

Tape #1089

Interview with Walt (Woody) Woods by Donna Carbone

September 28, 1988

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Alright, we'll start with where and when you were born.

I was born in Gorham, Colorado on December 3, 1916.

Now I just did a mine map here in the library and there is Gorham Mines. Is that in the same area where the mines were?

Yes mam. That's about a half mile south and east of Marshall.

Okay, was your father a miner?

My father was from Florida and he came out here with the railroad. He worked for the Colorado and Southern Railroad and was also a mail carrier. He was a depot agent at the Louisville junction which is south of Louisville and during the flu epidemic there was an elderly bachelor on his mail route and the man was very ill and my father stayed with him and he caught the flu and he passed away from it. From the flu. In what year was that, Woody? 1918.

So he was at that junction. I've heard that junction mentioned numerous times when people talk about the train coming in the Louisville junction. Well the Louisville junction, there was one track went through Louisville and then turned and went over to Valmont Plant and went west into Boulder. Then the other track at Louisville junction went up through Superior and Marshall and went into Boulder. Okay. And that's located, like maybe 300 yards south of the Monarch Mine. Okay, okay alright.

How about your mom?

My mother was born in Canfield, Colorado and her parents lived out there on , oh later. Next they lived out there at 96th and Arapahoe. You know where the Louisville road comes over, right there in that corner for a short time and then they moved to Superior, 2½ miles south and east of Superior and this is where my mother lived then till she married my father. And what was her maiden name, Woody? Wilshusen. Wilshusen? And what nationality is that? German. German. Her parents both came from Germany. And what was your mother's occupation? Was she a school teacher? Well, when my father died she went to school over in Boulder at the old prep school long enough to get a teacher's certificate. Then she taught down in Wiggins for about a year and then over to Deer Trail and then there was a vacancy at Marshall and she taught there in Marshall for seven years and was principal for --- then she married my step-father who is still living.

Alright, now. You said you came here in 1946? Is that about right?

Do I have that right? Well it's a ----. Now were you married then?

When you came. Fern and I were married in 1940. Okay, and Fern's maiden name was ----? Toby. Fern Toby. And the Toby's were from around here. Well they came here from Oklahome in 1935 and then Fern and I were married in the fall of 1940 and we lived in Boulder and I was called to service and the lady sold the house out from under Fern and she had to find another place to live and couldn't find anything in Boulder so she

found a place in a ---- well I guess she came and stayed with her folks until she found a place in Lafayette. Then when I got out of the service why we bought the a -- Greeky Lewis's place and we lived there nine years. Okay, and where was that at? Do you remember? 308 E. Cleveland. Yeah, okay. Down next to Bob Johnson? Right next door to him on the east side. Okay.

You have children, Woody? How many children? We have two children. James K. who is in Omaha, Nebraska with the University of Nebraska and Susan Hudson. They each have two children which made us four grandsons then.

Okay now. Fern, she worked for the paper. Do you want to touch on that any? Well, in about 1962 she worked for the Lafayette Leader. She became the managing editor for the Leader for I guess four or five or six years. The people, I forget what their names were, sold out and Fern then felt that she didn't need to work. Then after a couple of years she decided she --- well she worked for Mildred, for Barber Turkey Poultry Processing Plant as a, what did they call her, well she was kind of an accountant and then she got away from that cause that was just seasonal and she stayed as a housewife then for several years and then became a flag girl on construction. Is that right? And she really enjoyed that. She was in several areas and worked as a flag girl for several years. That's unusual. Well she ---. That's different. Yeah, it was different. That was the whole thing and she enjoyed it and she hated to quit when. But that was about the time Susan got married and things went a little haywire then.

