was on the board of directors, Bill. . . can't think of the name now, from Boulder, Roy Austin, Lewis Miller, Charlie Liley was on the board of directors, George Hening, they were all prominent men in the community, Lewis Miller was elected President, I was elected Vice President, I don't remember exactly the year, it was probably five years after that, I was elected President. And I served maybe ten years, something like that, til I become sixty-five years of age. And so then I, I just had too many things to do. And so I stepped down. But those were all happy days, even though some of them were hard days so to speak. I enjoyed every part of it. And it was progress. That's what we was after to start with. When you convert from a coal community to a commercial community, it's a big proposition. You go ahead and then I'll finish up later.

Well, tell me about some of the other businesses, like what was here when you first came, and what. . .

Well, when we came, in 1931, there was nine grocery stores in this town. Nine grocery stores. It was a very progressive coal mining town. We had a big department store, shoe store, dry goods store on the corner, that was in business about 60 years I think.

What was their name?

H. Alderson and Company.

A. O.C. Alderson

H. O.C. Alderson and Sons. The Public Service had an office here and had a work division out of here. The Public Service was down there where. . . on the corner, clear on the west side, they had a beautiful office there. And this has always been one of the things that bothered me, I was still mayor when this happened. So I went to the, they put up a notice that they were going to pull out of Lafayette. Never could find out why they were going to leave Lafayette. So I called them and they told me they was going to leave Lafayette. They were going to consolidate the Lafayette and the Louisville office, and the Broomfield office. So I went to Broomfield to see the manager at that time, and he told me yea that they were leaving but they was doing it because they decided they wanted to build a building themselves. Centaur was just getting active at that time they thought that it would be nice, maybe they could establish an office down there. Well, they moved to Louisville and they never have come back, you see. This is where you can't trust people, in the remarks of a specific individual. Now the man that was former head of the Boulder division, his name was Frank Henderson, I was very close to him because I was on the board at the hospital, and we knew each other, we contacted. . . At the time we went out for gas, he told me, he said, "Ham, if you'll. . ." cause coal mining was wearing out at that time, he says, "If you'll get me a hundred subscribers, to take gas, then we will go ahead. But then your first problem," this was during the war and Korea, he said, "But first you got to get pipe." it was under the control of the oil companies.

End of Side One

SIDE TWO

O.K. Let's start with your family again. Your name is Roy Roberts, and your son's name is. . .

H. Stanley. Stanley L.

He has a daughter and her name. . .

Shelly Lynn.

. . .and she has two. . .

children. She has a son, eleven and a daughter, ten. They're great kids. But, anyway, we try to live like a family should live. There's so much respect you got to have for one another. There's things that families bust up over, I sure hope it never happens to me.

You were married June 20, 1927 in St. Louis Missouri. So you've been married now, what, 52 years?

Fifty-seven this coming June. See this is nineteen-eighty-four. Yep, we've had two or three fights. . .

A. Ahhh you.
(laughter).

I've wanted to fight, but I would leave.

H. But, I don't think it's too big of a problem for two people to get along that long. If there's really love there and cooperation, you know what I mean. Course, I don't understand any other ways of life than this. I'm old enough to ((unintelligible))

A. My mother thought he was the greatest person she ever knew. He lived with my mother and father and worked and I was teaching school down in ((unintelligible))

This was in Missouri?

A. St. Louis.

So, you were born in . . .

A. Harrisburg.

And you were born in . . .

H. Sturgeon Missouri. There were sixteen miles between us, and there was just about the same animosity for one another as existed between Louisville and Lafayette. The kids could get along fine, it was the older people who couldn't get along fine. I remember one time here in Lafayette, we had a masonic lodge that was made up of members from Louisville and Lafayette. We had the Methodist church was Louisville and Lafayette, one minister took care of both. And I remember that we decided one year, we were furnishing the parchments for the minister and we were taking the eleven o'clock service rather than the early service, all those things, you know. So, I think it was four of us went to Louisville, we were on the board of the church. And, we went to Louisville to advise those people that we. . . that's bicentennial, whatever they worked under. . . that we would pull out, that we would sever our relationship as far as both of us using the same minister, we would go our way and they could go theirs. And my gosh, I thought they were gonna run us out of the place. They didn't feel that way about it because they were getting the better end of the deal because they didn't have to furnish the parchments and the preacher came over here and there was this message to go home. But, that's the things that's happened in the community. Somebody gets something started and it keeps

building fire until it gets out of control. But otherwise, I think Louiseville now is in better shape as far as getting along with one another. Because their councils are very cooperative, they try to get along well together. Of course, they've both been prosperous prosperity makes a lot of difference, even in an individual instance it's just. . . They're doing all right now.

