

I will be interviewing Joe Mathias of 105 West Cannon.

(There is some chit chat in the beginning that is not relevant to the interview)

Oh but the city is in bad shape. Just a minute now....

....what are you looking for?

Oh, you'd be surprised.

....I see you're going through some old newspapers.

Here's the bills of half a month for Lafayette (current edition of Lafayette News listing of city's bills) And read this now.

.....O.K. It's from the Lafayette News and it is dated March 19, 1980 and it is headed "dear editor. On the behalf of the people of Lafayette I would like to know when the bills of the city are going to be published in the Lafayette News. They should be a matter of public record. In Louisville the bills are listed and at least the people there know how much indebt they are and know how the city is spending money. We in Lafayette don't know and we should be told."

What do you think of that? look at the baloney.

...."I would also like to see the citizens ban together to stop these secret meetings. As an ex-city councilman I know those meetings are illegal. Keep the citizens informed. We are taxpayers and we deserve to know what is going on. And another thing, it is illegal for a citizen to serve on the fire department during his term of office as a council person. I know because I was also on the fire department for many years. (signed,) Joe Mathias, 105 Cannon, Lafayette.

Just look at the lies, the baloney. There's more. (Joe is ruffling through old letters, newspapers and notices)

....This is a flyer that says, "Clean up city government" and it is for the council election September 9, 1975.

Oh, that was a better bunch then than we have now.

....you wanted me to read this. It is the Lafayette Leader. A picture of Joe by his truck. what are you doing there?

well they wanted a picture.

....this is from the Lafayette Leader Wednesday, June 13, 1973, the heading is "charter amendments rejected by voters" It says, voters rejected an amendment version to the city charter Tuesday by a vote of 96 to 75. The defeat marked the end of a six month project by city officials and a 21 member charter commission elected in January to revise and update the city's current charter, written in 1958. (quote) 'I think alot of old timers in town must have thought they should vote it down because Mathias had that sign on his truck saying, vote down home rule. Actually, home rule doesn't have anything to do with it," said Vernon Berry, chairman of the charter commission.

They called me old fiesty Joe. Damn right. I was lively too.

.... and then there's a picture here of you and it says, "city councilman Joe Mathias, using a hand-painted sign put on a one-man crusade against passage of the revised city charter in the last few days before Tuesday's election. It was the only publicity effort in opposition to the charter amendment which failed." 96 1-75.

(laugh from Joe) I was lively then and I tell you I could fight too. It's a shame. I hate to see this town go down into ruin. Just through a bunch of men who don't have the brains. Well, they got the brains but they don't know how to use them.

....Joe is looking through old newspaper clippings now to show me articles about him in the Lafayette Leader and the Lafayette News.

Here they're gonna raise ambulance fees and that ambulance belongs to you and everybody else. It belongs to you just as long as you live in this town as much as it does to me. I'd like to talk to this guy dammit.

(Off the subject chit-chat here on a phone number Joe wants)

Another thing, that franchise tax don't belong to us. (by the city onto public service co.)

I've been here since 1910 and I know. That franchise tax that public service company puts on us belongs to them. They're making us pay it. Did you read in the paper? Oh, I want you to do me a favor. Find out from <sup>somebody</sup> someone in Louisville, (at the public service co office) to let you see who is really paying it. Do that and get it to me cause we are not responsible for that tax. I understand the thing and I raised heck with them over there in Louisville and boy, they didn't like it at all. I says, I'm gonna take ya to court. I'm gonna sue them for five to ten million dollars, if I can get a good lawyer in Boulder.

....Joe, most people in town consider you as one of the fierstier old timers in Lafayette.

Oh yea (laugh). Man I kept them alive here for quite awhile.

....Why are you like that?

Well, I can't help it--it's in my body. I try to keep them alive in this town and if I had never had that pass-out eight years ago, I would have half a dozen of those guys ripped by now. That's the truth they're just robbing the public blind. It's a pity. There's people in this town that don't know where to turn. Now you know Lawrence Amicarella, how fiesty do you think he is? He's ready to fight too. He's worst than I. He curses bad. I don't like that you know cause whenever you talk to the public you've got to use a little common sense.

....You wanted me to read this. For the recording, it's another letter to the editor from the Lafayette Times, Page 3, Wednesday, March 20, 1974 and Joe requests that I read this for the recording, it says, " Dear Editor, so you want us to get off your duffs because to quote you the administration says people never come to council meetings to find out what is going on. It is my understanding that when the people do take an active interest in what is going on and do try and attend, notices are posted to the effect that the meeting has been cancelled or postponed. Then when the so called disinterested people

leave council, it then takes up its business. " I'll skip down here a bit. "As far as not being interested is concerned, I feel we are <sup>all interested</sup> in what goes on. Unfortunately we are not politicians and even if we did fill the council chambers we would be unable to stand up and be heard. Therefore when election time comes around we carefully study those who are politically minded--enough to want to run for city government, select those who come the closest to what we believe in and dutifully go to the poles and hope those will be elected. If they are elected, we then trust they will do their darndest to work for the good of the city, eventho they do strike a descending note on occasion. We had one such man on our council--Joe Mathias--at one time and why the townspeople allowed him to slip through their fingers is beyond my comprehension. He was a man who perhaps lacked the polis of some of the so-called educated representatives, but he had a mind that could percieve what was going on and was not afraid to stand up and be heard, if he felt there were things taking place that perhaps <sup>not be allowed</sup> should not have. This did not please the city fathers, however, because he voiced his oppions around to the townspeople and gave us an idea of what was going on. Perhaps he did say 'no' a few too many times, but all too many times he was correct in what he was saying. He has said repeatedly, "they are going to break this town." Was he that far from wrong? Seems we should have been more aware of what Joe was saying in <sup>rather than</sup> ~~stead of~~ sitting back on our duffs and allowing his opposition <sup>the "yes" men</sup> to lead us into this present predicament. " Now, it goes on to talk about the "present predicament" and this wa in 1974. What was she (the author of the letter) <sup>referring</sup> to at that time Joe? Oh, they turned me down in the election there. I got beaten and that is why she put that piece in there.

....You also gave me another article from the Lafayette Leader dated July 13, 1972 and the headline says, "It ain't like it used to be."

I can tell you what happened (why Joe lost the election). It's the Mexicans that caused me to lose out cause I was supporting the Mexicans. Some people got mad and that's why I lost.

....Who were you supporting?

Garcios, or something, he's not here no more. He's gone. And boy I did get beaten. Plus I had all of this other trouble coming up--tumor taken out, gall bladder taken out.

....Now tell me about the Mexican.

Well, I can't tell you much. He wanted to run for councilman, and he asked me if I would support him to get the Mexican votes--and I lost out. It was one of those things. Still, I was trying to be honest, and that's what I get.

....Has there been an anti-Mexican feeling in town?

Well, They had the swimming pool up here and wouldn't let the Mexicans swim in it and pretty near had a big fight over that.

....When was that Joe?

Oh, around 1932, 33, 34..around in there.

....Where was the pool?

\ right on the side of the middle school yard. It was a big one too.

....have there been other incidents?

\ I was against them too to a certain extent I didnt want the whites and blacks swimming together.

....Did you feel then that it should be kept seperate?

\ Well, you couldn't let people know. You had to keep still when you're running for council.

....were there other incidents like the pool situation in town?

\ No I think that was about the only thing, that swimming pool. And you know that stone building (bathrooms at middle school) guess how much that cost. \$11,000. The girls and boy are destroying it and it costs alot of money to remodel it inside. If the town were in good shape they could have kept it up. Even if they have to put some woman with a club in there.

....Let's go back Joe, what year were you born?

\ You won't believe it. Make a guess. Way back now. 1896. I'm 86 years old on the fourth of February and I was born at midnight. And my mother always said people that are born at midnight have lots of dreams--bad dreams and things. I do that is the truth. I can tell the weather lots of times. There's a rough one supposed to come either here or over in Boulder. It just turns the life in me. I've been hurt in the mines you know. There's something in my throat that locks my speech and I feel like I'm in some kind of a big box.