Okay Woody now. When you came to Lafayette, what was the town like? Were the streets paved? Was it still ---? No mam. The streets were still gravel streets and while I was on the town board we managed to get the streets blacktopped and with a lot of resentment. There were a lot of people against it but we did it and picked up and really started the town on the up and up. So how long were you on the town board? Well, I was trying to think. I don't have any records but I was appointed to town board after the people moved or something. I forget what happened. Then I was elected to two two year terms after that. Was there anything other than the paving that stands out in your mind as far as the town? Well we put some better main water piping down Baseline. I remember that clearly cause they were wood pipelines at that time. So we put in new pipelines that furnished the whole southside of town with water. I was on the cemetary and parks committee and at that time we were having trouble getting enough money to keep the cemetary up and the committee decided that we would get the City of Lafayette more interested in it instead of the donations to keep the cemetary up we set up a plan whereby the city would take care of it. Which I think was real good. I had no idea that it was any different. So donations took care of the cemetary? Course now the cemetary lots are much more expensive and that's where the money comes from to keep that cemetary up and I'm real proud of the way that cemetary is taken care of. This year I think was one of the best that I've seen. They worked hard. Very, very nice.

Now on parks. Was the City Park up on Baseline and 287, was that established then or was that, at one time was a swimming pool. Was that right? Was that before your time? The swimming pool was before my time but while I was on the town --- no that's not true. The parks came from the ball park really. There was a ball park put in there before my time on the board and that was the only park in town. That was it? Okay.

So we've covered the paving and the water and the cemetery. This is the first we've heard of this. So there are things that you can add to this. How about the school board? Were you on the school board at all? After I moved to our present location I was appointed on the school board. I served on the school board from that south southern area with Howard Kilker, Ken Brown, Mrs. Hurt and Mr. Angevine was the Superintendent or principal at that time. I served on that and was very active in getting the new Boulder Valley School District in May of 1960 we had an election. It passed. That too I was rather proud of because I worked hard for that, I thought it was a necessary thing. Since Lafayette School District didn't have any money coming in whatsoever except from the Union Pacific Railroad. All the coal mines were shut down and that was the only revenue we really had and course some business but that didn't *amount* to too much so we had a rough time and it helped the City of Lafayette or the school district to consolidate. Is that the Re--- Re 2. Re2 school district. So before we were dependent just on revenue from the railroad and what little bit of sales---. Right. Well the sales tax was very small. Taxes from the businesses. Course taxes from the homeowners and so forth but a ---. I'm sure that helped alot. There were no mines in the school district again' then so ---. Right, that's right.

I know you've been in the union a long time. Do you want to touch on that any for us? Okay. I went to work for the Public Service Company, Valmont Plant in November of 1939 and I worked for them until 1951. At that time I felt that I wanted to get out and get into construction, get outside. I had two and half years of college, engineering. So it all fit in pretty good and I worked with the tools for nine years. A group from the Boulder Carpenters Local came out to the house and wanted me to become the business representative and I got into a little hot water by being a good union man while working for the Public Service Company. I told Fern at that time that I didn't want to -- when I quit the Public Service Company that I didn't want to get too involved in the union, even though I was a good union man. So after a couple of trips, two groups from Boulder Carpenters come out to the house. Fern persuaded me to take this business agent's job. So I went out in the livingroom then and told them I would take it on a hire and fire basis and they said fine. So I was a hired man until the International got ahold of it nine years later and they said that this was strictly illegal as far as the Carpenters Union International was concerned. It had to be an elected man. So I was elected until I retired then. I still had a year and a half to go but because of some sickness at that time I retired. So you were a union man a long time, weren't you? That's 37 years now.

Okay. Now I think too, you were a commander of the VFW? Yes. At the old VFW, not where it's located now. Is that right? That's right. And where was the old VFW located at? When I joined, the VFW was right after I got out of the service and we were meeting up at the Odd Fellows Hall. Okay. Then we got in some barracks buildings and put them up at approximately the same location. As where the VFW is now. That's on Emma isn't it? East Emma? No, it would be West Emma. West Emma. A block west of the stop light on Emma. Okay. We met then in this barracks and later, but anyway, I was commander in 1956-57. And then the new building was constructed? An then later, yeah, the new building was constructed in later years. I think about 1960.