Going on Lafayette, what Lafayette was like, were there. . .well, I know there were, but tell me what you experienced as far as racial problems with the Mexican-Americans. Was that a problem in Lafayette?

H. I never . . . there never was a problem in Lafayette.

A. Not with us.

H. No not with us. Not with our business. At one time, you know, I don't know whether you know this or not, but there's a full-size swimming pool where that parking lot is up there at the school house.

I've heard about it, um hum.

And that rock house back there was the bath house and so forth and so on. We weren't living here then, that was when we were in Grand Junction, and I don't know very much about that, but I always understood that they filled it up, don't know if it was a court order or what it was.

It was the racial. . . ?

Yea, the racial problem. But down here, I don't think they have any problem at all. And of course, we never did have any problem, 'cause we had a lot of Mexican people who were just wonderful, wonderful friends. And I think that's the way to go, it should be. After all, just as the old saying, we're all God's children, and some of them are just left in the oven a little longer and got baked a little more. I think a lot of times, a lot of it is due to the fact that we speak two different languages, we don't have an understanding of the conversation, the meaning. I think I've been very fortunate myself. Lafayette has been very fortunate, and the city of Lafayette itself I'd say we've had I would say wonderful cooperation from the community, things that you wanted to do, like elections and things and programs that you had. You know in the old days, we've tried everything, I said that someplace along there that I thought Lafayette would be 20,000 people by this time, and I really did, I was really sincere about that. We used to have drawings on Thursday afternoon and give away ((script??)) money worth a dollar to five dollars to ten dollars and they could take it to any store in town and get it recognized and fulfilled and then you'd take it up to the Chamber of Commerce or the Businessman's Association, whatever it happened to be, and get the cash for it. But there's one thing in Lafayette, and I wanted to do it years ago, that I'm rooting for a Municiple Credit Union. Because we had a lot of new people coming into town. And we was doing business, most everybody was doing credit business at that time and I thought it was time that we needed a credit card. And the theory that I thought would be good was that we would establish a community savings, whatever you want to call it, loan association, and if a person came in to me as a business man and said Mr. Roberts, I would like to open an account with you, and I'd say "That's fine, I appreciate it and would be glad to have you. But we don't issue personal credit, we issue credit through our Business Association which is located such-and-such-a-place and you go up there and they will take your name and give you a coupon book, and whatever ammount of business that you do if it's \$25 a month, or \$100 a month or whatever it is, you bring to me the coupon out of your book, and I could take it up to the Association and get my money maybe at a 5% discount or you would have to pay the 5% and I the 2% or whatever." And I still think it's one of the greatest things that could happen to a small community. Even with credit cards today it would be good because you're doing business with the personal people that you know. Huh, what?

A. You don't know very many anymore.

H. Well, I dont' know very many but they know who they are because they live here, see.

I think it would be a great way to do business.

Before, when you handled the credit, was there a percentage of interest that you charged; or was it on the honor system, where you kept track of what they bought . . .

- A. Honor basis. We had a ((can't get because both are talking at same time)) I had a card for everybody who wanted to do that. Never had any problems. People with us really paid their bills.
- H. I don't think that we had a loss exceeding one half of one percent for the first ten years that we were in business.
- A. But they were all working. Coal mines were, when we first started out, we just started out giving time, didn't we.
- H. Well, you had to give credit it was a way of doing business, the way you had to do business because people just didn't have that kind of money. And you had to extend credit to them whether you were in the grocery business or the gasoline business, or grocery business, or even shoe repair. We used to have all those things in Lafayette. As I told you we had nine grocery stores here.

You had a department store.

We had a department store, we had two drug stores, we had automobile agencies, we had a Ford agency, a Chevrolet agency, Starr agency. Ah, we had anything you can think of, jewelry stores, theatre. . .

Which was across the street.