I was born in south Wales. But I couldn't spell the town. They called it Skewen. I couldn't spell it though. That Wales is terrible for rotten names. There was eight of us all together Oh yea. There's that thing up there by the town hall. I hate to mention his name because the people knows him and I were like this (Joe makes a fist and passes finger across throat) ....what does that mean?

\ Cut your throat. He was no good he was rotten. He was the city clerk and he stole \$900 from the town they caught up with him. My oldest brother.

....was that Henry?

\ Yea Henry. He is two years older than I am. Then Bessie. <sup>comes next</sup> She just died week before last. She didn't live in Lafayette, she lived in Laramie, Wyoming. Then Bill in Washington. <sup>COUNTY</sup> Then Margaret, who was married to George Riccard who used to be town sheriff for 10 years. He lived in Longmont. Ricard or Richard. (?) Boulder County sheriff. He just died. Bill <sup>SIMPSON Sr.</sup> comes next, then Gladis Knight in Lafayette on Cannon, then Beatrice, then Tom. Beatrice lived in L.A. Tom died in Westminster about a year ago. My son and brother just died. Still alive there is Gladis, Bill and I. When you get up in age... Bill went off and left his wife with a bunch of kids. I didn't like that. My mother was <sup>never</sup> Hanah and my old man was Jim. He was <sup>awful</sup>. He would haul off at my mother with no provoking at all. I was sitting by him and he knocked me down and I told him, 'wait until I get big enough.' I ran him away from home. I told him don't you ever come back here.

I said you've ruined this house but you'll never ruin it no more cause I'll tear you to pieces. I was old enough then. I was about 13. And he listened to me. I said, 'get out and stay out' and he went to L.A. Every once and awhile he would haul off and hit her for nothing. I think he's crazy. He died when he was 55 and she was younger than him yet. Pretty near killed her. I kept telling him, 'wait till I get big enough' then I did get big enough and I run him out.

...Did your brothers and sisters like you?

Oh yea. <sup>that Henry</sup> But that one, he's rotten to the core. He was scared to death of me. Beatrice and Bessie were my pals. I was the only one in the family that cried after Bessie. Henry died of cancer of the stomach. Tommy died. Max Mathias... then my son Quillon died.

.... Why did you come from south Wales to here? <sup>Belleville</sup> Colorado?

My uncle Joe was here. He was a good man. A religious man. A wonderful man. He died when he was 93 years old. He lived in Lafayette but then moved to Illinois. The old man had asthma and he came out. My uncle told him, 'come out here to this warm weather in Colorado.' You see, it is cold weather back there. My father came by himself on a boat. We come on a boat too. The Empress of Island (?). Geez. That thing was as big as from one end of the town to the other. I tell you those passenger boats are big. When we rode on that ship oh-n-h everything came up but, you know, everybody needs a good throw-up every once and awhile.

....how many days were you on it?

Seven. It came to Quebec Canada and we rode the train from there to Chicago. From Chicago to Denver. Then we took the Interurban train. Boy, that thing could really travel. They should have kept them. We should go back to them. Like an automobile, all that smog is hitting the sidewalk and comes up in the other man's car. It was the interurban electric train. A big coach. It came through Arvada up to Louisville and went around and into Boulder, back to Superior and through Broomfield on back then to Arvada. That thing could travel. That was a site.

They had a steam locomotive pulling the coal from the mines and they had to get the cars and shift them around....

...What was the cost?

75 cents from Louisville to Denver. But the steam locomotive charged us 10 cents.

They always had one train kept on the sidetracks there while they were switching around. Then when they come back, people would get on and they'd have to wait until certain times of the day. They charged 10 cents to go to Louisville and 10 cents to go back. It was all we had in them days. It went through Arvada, Broomfield and into the Union Depot.

....Why do you suppose there was so much fighting between the two communities of Lafayette and Louisville?

Jealousy. That's all it was. But I hauled coal in Louisville and Lafayette. Everybody knew me. They called me ~~Welch~~ Welch. The ones that fought each other they didn't belong

to the union because the union men over there and here, they were like that (sign with fingers) together. When I worked at the mine I worked the 4:00, middle shift, then I come back with a load of coal on the truck--\$4 worth everyday--and I got \$24 and 24 cents a day for seven hours of work.

....When you came to Lafayette from South Wales, where did you live?

You go down Emma Street and we lived down close to the creek there. They put us in an old shack off of the street. Used to be ash dumped down there and sandy.

.... down by the railroad tracks?

We lived about two blocks from the tracks by the Capital Mine. When I first got here it used to be called the Rankin Mine. It belonged to a man named Rankin but then he sold it, and then it was the Capital Mine. And then after we lived there about one year, we got discusted of living down there with so many houses empty up in town and seems like we lived in half a dozen places.

We had a tent in the back of the house and us kids would have to sleep out in that tent in 10 and 12 below zero. That's the kind of a man we had for a father. When my mother died I was paying \$6.50 a month for a house in town here. That's a fact. Us boys stayed in the tent and the girls stayed in another room where my mother was. We were all piled in there like a pack of sardines until I got old enough and put a stop to it. How would you like to have a son that comes home and hands his paycheck to his mother? Ask my sister. Beatrice did the shopping. We were all close together--but that Henry. We had to carry groceries from town down there and the kids all walked to school from down there. It never bothered.

....What did your father do when he came to Lafayette?

He worked in the coal mines but he couldn't hardly do it since he had that asthma so bad. The Capital Mine. I got a job loading coal at 12 or 13. Or was I 10. It was tough work. Throwing that coal quite a ways and putting it in the box. You seen that flatcar at the museum? I don't know if I loaded that one or not. (at the museum)...Some aren't as tall as that you know. If they made them longer and lower it would be better to throw coal in. Some of them are pretty high in the mine especially when the roof is only that high above the cars.

....How many of the mines did you work in?

*That's the only one*  
I got a job in September and the five year strike come on March 31. I was on strike for five years. Say, look at this .....

....this was taken from the Lafayette News/Louisville Times, Wednesday, July 29, 1981.

The headline says, "Heckla house has violent backround"

I was there. Did you see my name?

...July 13, 1972 another article says, Saturday, May 16, 1914 indicted for murder at the Heckla Mine. (Mathias was)

That's news isn't it?

....Tell me about that.

The company, the detectives (company management) had this big fence around us....

(side 2)

....Our tape ran out and I didn't realize it and you were talking about a tombstone out on 287 on the way to Broomfield. The mine was south of Louisville and <sup>there was an explosion</sup> a miner was killed <sup>(in an explosion)</sup> there and the miners paid a Mexican woman <sup>(for the mine)</sup> to close off the mine as a grave in honor of the dead miner because it was impossible to get him out.

\Oh heck, what was the name.

....The tape ran out on the Heckla Mine and you say it was the boys from Lafayette, Louisville and Erie that charged the mine.

<sup>Lafayette is where I was in 1972</sup>  
\We were laying on the bank of the ditch and in order to get us out of there somebody went up and turned the water on the ditch. The ditch was located up by the city water tower.

WED., JAN. 12, 1983



**JOE MATHIAS**

Joe Mathias of 105 W. Cannon St., Lafayette, died Saturday, Jan. 1, in St. Anthony Hospital North. He was 86.

Mr. Mathias was born Feb. 4, 1896, in Swansea, Wales. At the age of 11 he moved to Lafayette from Wales.

He married Nona Gragg in Raton, N.M., in 1922. Mrs. Mathias died in 1940.

Mr. Mathias was a coal miner and fire chief in Lafayette. He also served on the Lafayette City Council.

He is survived by three daughters, Nona Winger of Wheat Ridge, Ann Carnaham of California, and Gwen Sandusky of Arvada; a son, Joe Mathias Jr. of Englewood; a sister, Gladys Snyder of Lafayette; and a brother, Bill Mathias of Northglenn.

A funeral service was held at 11 a.m. in the First Baptist Church of Lafayette, 204 W. Cleveland St. The body was cremated.

Contributions can be made to the First Baptist Church.