Alright, we'll go back a little bit to what the town was like as far as businesses. Can you recall any? Oh yeah. Okay. Get on to them then. We traded only in Lafayette at Ham Roberts grocery store and also bought all of our clothes from Aldersons. The drug store at that time was down on the corner of Simpson and what's that street, where Aldersons later moved after the drug store moved out of there. Okay, alright. The south and west corner of that street. I can't think of the name of it. I can't either. Isn't that a shame. Let's see, we'll say it's catty corner from where that Trader Jacks is. Right? Yes. It used to be Dow Drug Store. Is that the one you're talking about. Dow's Drug Store. Well, yes. They moved from the highway down to the corner there and then back up to the new building. Okay. Okay. It was Kemp that was the one that did the movin' until he sold out and I think he sold out to Dow, didn't he? To Dow. And Dow moved up there on the highway. And were there Doctor offices in that building at that time too? No, Doctor Gordon had his offices over there on Cleveland and that's the only Doctors office I know of. Just Doctor Gordon? As far as I know.

When Ham Roberts store was here, was there any other stores. Was the company store and all that gone then? No, the company store was no longer there. No longer there. Course, what's that lady's name that takes care of the historical building? Oh, Mrs. Rodrick. Rodrick's had that grocery store. That's right, That's right. Lot of people traded with her and Joe and Mrs. Roberts. Okay. Oh, and there was Clemens Grocery Store. That's right. Clemens down on 287 here? 287 and a ---. I don't remember that street. I don't either Woody. We've only lived here forever. It would be, right now it would be south of the Chamber of Commerce building. Right? Yes. Across the street. So that will give us some idea on the tape. Maybe we can look it up. (Clemens Grocery was located at the corner of 287 and Chester Street).

What about saloons. Was there quite a few bars in town at that time? When I first came to Lafayette there was Tom Treasures and then the James Brothers and Clemens had a little bar down there. Oh, I didn't know that. Now you got me to wondering. I thought they sold beer. I think they did have a couple of tables in there. But that was all. That was the only ones. That was it. Okay.

How about recreation? Were there any shows? They had the theater on Gough and Simpson. Right? Um um. No it wasn't. It was down another block. It was further down from where the old LaFay Theater was? Right. Of course, in the summer time there was the softball games and the baseball games. Put alot of hours in. We had a team down at the VFW and there was the Longmont Aces that were local boys and men. So we had two good teams for years there. Can you recall any of the names of the fellas that played with you. Oh, yeah. Okay. The pitchers that I had, I caught. The pitchers were Paspahallas. I had two Paspahallas from Boulder. Mike Mastriano and Fred Zeike played first, Joe Slavec played second and Tommy Satak played shortstop for us. Third baseman, I can't think of his name, and in the outfield we had the Davis's. Two Davis's. I can't think of the rest of the names. That's good. We had one kid from Detroit, Michigan that lived here for awhile and then he went back to Detroit to his parents but I can't think of his name. I've heard on some of these tapes that they said when the teams from Lafayette went down to Denver there wasn't a soul left in town. There was really a big following at that time. Oh yeah, they followed us all over. That's amazing. Matter of fact, the VFW team which I managed and caught for took second place in the regionals in Denver. Is that right? Yes, in 1952. We had a good team. It must of been because I hear it often, often mentioned in these tapes. The softball and the baseball were big.

Lot of dances? They hold many dances, as far as barn dances, or anything? Not at that time. Everybody went to Eldorado Springs, Erie, Ft. Lupton.