Yea, that's right. A theatre, we had almost everything, it was a servicing community. That's all there is to it, you see.

Well, what happened to the business, where did. . .

Well, I'll tell you what happened to the business, and I think this is true today. But Lafayette loss of dollars was due to it's location. You see in the olden days, in those days we didn't have paved roads, we was in the dust for years and years, it was terrible, they talk about emmissions, we had emmissions in those days. But it would take a day to go to Denver and back in those days shopping. Now, you go down and shop, closest place is Northglenn. But you can drive to Denver in twentyfive minutes today and look at the trading places that you've got. Instead of going up here to Mrs. Jones' place to buy a dress, she's probably got one little rack of dresses, you can be in stores that have floors of dresses, see. You don't buy a dress just to, you buy by impulse. I rember one time when shopping centers and malls became popular, I went to a meeting and the fella said there's only two business that you wont' see in all the shopping areas, and one of those is jewelry, one is furs and another might be expensive toys. Because you dont' buy those things by going to buy them, you buy them by impulse. You go along you see a ring or something of the kind, some fancy toys, and you buy it because you want to give somebody something. Same thing with fur coats and things. Of course, you seldom see a fur coat anymore. But in those days, those were things you didn't see in shopping centers to start with. Now, we're only. . .and then, at that time, why supermarkets were beginning to get flourishing. I remember the day when Boulder didn't think they'd have a shopping center, or didn't have a supermarket. Them guys was sitting down on Pearl St. and Joyce's was one of them, that they were starving to death. So he came across down on 15th St. bought a piece of land, it was a weed patch. And he built a supermarket. The first one that Boulder ever had.

And it's right south of Canyon Blvd, on 15th street is where it would be. I think there's a big liquor store, used to be a liquor store there. Well, the Pioneer Wholesale grocery was right across the street from him, and I remember the time when people used to say 'Well, I don't know why he went down there in that weed patch.' You see, they weren't thinking ahead. He had an idea that that was the thing that was coming. Same thing happened in the City of Denver. Lakeside was the first one of any consequence that I remember in this area. People can walk down the mall and see every other necessity they need in those shopping centers.

They get the variety.

That's right. And I remember one time, that there was a young lady, her husband used to be city manager here, and she wanted to go into business up on the highway, a lady's wear store, that would be where the beauty parlor is right off of, you know where this bookstore is up here on the corner, south of that. Now, if my wife were going to buy a dress she wouldn't go down to that lady's, she had one thing there she had some dresses on. And another thing was that everybody in town didn't want Mary wearing the same dress that Joan had on or something like that. And they didn't do that and it's the case today, you see. So then they could get their car and drive to Denver on a paved road or down to Northglen or Lakeside or any of those places in twenty five minutes and they could have hundreds of dresses to look at. And that's still going today, whether people like it or not. It still is. You have an assortment, you have a variety, you can pick out whatever you want. Now with me, I'm happy to say that didn't happen. We had one of the best finest grocery stores in Northern Colorado. And we were never undersold. Never undersold. We did business as far from here as to Northglen. But it's like I tell ya, I contribute all to the people that worked for me. They were wonderful people. They weren't too busy to spend a minute in conversation, 'How's your family?'. You know the greatest thing in the world, you're talking to an old man and an old lady, and you say to them, 'How's Mary, or how's John, or how's Frank, or their son or daughter' the light in their faces comes up immediately, see.

Personal contact with them and they feel that you care.

That's right, let them know that they're something. Another thing was happening during the war that we had a display board up, all the service men that went from this community. And every time that one went in, we had his address, where he was and everything of the kind. Then another thing was, that every week I would change things on little card about like that on places, you know, 'Go ahead and squeeze the Charmin'. Things like that, you-know what I mean. And people would get a kick out of it, you know. So, for instance, we'd say, 'So, if the temperature does go down to zero, that's nothing.' Things like that, you know. And people would get. . . it was a happy time. Any time can be a happy time, if you want to make it a happy time.

Yea, that's true. When you went out of the grocery business, you told me the year, I don't remember. . .

1971.

1971, right. You sold the building or the store itself?

We sold them both. We sold the business and the store.

What happened to the business?