Capitol Mortuary of Lakewood was in charge of arrangements.



Continuation of side two of Joe Mathias tapes. . .transcribed by Teri Deane

They got caught in the ditch and couldn't get out and they had to call the rest of us out to get him out of the ditch.

Were you one of the boys that went up there to shoot just for the fun of it?

No. I didn't know they were up there til we were told uptown. See, the union run that town, we were up all:union. Everyone in town was union. And we met and they said, "hey, Joe, there's a guy needs help up there. The guy's caught in a ditch and can't get out. So we had to run through the fields up there. We had two lakes up here, ponds. Two Mexican kids got drowned in one of them ponds. Where the machine shpp is now. . .that used to be a lake where the city has a machine shop off of Baseline. They have a rodeo up there now.

You say that two Mexican boys drowned?

Kids, girls.

Girls?

I pulled them both out.

When was that?

Oh. . .I couldn't tell you what year but I was fire chief at the time. That must have been around '33, '34 or '35.

Were they out there swimming?

They were out there playing on a raft, nobody watching the lake at all. They dumped over and nobody there to jump in and grab them.

What were you doing there?

Well, they called us, the fire department, out there. Here's the firemen.

It's an old photo that says Lafayette Fire Department, Do Not Park. Now, this is located where our fire department is today?

Where the police department is today.

Are you on here, Joe?

Yea, can't you see me standing alone? And my kid that died ((Quillon??)). Let me show you now. This is John Baker, Shiny Bania. . .you go down Simpson St. and you run into them house trailers he bought that place and he sold that place out for three or four hundred thousand dollars. Let me read them from this way . . . This is Jack Davis, Bill Kellet, my buddy, Eddie Waltelis, and that's me there and this is Pat VanDyke, and Shiny Bania, and John Baker, and my kid, Quillon, and the kid behind the wheel is Bill Dillon and my kid is on the side of him.

What year was the picture taken?

Oh. . .I'd have to ask one of the other firemen. I couldn't tell ya now.

This is when you were fire chief?

No, this is the first truck, 1917 truck. It sold for \$500 to Superior, and it it was a good truck. It had a good pump and a tank on it. That was good enough and we were satisfied with it. Look what we have today.

Tell me about the whistle. . .you had bought that or something?

That fire bell belongs to me. I give \$360 for it from the Dally people in Chicago. And after I bought the thing was along 'til ((eina town??)) got into it and I told them to keep the goddam fire department. These other guys are getting a pension and I don't get a dime. I joined the fire department in 1919, and I was helping them before that cause all of us was union and hung around the fire station all the time. That's the City Hall. We used to have two horse carts in front of the Hall there. On the porch they had a platform to come down on. And we had to grab the tongue, a man on this side, a man on that, and three or four men on the back. And it had a rope on it for people to help pull the cart. The cart weighed pert near ten. . .because it had that four inch hose on it and you tried to pull it up that hiss, and we'd call at the kids on the sidewalk, "Hey, get over here and grab this rope." Cause heck, it's hard to pull that thing up that hill. And some of the firemen get mad, "hey get away from here". I says, "oh, don't you chase them kids away, they'll come in handy to pull that hose cart. And lots of times the kids had to take that cart to the fire and wait till the men come. Men were waiting at home so's somebody else would pull the hose cart to the fire. Used to have the red hose cart and the blue one and we used to grab the red one every time. And ring the bell awhile. And that bell was hard to ring. You know where that coal cart is

The museum.

The place next door up and down. Up and down and there was no firemen on the job. I was living over. . .you know where the lumber yard is. You know where that preacher lives, Griffith? Well, before all that was in there we had a house tent, half wood and canvas, and a shingle roof. We had to sell it out. Somebody bought the whole ((??)) we had to move out north of town, just at the edge of town over on Oak St.

What did you move? The tent?

Half of it was lumber, nice lumber and canvas up above, double canvas. That's what they had around ehre, lots of them tents them days. Half tent, half lumber. Now you don't see that anymore. So, anyhow, the house next to the museum caught fire and Ada Carr and the woman who lived in that museum house, Elmo's mother, you know Elmo Lewis. It was long about three o'clock in the morning -- we was living over there by the lumber yard -- I woke up and my ((brother?? mother??)) hollered, "Joe, Joe, there's something wrong over there." They pulled that rope. . .DING. . . DING it was so heavy. And my mother hollered, "you awake?" and I say "yea". So I hollered at my brother, Bill, "come on Bill, there's trouble over there". And we got over there, he was gettin' to be a young man, too. I was about 17, and he was about 14. We got over there and we fetched the firemen out and we rung that bell. That bell was the hardest thing to pull in your life. The women couldn't ring the bell.

When there was a fire at someone's house, was it the person whose house it was that rang the bell?

No. They'd knock at the doors of some of the firemen that was close and then they'd run to the fire station. Just imagine running from way down here and all around to the fire station. And quite a bit of that had gone up. It was the comicalist thing you'd ever seen in your life.

So the whole town helped push those carts?

Everybody was firemen them days. Men, women, and kids was firemen. Because we was all together here.

Did you say you bought the bell, or was it the siren, out of your own pocket?

Out of my own pocket. I was making pretty good money.

Is that the one that is still up there now?

Yea. It's got a crack in it now. I don't know how they busted it. The siren was heavy. The fellow that put it up for us was named Spicket. Oh, him and I was good friends. He was working for the Public Service at the time. The way we blew it ((the siren)) was to push the button and then release it, then push it again, then release it three times. It didn't aggravate the people. But you turn that thing loose up there and it drives them nuts.

I've heard around town that you and the fire department had a little spat.

No. The Town Board. This Bill Kallit started it all. See, he had a friend on the Town Board. I was off of the Board then. Him and Frank Suttage ((Sutlage??)) was on the Board and he was jealous of me being chief all the time. What could I do when the guys wouldn't nominate me? I let the other guys take it. About each one had a year of it. But him, he thought he was smart. I run him out of town one time. I told him, "if you don't get the hell out of town, I'm gonna beat the hell outa you." But this man here was no chief. My kid was just a fireman and Bill Kallit was just a fireman. He's been dead a long time. Couldn't drive a car. He was missin' a little bit, but we took him into the fire department anyhow. Felt sorry for him. The Dillons that live down there, that's his stepson. Married this one's aunt. But anyhow, I let him, Shiney, and Pat, and Walt, and Jack Davis take it about.

As fire chief?

To be fire chief, yea. That's what I didi but he thought he was smart, one of them smart alecks, you know. He went to Boulder to live. But anyhow, him and Frank Suttage got together and there was something said about me and my kid heard it and I told them to keep their fire department. That's how I got out.

And there was something about the hose getting cut?

Naw. Nobody cut the hose, they just left the hose up there. There was supposed to have been a fire, but it was a flase alarm and somebody pulled the hose off. And I came back to the station with the fire truck and I didn't know that the hose was missing. And they had to go and pick it up. That's when I quit.

What year was that, Joe? Do you remember?

Oh, around '57 or '56.

How many years were you on the fire department?

I joined in 1919, and in '57 was when I quit.

How many years were you fire chief?

Oh, I can't figure now. . .

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Was Henry with the fire department?

No. He was in there for awhile before I got on there. But he was jealous of me 'cause everybody pulled for me. John Baker was on the board at the time. He went back East.

You said that the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company was called the Northern Coal Company?

Yea. Northern Coal Company was the first and then Rocky Mountain Fuel Company after.

Do you remember what year they consolidated?

No, I don't. That's something I don't remember. That's after the strike was over, I believe.

Can you tell me something about the old Rocky Mountain Company Store here on Simpson St.?

Did you know the town can't buy that?

Why?

They won't sell any property that don't concern the Town Board at all. When anything has to be done, it has to come to the vote of the people. Listen, I want to tell you the truth. All the duties they got is to receive bills and pay bills, stuff like that. Buy machinery and all cause you got to work. But they can't go out and buy property at all. That's the God's truth, I know that to be a law.

Did you used to go to the store?