Now was that Interurban running at your time, Woody? It was. When my father died, my brother and I and mother lived with my grandparents on the farm out there south and east of Superior. We lived within a quarter of a mile of the Interurban. So when I started school and my mother was teaching in Marshall and so she said she was just going to take Walt up to Marshall. So I rode the Interurban for four years with my mother up to Marshall and back. Is that right? Yes. Then when my brother, next year he was, he started school the two of us went to Superior. So it would make stops then, regular stops? Yeah it would make regular stops but we didn't ride the Interurban to Superior. It was a two mile walk. We just walked out around. But it went on up into Eldorado? It went, I think it only made one trip a day to Eldorado but it went straight to Boulder and then instead of coming back that way it would go around down through by the Public Service Plant and down in through Louisville and come around that way. They had a ----. The kite route. Kite route. That's right. I read that but I had no idea that it went up that way. I couldn't imagine in my mind. I think the way that worked, that it went up one way and come back the other way and then the next trip it would go this way and come back this way. Just go opposite of the way it had gone previously. Did a lot of people ride that? As I remember, there were quite a few people that rode it. And that was a rail system, is that right, or electric? No, well it was electric, yeah, but it was on two rails. On two rails. It just had an overhead electric.

Talking about electric. How about the plant. Was the plant running when you, the electric plant. The Lafayette Plant? Yes. No it wasn't. It was down. It was down. Lafayette and everybody got their electricity from the Valmont Plant. Okay. Let's see what else we can touch on.

Any other organizations you were on? Any lodges? Oh, I was with the Boy Scouts for --, I have a pin at home, I think it was forty years. My gosh. That's an accomplishment right there. I'm pretty proud of it. Yes sir. The main thing I did, I guess, with the Boy Scouts was we ushered the CU games. The scouts did. J.D. Hutchinson and I and there might have been one more man, I'm trying to think. We took them to the ballgames and they ushered, we all ushered. I can remember that.

How about the dentist, Doc Hurt? Doctor Hurt was the dentist. Everybody got a kick out of him, everyone laughed, I imagine you remember him. Sort of, not real vividly but enough that he was a slender little man. Yes. Doctor Hurt was the dentist and Doctor Gordon was the physician. Ham Roberts was the Mayor of the town when I was on the Town Board. Oh, okay. Mrs. Hurt was the chairman of the school board.

Now the school that you attended, did you say in Marshall, with your Mom, was that a one room school house or was that a ---? It was a two room school house. The first five grades went in one room, the next four -- didn't have a kindergarten, what did they call that -- primary. Primary, first, second, third and fourth was in one room and fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth in another room. But I just attended Marshall that one year and then went to Superior for three years and then moved to Boulder. You said that you had attended college. I went to Colorado University. Up to CU? I went there two and a half years. That was when the times were tough. Yes. I dropped out to make more money to go back to school and never did get back to school. I hear that often too. But it helped me in later life as far as carpentry is concerned. I had a good job at the Public Service Company, the only thing is, it was behind a desk and I couldn't take it. You wanted out. Out in the sun and that. Well I was a carpenter before I went out there and I like construction. Constructions kind of down right now isn't it? It is. It looks like it's starting to come back a little. Good. That's good.

Is there anything you want to touch on, Woody? Anything at all. Well you helped me with more things than I could think of. Oh, I do remember. I wasn't on the Town Board at that time but it was very important when we put the sewer into Lafayette. There was some resentment there that a lot of people resented the fact that it was going to cost them some money to put the sewer line in. That was a big step, a real big step and of course Lafayette has good water. Apparently plenty of it now. Yes, we've had no restrictions, so it must be okay. Before the sewer came in was there just cesspools? Was that it? In that house that I bought down there on Cleveland it had an outside two holer and yes we had a cesspool for the dirty dishwasher and the bath water. So there was nothing until the ---. It was a big improvement. I'm sure. Everyone then put bathrooms in their houses.

At the time, were we already switched over to gas, from coal to gas or were you here during the time that they ---? I wasn't here when they switched from coal to gas. I think I had already moved out there.

I can remember the streets not being paved. Oh, can you? Yes, and the ruts and everything. Yeah. You bet. Yes, I think all of those improvements were ---. Lafayette is a nice area to live in. It is. It's

a very sought after area to live. Apparently it is with the way it is growing. And it's amazing when you stop and think in some of the earlier tapes, how many stores we had. Butcher shops and blacksmith shops and tailor places and hat shops and that and then as the town went on we started losing more and more of those businesses and now we're starting to gain a few businesses back. I notice that.