Well, he. . . well, this is kind of a personal thing, but it's the same. I was still Mayor, (laughter) and this young man was in business in Longmont. He sold his store to a young guy by the name of Ward, because he wanted to go to Longmont and there were two stores up there owned by a man by the name of Smith. One of them was on Coughlin Ave. and the other was way over on the west part of town. And they bought those two

stores. His sister run one of the stores, and he run the other. But in the meantime, before that happened, he decided he wanted to build a store in Lafayette. And he owned a building right down south from where this Industrial bank is, you know on 287. The City of Lafayette wanted him to give twenty feet on the west side of that as an off to get into his shopping center. And he just raised all kinds of Oh Ned that he didn't want to do that. But he decided he didn't want to build a store, so he sold out and went to Longmont. So, I don't know. . . Now he want's to come back. Now I don't know whose the financing of this store down here, have no idea whose financing it. I've heard that's its probable Associated Groceries. But, anyhow, there's a growth period in this town and it's got to be from the desire of the people. But anyhow, the whole thing of it is, that I still maintain if these business and commercial people and professional people would get together and put all their effort there and see the bank, and the bank would put an ad in the paper that says 'we've got money to loan. We want to help you at your advantage.' Now I know the banker, I've known him ever since he's been there, and I've known both of them before because I helped start it, but, if they would just get together and get the cooperation of all these people, things could happen in this town. But they don't seem to have the cooperative attitude, but that's the way it's got to be. They've got an investment here, the people have an investment, they came here because they wanted to come here, if they don't want to stay here all they've got to do is pick up their stuff put the tickets in the - - - and leave, see. But that isn't the way that they feel about it. Cause it's so close that they can go anyplace and shop, twenty-five or thirty minutes. Now you know yourself, I say you do, you can go down here tonight at 4:30 and you can start home and there'd be cars all the way in front of you, and there'd be cars meeting you just in front of you all the time. There's people going all the time. Now, I don't doubt one minute, but what 30% of the business at Safeway is from Lafayette. Now, people from Lafayette wouldn't go there if they had the variety of business, the variety of product that they have, see what I mean. But, you have to have a neat place, have it well displayed, have it fresh, keep it clean, all those things. I have always made it a criteria of business with me, when I walk into a store, whether it's here or there, or wherever it is, I look at the bread rack. If they've got a bread rack the length of this and it's full of bread, I know they've got good business. If they've got a bread rack the size of that, I know they don't have any business.

That's interesting to know.

That's right, you've got to have something to judge by. Now, down here, this might be bragging, I don't know, how can this be bragging cause that's how I felt, we had four butchers that worked for us everyday of the week and we sometimes helped them. And sometimes my head man would be back helping cause he was a good butcher, he and I started the business, see. But I had a butcher that only took care of the hamburger and the lunch meat. And we cut freezer beef the first three days of the week, and after Thursday, well we took to get ready for the business. I've got bills that I can show you that I've advertised tons of beef roast, so you know what I mean, a sale this week. And I always sold chicken practically at cost. You've got to pick out some items to promote your business that is desirable, that is fresh; that is quality. And we sold chickens by the ton. We sold hamburger by the ton, because we made good and if I wouldn't take it home to eat it myself, I wouldn't sell it. So, that's the way you've got to run a business.

Where did you get your meat from? Did you get it from one of the local companies?

H. Out of Denver.

A. The packing house.

H. Years ago, we had seventy deliveries. I have sold pork shoulders in this town for 5¢ a pound.

Oh, I wish we had those prices today!

Well, they're a dollar and a quarter, or a dollar and thirty nine cents a pound, something like that. There's just a lot of unreasonable prices on stuff. Just imagine, a loaf of rye bread at a dollar and twenty five, twenty nine cents, it isn't possible. But, anyhow, I guess there's nothing we can do about it because it's a day of high finance. Most everybody's got some money. And most everybody makes good money, so.

But tell me, let's go back a little bit again, I wanted to cover the churches in Lafayette. What churches were here when you came?

Well, the same churches as are here now. We had the Methodist church, the Catholic church. It wasn't where the new one is, it was down on. . .there's another church there, it's still standing. And we had the Baptist church and this Mexican church that is down here, it wasn't there. But now we have a new Baptist church down on South Boulder Rd. And then we have that church that's in Centaur Village, I guess it is a Luthern church. But, our Methodist church burned. And it was right here over on the next corner where George Sleppy lives.