Oh, yea. After. . .the scabs had it. That's where the scabs was trading. When the strike was on, we never bought there. The union store was across the street from it. We bought at the union.

And the scabs went to this store?

Yea. This is all different now, you know.

Why didn't you still go to the store during the strike?

Well, scabs scabbing at the mine, they'd go and buy their groceries there. And us union men, we'd go and trade at the union store.

Who owned the union store?

Oh, the union. And they had those ((can't understand what is said here)) men run it as manager. His name was Jack Green. He's been dead oh, twenty five, thirty years. He's a Johnny Bull, born in the British Isles.

Did you ever go in the basement ?

Before the strike, we used to go and trade in there and after the strike we traded again in there after everything was settled. But I tell you, when you get to thinkin' of all i've seen, got to have a good memory on you. I hit many scab on the sidewalk. See there. . .

He's showing me some bulges on his hands.

a lot of them would run off and hit them sideways. That's how I broke my hands.

5  
Why did you do that?

I didn't want 'em scabbin'. If they didn't get no scabs they'd have to sign up and we'd all be working.

Were they local?

No. They came here from West Virginia. There's a big truckin' outfit right close to it now, since it's all been disbanded.

Are you talking about the one in Broomfield?

South of Louisville this mine was. But down in the mine it went as far as Broomfield. That's why they left his body in there. And they paid the woman, his wodon, so much and then put a stone there and a fence around it.

Do you remember what the initiation was like for the firemen?

When you joined in them days, it cost you a dollar to join.

Did they have any kind of ceremony for initiation?

They'd swear you in that's all. Oh yea, they'd dump water or whiskey or beer on some of them for the fun of it. I joined the fire department in 1919 but I used to help them before that cause they couldn't get along. Most of the miners was in the mine.

What kinds of things did they do to initiate the firemen?

Well, when I joined, they put stuff on your head and different things, you know. Each bunch had a different idea, you know. Strip them naked and run them down the street. But we all knew each other. We was all firends. Everybody. If a woman could run, she get to grab that hose cart, too.

What did they rub on your head? Do you remember?

Oh, no. . .something some of them guys had. And then they'd have lunch. Mostly beer they'd dump on the head. People didn't have money to buy whiskey.

Did you say they stripped them naked and ran them around?

They put shorts on them and ran them down the street. They'd wait till it was cold weather when they'd initiate them. They'd never chase me away. They always had me and I'd grab hold of that tongue if I got there in time. But you take a run from here out there and then grab hold to that cart and go downhill, and them guys in the back keep pushing, we'd have to haul and quit pushing cause that thing is hard to hold back. Got steel rims on the wheels and all. And then the frame, all steel.

Do you remember the lodges?

Oh, yea. The Odd Fellows and the Rebecca.

Did you ever belong to them?

I belonged to the Odd Fellows and quit cause I had to work night shift. I couldn't attend the meetings. When Bill Moon was buried they put one of them things, collars or whatever you call them over my. . .and Ham Roberts asked if he could put one over me, I says I have'nt been in the lodge for years. Bill Moon, Gus Wanake, Mr. Autrey, they were old time Odd Fellows.

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You say that when Bill died you were to wear what kind of garment?

It's a . . . like a thick ribbon with the IOOF or whatever you call it. Gus Wanake was just buried, he was one of the first ones, and Mr. Autry, he's gone and Joe Kneebone belongs to it and he lives in Broomfield. He was sitting by me when we buried Bill Moon. Ham Roberts is one, he's been in there a long time.

Do you remember what the initiation was like for the Odd Fellows?

Well, they didn't give me the works. They was short of men and I got in. How in the devil I got in there I don't know. Oh, I tried an excuse to keep away and they wrote out the card with my name on it. I was supposed to go later and get initiated. I didn't but they called me out for it anyhow. I kinda worked a scheme on them.

What year was that?

1918, I believe it was.

What did they have for initiation for the other Fellows?

Everyone had a different. . . you know. I never attended the meetings, had to work night shift. That was the trouble, you know.

I had heard they had some kind of old stuffed goat up there.

Oh, right. The goat you mean? I didn't see that. But they found some stuff down there, a coffin down there. They'd make them lay in that coffin. Lots of guys there like that. Scared. Nothing to it, you know. The dead won't hurt anybody.

Do you remember the bowling alley?

Oh, yea. You know that big store down there, Ward's store? Well, the first building there, that used to be the barber shop and the bowling alley.

Where was that again, Joe?

You know where the grocery store is down there, Ward's store? Well, there's a driveway between that and that building, it was in that tin building there where you drive into Ward's where they park up against the building. Used to be a barber shop in there and a bowling alley.

When they tore the basement up on the old Company Store they found a bowling alley there. Do you remember there being a bowling ally there?

My god no. I don't remember that bowling alley. Must have been before my time. Or after that, cause I went away from here too, you know. Went down south. Worked around ((Conni??)) in the mine and around ((Agila??)) I got fired down south. I worked in the mine and they was stealing the weight off the men. There was a Welshman, he was super, and I yelled about him stealing the weight and I was talking about it htere. We used to stay in a boarding house, fifty dollars a month. A big bunch of men stayed there, and I mentioned about him stealing and the super heard about it. Somebody told the tale. I know who it was. And the next day I was in the mine and he come up from down below to where I was drivin' the mill. Says, "Joe," he says, "you don't like the way things are run in this mine, you can get your time any time you want". I says, "yea? Well, I'll work the day out." He says, "you get in there and work the track". And I says, "go to hell." He was eating dinner down at the boarding house -- he didn't have no wife cause no woman could live with him -- I says, "when you come down to the boarding house, I'm gonna

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kick the hell out of you". So out I went. I left the mule there and out I went. I was about a mile from the mine, ahlf a mile anyhow to the boarding house. I was waiting out there, it was close to dinner time. So I look up the road, up towards the mine and here come a man, it was the fire boss. I says, "where the hell you goin, Bill?" He says, "I quit too." He was Welsh, I was Welsh, the super was Welsh, and there was two timber men on the outside, Welsh. And he says, "What you waiting here for?" I says, "I'm gonna beat the sonofabitch" excuse me talking like that. "Aw," he says, "let him go. Let's go get our time." We went to Walsenburg in his coup and I got a nice job driving a mule. Two weeks later the mine blew up and killed the super and nine men. What'd ya think of that? Blowed the plum up.

What mine was this?

Southwestern. Just about a mile out of the town of ((Agulara??)). That was around 1924 or 1925.

And he was cheating on the weight of the coal?

Yea. The man on the tippie. The guys had little checks they'd hook them on the inside of the car. And they was stealing so much weight. Hand one man up there. They didn't check women down in. That's what we was trying to do, check women. They were robbing the men blind.

Did that happen here in Lafayette very often?

Well, yea for quite awhile until they got organized. But anyhow, that's what we was fighting for a raise in pay, nut much. And to put a check woman. We'd have to pay for the check woman out of our own pocket, and watch that they didn't steal any weights off. That's why we had to put a man up on the tippie. One man worked for the company and another for the miners.

How many children do you have?

Five.

What are their names?

One lives south of Lakeside, one lives in Arvada, one's in the cemetary down there, died three years ago, a boy. Girl lives in California, in L.A., drinkin' and smokin' and working in a tavern out there. And I got one boy livin' south of Denver around Littleton. His name is Joe. He went off and left a family too, and I don't like it.

Do you have any children living in Lafayette?

No.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE THREE:

What did you do in Lafayette for entertainment?

They had a picture show here. You know where that platform is on Simpson St., That wooden platform that's under them buildings?

Where the Council Chamber is now?

Yea. Used to be up on the corner. Somebody burned it sown seven years ago. That's hte only thang we had. Well, they'd have a ballgame on Sunday and the miners and the railroad bunch, some from Louisville, Lafayette, Superior and the area. They used to charge us ten cents to go in. Had a big fence. On the northeast edge of town. Had a nice big ball fence. Some of the guys would sell tickets. And good ball players, too. It was entertainment, by gosh.

Did Lafayette have a town team?