Okay. Let's see, what else can we hit here?

We're going to talk about W470. W470. That is a needle in my craw. Cause that W470, I think we need a highway like that but the big problem is the open space out here will not let them go through open space and there's a developer that has plenty of land out here on the south side of 42 that they could go through there. As it stands now and if they can get the money, it's going to wipe me out completely. It's going to go through your land? No, I just have seven acres out there but it's going to take the whole seven acres, house and all. So it is discouraging to me because Fern and I built that house. She did alot while I was working, she would go out there and do alot of work and there's alot of memories to that house. Even though it won't be long and I'll have to move away from there I'd kind of like to live as long as I could out there. That's right. That's right. If this passes, if they get money in February, that's the election in February, that will be one of the first areas that they will start building the road from highway 36 and go north and east. I had no idea that that ---, I know, I belong to the Volunteer Naturlists so I know with Rock Creek. In fact I've seen you out there a few times when I've walked down to check on the hawks and that. I've see you out one day, I didn't know if you recognized me or not, I waved to you, you were on the tractor and I thought I probably should have went over. He probably doesn't recognize me. But I had no idea it would do that to you. That fenceline that you were walking it is supposed to be the south side of the right-of-way and it takes 300 feet for the right-of-way, so you see that 300 feet will take ----. That's a shame. Well I think it is. I do to. Whenever I hear anything like that it disturbs me. Course the growth disturbs me because I've lived here all my life. So anytime they do anything. I realize we have to have some things but I think they could take into consideration the ----. Really. There was alot of statements made and I attended alot of meetings of Dr. COGS and the authorities and I went to meetings there in Lafayette, the meetings in Louisville and there were a lot of statements that were not true and that just kills me and I never could tell anybody a lie regardless of how much it might hurt. This developer that has this land south of Highway 42 said that --- well the representative of Dr. COGS told the Dr. COGS Committee that that developer has already bought water rights, water taps and sewer and so forth, future development and I spent a lot of hours digging into this and I found that this developer gave the City of Lafayette \$3000 just for the city to promise them water when they needed it. I thought that was terrible because that protected that developer from running

W470 through his and I couldn't convince anybody and I wouldn't use names where I got the information but I did get some good valuable information. It didn't do me any good. It didn't do anything. The Boulder County Commissioners, they don't have nothing to do with that. They have not joined the a --- that's right the authority nor has the City of Boulder. So this is something else and when this vote comes up in February to increase your license fees \$10 per year to go toward building this highway. Those who live in the county of Boulder, which is me, and those who live within city limits of Boulder will not be able to vote because they're not a member of the authority. Broomfield, Lafayette, Louisville, Superior they all are members of the authority and those are the people that are going to vote. So we don't stand a chance. So you don't have a thing to say. No, they can more or less do what they want. Oh yeah. And that's the hard facts of it. I don't know how a person goes about changing it but you read about it and you hear about it all the time and it sickens you because it can happen to you so fast. Well anyway, that isn't historical. That's alright. It will be history sometime. That's right. That's right. Somebody will be saying well I had no idea that's what that -----. Good.

How about the fire department? Were you ever involved with the fire department? No, I wasn't involved with the fire department. It seems like I was -----. It sounds like you were busy enough.

Fern was in quite a few organizations wasn't she? Well at one time she was in the VFW Auxiliary. She was in the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts in particular and she was on several committees. Oh yeah, PTA when you were in high school, she was on the PTA for several years. She was president of it. Yes, she was quite active. She had a lot of things to do.