Ah, where would that be. . .

Geneseo, and what's this street right here. . .Gouch. And it burned. Burned down twice. But it burned and then we had services in the building down here which would be the Rocky Mountian Store was divided into two seperate buildings, two seperate rooms. And we had the west room and then there was a room on the other side where Gambles was. We had all those things in them days. Then Gambles sold out and the church had their meeting in there. Now, I have been on the board of the Methodist church for years, I was lay leader for years, I even preached in the pulpit. And I preach a damn good sermon. (laughter). But, our minister now has been here, I think it's his sixteenth year.

Reverand Griffith?

three or four

Reverend Griffith. And the Baptist church, they've had ~~xxxxxx~~ ministers. The reverend Mayfield was one of the longer time ministers here. His tenure has been in the teens, I would say fifteen or sixteen years. But he retired several years ago. And then I had a man by the name of. . . a minister who worked for us eight years down here in the meat department on weekends and off days and so forth.

- A. We had this minister
- H. I know, but I can't think of his last name. After you get twenty seven that happens to you. But any how, he was a wonderful guy. He was an individual that you wouldn't know that he was a minister.
- A. He was wonderful.
- H. He's a great minister on the pulpit but you put him behind the meat counter and he was a great guy.

When was this? In the fifties?

It was in the sixties, I would say. And then when he retired from here, I think he went as a missionary to. . .ah, I don't know what part of the world, it was, . . . Central America or someplace down in there. But now he's the manager of citizens, he calls them older babies, citizens, seniors in some church in Denver. I had him out here at our birthday dinner and he's a real nice guy. And then we've had several pastors at the Methodist church. They're sent two to four years is all the longer they can stay. But a man, a good preacher, is just like having a good man operate your business. Don't disturb him, let him go, see what I mean.

- A. You know Reverend Griffiths?

Yes, I do.

- A. He's a wonderful man.

H. And that's ah, right now we. . . we're enjoying the good time in the church, Sunday our service was full. But, Bill is not just a minister, he's a community minister. He knows just about everybody, just like he works in this Catholic place over here, whats that?

Sister Carmen Center.

Yea. They have a food program that they contribute to every. . . I think a food. . . one ((??)) will take care of a family of four for a week, or something like that. They take cans and merchandise, stuff like that and then they clear it down there to them. But, its a willingness to want to get along with people. I don't care whether you're a businessman, a doctor or a dentist, preacher or what it is. That's what it's got to be. We took a big jolt when we lost Dr. Gordon from the city of Lafayette.

Dr. Gordon was your physician?

Yes. I remember when he came here. You see the mines used to have two doctors that represented them. Dr. Bradon represented some of the mines and Dr. Porter was down here where the offices are now. And you'd go down and if you worked for the mines your family would be taken care of, the union paid bills. You ordered medicine that was in the days where they poured you out two pills and a white put it in an envelope and sent you home. Well, when Dr. Gordon came that all changed. Dr. Gordon, he was an M.D., would give you a charge. He gave you a prescription you took it to the drug store. And that was a slower time for the physicians in this area. But, I don't, it didn't last long because when I was on the board at Community Hospital, he put more people in the hospital according to his potential population than any other doctor in the county of Boulder. He took care of the people.

When did you say he came to Lafayette?

Oh. . . he came to Lafayette about thirty years ago, I don't know just when, I know Lonnie is about thirty years old and ((Lonnie or is it Ronnie)) was born here wasn't he?

A. Yes.

H. That's his oldest son.

A. He had two sons.

H. He had two sons, one of them's a doctor and one of them's a businessman. I don't know what particular business he's in. But Dr. Gordon is retired. Now he spends his winters in Arizona and he has a home in Broomfield and he comes back in the summertime. And he was one of the original supporters of our bank. He was in the service, he had to go in the service. We tried to keep him out of it due to the fact he was the only physician we had at that time. But in the meantime, he found a man that could come here for him. And you probably read about the kid who killed his parents, the doctor, I can't think of his name. . . he killed his mother and father. Now he's a doctor. Somewhere. I wouldn't want him to practice on me. (laughter).

I read something about this just recently.

Yea, where he recieved his qualifications to apply for. . .

END OF TAPE