Well, part Lafayette, and part Louisville, part Superior and part Erie. And all them are dead and gone. I could name all of them one time. But you take take fifty, sixty years ago, and that's a long time to think!

Did they play games against Louisville?

Denver. Denver had teams all around. And they'd come out and they'd get good experience from these guys. They'd come out and it would cost them so much on the train. By gosh, I've seen some damn good players there.

What about this picture show? What kind of movies did they show?

Oh, I don't know anymore. They were good clean pictures. No foolishness. Great big people on that screen. Most of the men, they'd pass time up in the saloon drinkin' beer. But you never see them fighting or killing each other. There was one union man killed by some Mexicans. Some guy threw a rock at a Mexican man and his two sons. They were vicious looking. And they stabbed this guy to death. His name was Ted Richley. Right there by the stoplight. . .

Oh, at the printing shop. Morell Printing on Public Road.

Yes, right in there. They arrested them but somebody threw a rock at them you see.

The union man threw a rock at the Mexican?

Yea, and the wrong man got killed. Richley got killed for Jack Rease. Jack Rease is the guy that should have been killed.

Jack Reese threw the rock?

Yea, and he's been dead for years, too.

And the Mexicans killed. . .

They took them to court in Boulder. But there were witnesses around to say that somebody was throwing rocks at them. Thought they were coming here to scab in the mines, that's what started it. a ime of the strike. That's been a long time now, 1911, I believe.

Were many of the scabs Mexicans?

No. They were white men. There weren't many Mexicans them days. They were mostly down south and in Mexico too.

You were telling me the last time I interviewed you about a man driving a mule team that fell into. . .

A farmer come into town with a nice mule and horse with a wagon, you know them hardwagons they had. And when he got started in this alley. . .



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Where was the alley?

Down here off of Emma St. You go down Emma St. to the first house trailer. It was in that alley. I was uptown at the time. When I got down there was a bunch of people standing around and I says, "what's comming off around here?" "Oh, a mule went down in there , a farmer come into town and just had time enough to jump out and jerk the harness of the horses on one side and the mules on the other side. And they kept going down and down in there and got covered up.

What did they fall down into?

Used to be an ash shaft of a mine. Should. be the Senator mine or the Simpson mine. Just filled up and they never bothered no more. That was in about 1911 or 1912

Who was the man?

Don't remember. He's been dead. . .farmer out there used to come in town. Took all day to come in from out East there. And then he'd come up to the saloon and get his drinks and chew the rug up. They never used to get real drunk, just stand around and talk. Bettin' and all that stuff. People had rabbits and pigeons them days. I had a duck, and a big bunch of chickens and a big bunch of rabbits and pigeons.

Did they ever gamble?

Oh, yea. Oh, yea. Not for big money though. Just for the small amount, for the fun. I never played cards in my life. I had no desire for it at all.

Were there any fights that erupted from the gambling or anything like that?

It wasn't real gamblin'. They were pals. They played for chips or a glass of beer. They didn't have the money to gamble with like they do in the places with big gamblin' joints.

I remember you telling me that you dug a lot of the graves at the Lafayette Cemetary.

Dug many graves for nothing and acted as pall bearer for the public. You'd always see Joe's face in the cemetary. I worked in the cemetary of top, cut the grass, watered the grass. And I dug graves. Ten dollars a grave. Lots of graves for the strikers. I wouldn't charge them a thing. After the strike I dug a few. It was a heck of a job with a pick and shovel.

When did you see the most deaths? When were you the busiest digging graves?

In the wintertime, when it's cold. They won't stay alive. I see a woman must have died today or yesterday. A fella called me up before you came and told me that Lawrence King, he had a stroke awhile back and she died of a heart attack. I know that King pretty well, used to haul coal with a big truck around here from here to Denver and Public Service.

Do you remember when there was a flu epidemic in town?

Oh, do I! Man, man, man, that was terrible. The first guy that died, his name was Ernest Johnson. They were dying like fleas, never saw the like. I had a touch of the flu too, but I survived. People have no money. When I buried my mother it cost \$175. They want 2,000 to 2,500 now.

How did your mother die?

She had the flu.

She died during the epidemic?

Yeah. We was living on Chester St. in the third block off of the highway. Paid six and a half a month for rent.

Were you digging graves at that time?

Oh, no. After the strike was over I went back to the mines. I worked all over up in ((?)) county and all over. Worked up in Ratka ((?)) in the summertime. Then I came back here. I always sent money home to my mother.

You told me you used to make coal deliveries with your truck.

Yeah, yeah. I'd go get two ton or a ton of coal and deliver it to the the people and they'd pay me. Oh, yeah that was pretty popular then. I give one big truck away for nothing, to McDaniels down there.

Why did you do that?

Well, he ran that ((?)) joint up there on the corner on Main and him and I and his Mrs. we was all pals. And the turck I had in the yard, I wasn't using it anymore. Only had 50,000 miles on it. He worked on it and cleaned it up and got it in great use now. Put it in the parade whenever they have parades.

Where did you deliver the coal to?

The houses. They had coal houses in the back. You don't see coal houses anymore. Some of them have coal houses yet. They had a little window in the back and I'd drive up and unload the coal into it. then the woman would come out and pay me or I'd go when I had time to collect my money. I'd pay for the coal and they would pay for the coal and delivery. Coal was 3.75 a ton. And I'd charge a dollar a ton. . .no, two dollars a ton I believe it was. Yea, two dollars a ton. And they'd have two tons it would be four dollars. But when I got that job on the ((?)) I'd go out about one-thirty in the afternoon. Go to the Eagle Mine and load up, and I'd take it over to the mine and I'd wait for startin' time. Then I'd come home, wake up oh about six in the morning, get my breakfast and go and unload that coal. Then get ready at one-thirty and go out the next. . .I kept busy all the time. And I got 24 dollars a day at it.

So you worked full time in the mines and also did the deliveries?

Um hum. See, that's why I worked this day and night shift. So I could go and get the coal. And I'd take it home. The Eagle mine was here and you had to come up and go this way to the Lincoln mine, east of Erie about two miles.

Do you remember what the Great Depression was like, Joe?

Well, they didn't have presents. Lots of people didn't know Christmas was around 'cause they didn't have no money. Oh, come you know would work for the farmers. A dollar a day. How'd you like to work for a dollar a day?

What did you do for the farmers?

You know, they cut the wheat, put the sharks up to hold like that, or throw them in the thrashing machine. It was a job I didn't like. That machine kept running fast, you could play out. Then I worked one day or two on the section. Dollar a day. Oh, that's a tough hob, working on them heavy rails. Oh, God, we've seen some tough times. I misses many a meal them days. Related to this Kellet, his uncle.

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We'd go out and hunt for rabbits all day out here, miss our meals. And his grandmother, I used to visit with my friend, she'd fry potatoes. Bread and potatoes. Boy were they good.

Tell me about your truck. You used to drive your truck around with signs on it.

Yes. Signs still on it yet. This pickup? Yea it's still up in the garage there.

What does the sign say?

Oh. . .haven't looked at it for a long time. Don't they have one of them pictures in the paper here?

Here's one from the Lafayette News and it says, "I Protest Chlorine In the Water"

Yea. Now you got it. You know that's hard on people's kidneys that chlorine? I think that's what's causing this arthritis.

Where do you get your water?

Eldorado. I go up and get 30 gallons at one time. Five gallons fro a dollar. If I'm feeling good, I go over to Boulder and see Rex Scott. I got his picture here. There was a judge that got on the television and says you can't terminate public drinkin' water. Take twelve people to the doctor. Sick. And you had different sickness. Would you prescribe the same for one as for the others? The medicine for you wouldn't be the same for me. Same with that water. They have no business terminating. Canon City turned it down twice. Was in the paper. And there is the gas and look out. . .you aint supposed to have that stuff in your stomach.

You were on the Council what years, Joe?

The last time I was on from '69 til '74. But I was on years ago.

And you were thinking about running this election also? 1982.

Yea. Got a big bunch of names on the petition. I can't take it. This black lung is giving me the devil.. It's been a killin' me. Hurts clean through. If I climb up the step-ladder, it hurts me. I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't drink tea or coffee, don't drink milk. Mild sours in my stomach.