One thing that I've noticed as we've gone along on this tape that you were fortunate enough and farsighted enough to see a lot of good things come out of all your things with the school board and on the town board. That's neat. It's good to be able to serve on something and look back and say " That was good what we did." That was good. That was really good. Yes, that's true. That's really true. You get to talking to people, such as this, the good things you remember, the bad things you forget. That's true. It's just like the service. Boy I hated it. I was in the Navy and I hated it and I couldn't get out fast enough but when you get out you remember the good things and forget all about the bad things you went through.

It must of been pretty rough on your mom when your father passed away. Yes it was. Fortunately her parents were living and we got to live with them. That's good. When you were talking I thought of going back and getting a certificate, that was something rare right there wasn't it? At a time not too many people did that. No, that's true. She was a pretty driven lady. My father's parents lived in Miami, Florida and we went down there and lived with them for Oh I think eight months or something like that, just after my father passed away but it didn't work out because mom was away from her parents and it didn't make any difference to my brother and I because we were young enough that -- but it was rough on her, really. She found a good man and married him and she passed away in 1986.

Well your dad must have been a good man too Woody to set up with someone who had the flu like that. Yes he was and he was a talented musician. He had his own band and he gave the people throughout the area lessons on any instrument that they wanted, he could play everything. My gosh. And then he'd go to Denver on the Interurban when he had a few hours to spare and take lessons. He had his own dance band and he played for dances out here at the Grange halls. That's where they held dances then and then I have some old tickets at home where he played for the Fireman's Dance here in Lafayette. Well my gosh. Did he have a name for his band? You know I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you. My mother never told us much about our father. She couldn't talk about him. She was very young when he passed away and she had the two boys and she couldn't, so there was a fellow by the name of Bill Reich here in Lafayette that worked over at the Public Service Company and he used to follow my father around to these different dances. Davidson Grange, the Broomfield Grange, and the Grange out at, well there was Pleasant View out of Boulder and then one out at 95th and about Valmont Road out there. It's still there. I can't think of the name of it but I-----. Anyway, Bill Reich told me more about my father than my mother ever did tell us. It was too hard for her, too painful. That's neat though to know that. Oh yeah. While we were working he used to tell me things about my father and I knew, course mom told us this, that he played every kind of instrument there was cause he had the instruments and we have a stack of music, about three boxes that I'm going to take to Jim the next time I go to see him. He and his wife, they have their own band now. Is that right? I don't know how they find time to play. My gosh. Isn't that something. Went right around. Went right around me. I couldn't even carry a tune. That's neat, Woody.

Let's see, is there anything else? I can't think of anything else. I'll probably think of things after. Well if you do, give me a call and we'll get into it. I think we've got some good stuff on here. Things that we've never had before as far as the cemetary. That's great. Cause see we've not had that touched upon before at all and the way that the railroad with the schools. That's all very good and I thank you very much.

Can I mention one more thing. You bet. This is your show. When I was on the cemetary and parks committee, the cemetary was getting pretty filled up, you know, so we got together and went up there one day and we decided if we'd close up a couple of roads that would create more room so I don't know if you remember those old roads that was in there but we did close up that road that was running east and west. And a road that was running north and south. That gave us a lot more plots. Right, That was another thing that I thought was neat. It was very helpful to the future of Lafayette. That's right. You bet. You know there are a lot of outsiders that would like to have some lots in there. I was up to the cemetary, oh probably two months ago, it was in the summertime, a fellow came over to me, I was standing there by the grave and the fellow came over to me and he said "You know, I'm from out of town and I have a pretty big family and I would like to find some lots in this cemetary because it's kept up so nice". So I suggested he come down to the city hall and by golly a week or so later I saw the man up

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there and he was trying to locate four lots to see where they were located and he wanted to buy them. So I helped him. He was just tickled to death when we found the location and it was a beautiful location. Well good. So he bought it. I have to do that. You mean you don't have any up there yet. No I don't and I better get on the ball because they say that there ----. I think that you can still find them. And my mom has been on me, so I'd say ten years, just to do it and now I have to. I just have to make myself do it. It's something you don't like to think about. Yeah, that's true but those are the things that you have to think about. That's right. That's right.