You are pretty vocal about the Sunshine Law.

The Sunshine Law was passed by the State Legislature either '73 or '74. Just before I got off Council. And I raised hell down there. They wanted me to go in the other room and I says, "No." I says, "the State passed a law that you can't have no ((??)) and I don't believe in it. "You go to hell," I says, "I'll report you to the Secretary of State."

This was when the Council was having the secrecy.

Yea.

What year was that?

'73 or '74. All you have to do is ask the State Secretary. It's in the books down there. You can prosecute the town. And I was going to do it. Oh, I had big fights with that. Johnny James called me up and says, "the District Attorney and I would like to take you to lunch." I says, "Johnny don't you bribe me, I was elected in this Council by the people and by God the reporters are going to be

in there too." Yes sir, and it's up to you reporters to get together and notify the Secretary of State, you got that right.

How did the other Council members feel about that?

Well, Pat Reich, she was on my side. But the rest of them, oh, come on in, I had it stopped for awhile. I says the reporters got to be in there, 'cause if we know if the reporters gets in there they'll report it and we'll know what's going on. But that Ferris, oh, I wish I was young, I'd just like to hit him.. And his mother-in-law is one of the finest, Mary Bassaro. And I called her and she says, "when is this damn town board gonna stop doin' what they're doin'?"

Were there any fist fights when you were on Council?

Well, the day I was elected Tommy Lopez, he was on the board and he was running again, him and I had a fight up there in front of the fire station.

How come?

He says, "I'll flack you. And I says "you'll like hell flack me." And then he wanted to shake hands. He spent \$900 on a house he had got without reporting it to the town. You got to get a permit, and he and I got inot it over that. The woman who lived there told me. I says "you owe the town a building permit." Seemed like he got on every election-time he run. I tried to stop him from gettin' on there, he was the crookedest bunker that ever lived.

How long was Tommy Lopez on the board?

Oh. . .he was on quite a long time. The Mexicans would go down there and lots of whites would vote for him too. And he's as crooked as they make them.

Do you remember some of the businesses that were in town? Like what was the Lafayette New like? Do you remember when the town had its first newspaper?

The newspaper used to be down there. You know, that Dollison building? Used to be the printing offices were on the side there. The guys name was Guinup. He's been dead for years. He was a union man.

What was he like?

Just a nice white man. A good ((??)) that's what he was. I was a good friend. Then, one doctor, doctor Porter, he was on the side of the scabs. Dr. Preding and Dr. Bingham, they were on the union side. And they've been dead for years. But that Dr. Porter, he did doctor the scabs. He was the best man they had in here: Used to charge you a dollar to come and visit. Used to be they come and visit you. Now you got to go there and pay.

Did he doctor scabs when the other doctors wouldn't?

Yea. He'd doctor anybody that called him. He doctored the scabs, well you couldn't blame him much, you know. Anyhow, he was a good doctor. He had one yey. Always smoked a cigar. He kept the cigar in his mouth all day, chewing it more than he did smoke. Dr. Porter. and Dr. Braden owned this house. After he died his daughter got the house and was drinkin' and some Jews saw the advertisement and the house was sold for taxes, \$300. And me livin' next door and didn't know it. That house over there Tommy Lopez bought. They should give it back to the people's kids. I don't believe in that dirty rotten stuff.

Do you remember if there was a creamery in town?

No. . .there was a laundry in town over on Oak St. But not one of them. You could go to any store and buy it ((cream, cheese)) the Company Store, Union Store, Johnson's down on the crick, Lee Baker up on what-dya-call-it, and Tom Johns up here on the hill, just small places. And people likes cheese. I can't touch it.

What do you think of the changes in Lafayette since when you were small; how the whole area has grown so much?

That Home Rule I fought putting that in this town. We've had trouble ever since that was put in here. It's ruined this town. And Ham Roberts came from Missouri and put that on there with the rest. The Lion's Club and the Chamber of Commerce has ruined this town. And I don't give a damn whether they like that or not. I'll smack them in the mouth if they come talking to me. And I was gonna put that in the paper. This Home Rule and Chamber of Commerce this town's going to hell.

Why don't you like Home Rule?

Home Rule? They can do as they damn please. And the people have no rights. The way it is we're run by the state. And you got to bide by it and if not they get you kicked off. I was going to Boulder and have the judge make an injunction kick these guys out for voting. . .now what was I going to say. . .oh yea, for secret meetings. The reporters got to be in the meeting. Boy, if you talk to the Camera guys they'll say Joe Mathias, he's all right. They put a new pipeline in up here way out of town. They had to pay the farmer I think it was \$20 or \$50 to run the pipeline throught their property. Now, I voted 'no', but three or four dozen people got a permit to put the pipeline. You gottaput the pipeline out on the highway. . .

END OF SIDE THREE

SIDE 4

You never went to school in Lafayette?

When I was four years old. . .and I never came back.

What happened? You say your dad. . .

Well, I disobeyed him one night and I stayed out late around the house and they went looking for me and he went to bed. So, the next night, I was in bed and he hauled off and hit me right there. Broke my nose. The bed was covered with blood. And my mother go and get him arrested. I was just a small kid. And I've had trouble ever since. And I couldn't go back to school cause I couldn't keep my eyes open. Teacher looked at my eyes and said, "Joe, can't you see?" and I says, "no". But I didn't tell them what happened, I was too small. But my mother did go and see the superintendant of the school and found the teacher and told him what happened.

Now, here in Lafayette you say there's no need for a City Manager?

Pay that man 38,000 dollars? And they need to pay the bills. It's been about a month now since he raised his wages, they voted. What's the matter with our town board? And they're in one heck of a shake for money. Ah yes, I read in the Lafayette paper that someone said they only had a thousand dollars or ten thousand dollars in the kitty. When's this gonna stop? What's that guy doin that said he wished Joe Mathias was here?

Oh, he was complaining that the City annexed a parcel of land for a chemical company out here.

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We don't need that stuff here. It's gonna kill people. We've gotta stop this rotten filth. Somebody's gonna get a kickback. When I was on the council, the district attorney wanted to move the town down by the stop light. I says, "you will like hell move the town. We don't need to move it, we don't have enough facilities to take care of it. New business.

Who was that who wanted to move the town hall?

Alec Hunter. I was gonna whip him in the hall one night. I told him in the day, "you're not gonna move down there. We don't have the facilities. We don't want no more building. And look what they're doing. Somebody's gettin their pockets full. I'm telling the god dammed truth. They're robbing us blind.

Where did they want to move it to?

You know the stoplight going to Louisville? Way down out of town.

South Boulder and 287.

It had something to do with all them houses down there. I tried to stop it, but they wouldn't back me up.

How is it they decided not to move it then?

. . .they wouldn't fetch it up in the meeting. But they were in favor of all them houses and that's why all the houses. . .we don't need that stuff. Look at the water they're taking; takes a lot of water. Oh, you know what I'm doing?

What?

Gonna take my truck when I get a chance. Gonna fetch rocks. Put rocks and not use any water.

Oh, on your lawn.

You take a thousand people, put rocks out there, look how much water you'll save. But why should I go buy water when I got water? Just think of it though. But that guy over there tells them a time. I wish he'd tell them some more.

Who's that now?

Your boss.

Oh, Percy Conroe.

What's his name?..

Percy. Percy Conroe of Lafayette News.

When he gets mad, he gets mad. And I'll bet he gets mean when he gets mad. How many's working over there?

Not too many. One in this office in Lafayette. And then there are. . .

Didn't you quit and go to Longmont?

Yes, now I'm with the Longmont Times. . .

But we need you. You got more spunk than anybody on this.

Have you met Marcia, the new woman?

Yea, I met somebody. You're still with Lafayette?

No. I'm with Longmont.

Oh. That bunch likes me, up there. Did you ever ask them if they know that Welshman; boy he's fighting for us. Yea, you're darn right. And listen, do your best. Attend every meeting. Tell people. Like that guy wished I was on. . .oh. . . if that don't bother me. I wanted to run on it so bad. And I'd a got elected too. . .oh. . .man there'd be hell poppin'.

Joe, I don't think you told me about your wife. What was your wife's name?

Nona.

What was her maiden name?

Nona Gregg. She's been dead forty years. Boy. Talk about fight. Man, I wish she'd a been living when I was on the board that time. She'd a go out and fight. She done everything. I bought a typewriter, it's in there. Been used twice. Bought that right after she died. I was gonna buy it for her, cause boy, she had a good hand. Good speller she was. I mean she took care of everything.

How did she die?

No blood. I'd taken her to Colorado General, you see. And, oh quite awhile before that they said she was anemic and give me a card. So, I was going to Denver with the big truck, doing about 25, 30 per hour and something picked us up and turned us back the other way. And she got a cut right here. Took her to the hospital on a Monday and she died on the following Saturday or Sunday. And the doctor was coming out the door and I was going in and, county doctor, you know, everything was county, and the doctor says, "joe, your wife just died," I says I had a card from the Colorado General that she's anemic. "Oh, for God's sake, why didn't you tell me," he says, "I'd of saved her life, all she needed was blood." One's supposed to be. . .Just that, no blood. She went to nothing you know. And she was a big strappin', you shoulda seen the breast on that woman. She had a beautiful breast, now. And when she got mad, she got mad. I got run into one time down in Westminster. A Jew was turning and he run into my car and he butst it by whatdycall? I sued him, and he took up bankruptcy. And I caught him one night coming home. That was long after the operation was over with. I took him and I beat him. I beat him, I took him by the collar and there was blood running and people could see I was trying to kill him, and he stopped the fight.

So your wife died in a car accident then?

Yea. Just a little cut there. But something picked us up. Farmer came there and says. . .there's the old road out ther you know, cause I never drive that truck fast, bout 25, 30 miles an hour. Farmer came along and says how the hell did you get in there? I says, I don't know. There was a fence in there, the same distance in the front and in theback. I don't know if it dumped over or what happened.

Oh. The car lost control.

No. Something put us and headed us back the other way. I was going that way and it headed us that way.

What did you hit then? A fence? What did you hit?

Nothing. Something put us over there. But I don't know if it dumped over or what. My youngest son, he's dead now, was on her lap. He never had a scratch. I never had a scratch. She jsut had a little scratch here. Here time was up. I can't figure, it scares me to think how in the heck did I get down with that truck. The farmer says "how in the hell did you get down that way?" I says, "I don't know". He scratches his head and says "This is the funniest wreck I ever seen. Something picked you up." Sent me over there back the other way. Let's see now, let me show ya. We was pointing this way, see. The truck headed that way, just the same distance in the front as in the back. Just bent one fender. So, I musta done it. Must have dumped me over. How in the heck did I go over and come back up on the side, whe sitting in the seat? Can you tell me what the devil happened? It scares me. I got up and went around and it hurt. She couldn't talk she just showed me how. And others came there and they called up the patrol. No, there was no patrol them days. They called the Sheriff. Brighton Sheriff. That was in Brighton County. And he came over and examined. We left the truck there, called Keller's garage and left the truck, but we called the Sheriff first to come and examine. He says, "That ain't no wréck, how the hell did you get tha way?" I says, "Sheriff, I don't know." It don't look good to me this is the funniest thing I ever seen in my life. Didn't bump nobody. There was hardly any one on them days. Forty years ago.

Was she born in Lafayette?

No. In Osawaname Kansas.

How did she get to Lafayette?

She? They had a farm down by Trinidad. Their dad come with them. There was two girls. Gertrude was one. She died couple a years ago. She died a horrible death. She was smokin' and smókin', and oh, I bet she been to the hospital two, three dozen times. And she was a helluva nice woman. I was taking her from here down to Trinidad. I took the cigarette lighter out and the ashtray out and she couldn't smoke. She told everybody dow there that damn Joe took the ashtray out. My buddy, Walt Tilley, he was smokin' and he and I run around together and he quit smokin'. And he was smokin' all the time. Somebody says to him. . . is a good buy and he says I feel wonderful, riding with Joe, that's why I quit.

What are your kids like?

My kids like? Like somebody else. Ornery buggers. I tell you they don't give a damn for me by right. They don't come up and help me. I done all this myself. Panel that and the bedroom. That's hard work, pütting up that by yourself. I'd only been out of the hospital six months when I done that. I had to cut that stuff, you know. Yea.

Did they go to school here in Lafayette?

Yea. And then the two oldest ones went to school partly down in Trinidad. They went down to stay with their grandmother. She wanted to coax them down there, that's what happened. Left me with a young boy. And he's in his grave.

This was after your wife died they went down to their grandmother?

Oh, yea. After she died. Oh yea, or they woulda never went.

You seem to be able to read well.

Oh, yea. I can read good but I can't spell.

Did you teach yourself how to read?



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Listen. I was standing there ten years, no about eight years ago, and a guy by the name of Joe Monemayer came to visit me. Firend of mene, and he wanted something and I gave him the keys to the garage. I was feeling fine. . .no, no, the first time I passed out, I was going to California and I took the two girls with me. Came back and my daughter wanted me to go with her, she was suing the old man for divorce. He was an alcoholic and making his own wine. And she was scared and wanted me to go down with her and we went out shopping in Pueblo it was. And I bought twenty dollars worth of groceries cause I had money, and I paid the bill and after we came home to my daughter's house, and I was standing near the lounge, sat down and I passed out. For twenty hours. The kids was in the dining room and they started screaming, "Mama, Mama, something's wrong with grandpa." And she come in, started screaming, ran out into the street and they called the ambulence and took me to the hospital.

What was wrong with you?

Well, when they got me to the hospital, I was out about twenty hours. And they examined me, put the light in throught my privates and found out I had a tumor. That's the starting of my trouble. So, I had to stay there and they discharged after being in there fifteen days. I come up and I called my oldest daughter and says "Lonie (??) I think I'll go down ther and see Dr. Guern. I walked in there and he looked at me and he said you're going to the hospital right now, you're dying. You'll be dead in two days. So they took me over there and took this tumor out of me and I don't know how he knew I had an overenlarged tumor. How in the heck did he know. But, boy it scared him. He said, "Joe, you go to the hospital right now," says, "do you got a way over there?" And I says, a daughter of mine will take me over. You should have seen how I looked in fifteen days. I was under 245, 250 pounds. I was dyin, I was dyin. That's why I don't have enough flesh on me. I'm light right now, honest to God. So, I wonder how the heck he knew I had that tumor in there. Year after that, I passed out again. On a Saturday, in the summertime. I was tidying up the house and I went to lie on the bed. I says, I think I'll lie down here til after dinner time when the ballgame was on. Never did see the game. My daughter's youngest daughter came to visit me. Had the screen locked and the door wasopen. They pounded on the screen. He's in there, something's wrong. So she got in some way and she run out screaming. People come rushing in, they got the ambulence, took me to the hospital and I was out for twenty hours. And then that Montemayer came in to get something from the garage and I was there and I passed out and that guy ((Can't understand this in here)) he's dead too, died of cancer last year. And this joker was scared and he do htis cross business and I woke up and said, don't you do that with me again. I ain't no religious man at all. I says there's a spirit someplace and we don't know who it is. And I asked thatspirit in my own way to help me. So, anyhow, he didn't know what to do, he called ((Bane??)) Bane says, oh, better get a sign. See, this signhere? If I pass out don't take me to the hospital. I got one in the kitchen and that's what happened. They took me to the hospital and this county commisioner woman, who is resigning, husband give me some white pills. The rest didn't give me mothing. And that's been eight years ago. But I can't eat everything. I got vitamins and pills I can't take. Can't take nothing.

How did you learn to read? Did you teach yourself how to read?

I just learned it without going to school. And that brother of mine, he had a good education. But ever since that dad of mine broke my nose I've been in trouble.

Do you remember some of your friends you used to hang around with in the early days? Are they still around?

No. Bill Lewis is dead. Pete Harrison is dead. Walt Tilley and I, we still, I don't know why he didn't show up yesterday or today. When he goes to the store

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he buys two dollars worth, and I always go to the store to look at cowboy hats, cowboy boots, and them ((charts or chaps)) you know. So, he'll be here tomorrow. If he isn't do you want to go shopping with me? Heck yea, I'd go with ya. Don't have nothing to do.

And he's a friend you used to hang around with?

Yea. He's the best mechanic around this county. He works with the farmers. They call him up and he goes and works at the farm. He don't charge them, they know what to pay him. Oh, I go with him everyday in the summertime, out in the field and it's so hot. I can't stand that heat. And he don't clean up just right to suit me. But he wants me to go with him.

Was he a member of the lodge around here? Did he belong to any of the lodges or clubs?

No. He don't belong to any of them.

You belonged to the OddFellows, but did you belong to any of the clubs. The Lions, or. . .

Mineworkers. No, I don't have any use for them (Lions) they just bust every town. They are in every town and that's what breaks the town. I'm telling you the God's truth. They're breaking every town. Paying that man and the treasurer. We don't need no treasurer. If I was going on then, I'd make a motion that that clerk had got to step off the chair and take care of these bills and things. I'd take the money after the day is over and have a policeman guard it over to the bank with the money.

Now. Let me ask you and see if you remember. When you first came to Lafayette in 1910, what businesses were in town? Do you remember what businesses were here?

What businesses in the town?

Way back in 1910.

Anybody could get on the council then. People didn't want the job.

No. No, I mean what shops.

Stores? Shoe shop, grocery store was the Union Store, that company store was the Company Store, lots of different stuff; Lee Baker grocery store on the highway.

On Public Road?

Yea. And Clemmens didn't come til late. He had a store down near the grocery store in the next block on the end. Tom Jones had a ((Drug??)) store. But when I come here, there was two or three. There was Johnson on the creek; Lee Baker; Company Store; Well, Company store hadn't started yet; that big stone building, this building here, that was about the biggest store around here. People did most of their trading in there before the strike.

The Company Store. What was in this building before the Company Store?

It was always that way.

Well, you say that when you came here. . .

Yea. When I first came here, that's where everyone was dealing before the strike. When we'd work for the Company, we'd go there to cash our checks. It was a big

store, had rooms upstairs. Oh, there was a dentist up there. He's been gone from here years and years now.

When you first came here, it was the Company Store?

And the bank was on the side. On the west side of it. Did I tell ya about the bank? That was the crookedest, nearly broke the town. This town went broke, you know. Once or twice. And this Ham Roberts has it in a halluva shape now. That damn home rule, that's what ruining this town, that home rule.

Did the bank ever get robbed?

No. They never robbed banks and them things them days. Listen, they have a City Manager, 38,200. There's a treasurer there, City Attorney, and some others drawing big salaries. Now, that's got to stop. Just giving the money away for nothing. I'd like to go down there with a mob, march right down there and say all you guys get out. But the girl is taking in the money and paying the bills. I'd tell that Beverly, you got to get up there and take care of this business. You're elected by the town board. You have got to put a stop to lots of this foolishness. Tell people they got to work for their living.

Now, Joe, what did your family do on weekends? Did you go out on trips or have picnics?

Stay around in town here and in the summertime, wait for the ballgame. You know that 10¢ game. Lots of guys would go fishing around these lakes. They'd walk. You know where the Stanley Lake is? You know where Arvada is? West Arvada. I and another fella, Dillon, used to walk there and back to fish. And that's a heck of a distance.

How far would you say that is?

Oh, that would be about 20 miles down and 20 miles back. Yea, I guess it would, you see Arvada is quite a ways from here. Broomfield is seven miles. And it's south of Broomfield. We enjoyes life. Lots a guys went hunting for jackrabbits. All the fields was open them days. It's hard to remember all this stuff, you know.

What did your kids do for fun? Your children?

My children? Oh, they had lots of fun with other kids. When they was small this town was we knew everybody. Nobody knows you now. The ((Creeds??)) and the ((Crossies??)) used to come out here in front all the time. Since she's married to the knothed, they don't know nobody. Let's see, Mrs. Mathene on the corner, Jimmy James next, and this new woman, I don't know her name, but she's pretty friendly, cross the street there. And I know the ((Creeks??)) but I don't know them two there and I don't know the Mexicans and them, and I know these people right here. There's good neighbors next door.

Was there a newspaper in town when you came here?

Oh, yea. Guinnip was here when I came here. Mr. Guinnip, yea, on the corner. You ask anybody else and they couldn't tell ya it, bet Elmo couldn't tell ya it.

So he was here before you were? The newspaper man, Mr. Guinnip?

Oh, yea. On the cornere there. And they had a pool hall down there. And one undertaker, I believe it was. There was one up there by Dan Jones' livery stable, and one down there around the corner where Guinnip was. I used to be pall bearer most of the time. There was one on Main Street too. It moved from the corner to

Main St. Then they moved up by the livery stable. Across from where the town council meets now, used to be a building there and big long livery stable there all torn down

Which livery stable was that? Who owned that?

Dan Jones. Joseph Jones and then his son Dan run it. A big livery stable down in the next block where that other building on the side, that nice building that's been remodled in the middle of the block. And the old man like his whiskey and he had horses and all for people. And she hated him drinking his whiskey and she'd find the whiskey in the manger and she took a neck yoke and hit the old man over the head with the neck yoke. Oh, she was a mean bugger. He was part Welsh and she was a part ((johnny bow????)) and when that ((johnny bow)) got mad, well, I guess she meant it. And another thing, there wasn't a bit of cement or black top here, it was terrible, honest to God.

END OF SIDE FOUR

Side 5

We were talking about the dust storms. You said they used to be so terrible you couldn't. . .

Oh, they used to be terrible. They don't blow like that anymore. Pebbles would hit you in the face, especially when you'd run up there get the cart and run from here to there. And three feet of snow in 1913 or 1914. I shoveled some snow on the street and it took me three weeks to get it so that people could pass, teams you know, wagon.

Do you remember any of the big fires in town? How about the one on Main St., here on Simpson?

Well, that big store down there, Franzes Store right you know where that Alderson building is? Across the street there. Used to be a big two story. One of the lodges was in there. Franzes Store they called it. It caught fire one Sunday morning, and the big grade school, it was on Sunday too, I'm not sure, it burned down. Somebody burned that school so they could build some new ones.

Who do you think it was?

Oh, must have been some of them big shots at the school. They didn't want that school anymore. The high school was there, the grade school and the kindergarten all in one building.

They say that it was arson, that somebody did it on purpose. Do you know who it was?

Oh, They couldn't put their hand on the one. Some person out of the school. They didn't want that anymore. And then they add on these others. I tried to stop lots of this school building. Signs you know, then I took petitions around. Yea, I was writing petitions. People want me on the town board they could write me in if they wanted to.

Did they do that? Were you ever elected as a write in?

No. I got some write in naems, told people I was gonna be voted in, but. . .if they'd do it now, I couldn't serve because that thing starts to hurt me.

Joe, what do you think of the town's future? What do you think Lafayette will be like in the future?

Going to the dogs. People have to pay more bills. Because they're forcing it on them. That's the truth. Looks bad, looks bad. Them guys don't know what they're doing. Why should we have. . .when I served before, I served for nothing. The last time I served, they were paying nine dollars to the town board, and I give them my money back. And people says why did you give the money back? The damn City Manager will take it and spend it. So, I took it. And look what they're getting now. Years ago they used to work for nothing on the town board. Only one that got paid was the clerk, the City Clerk.

Do you remember what law enforcement was like in Lafayette? Way back in the early days, did the town have a sheriff?

No, the town had a Marshall, jsut a Marshall

What was his name?

Jack Cassidy.

And when was that?

1910, 1911, 1912. Great big, heavy-set Irishman. He was a good man, too. When he'd grab a man, boy, he'd go to jail. He had a jail one of them places with bars and big locks on them. Threw them in there then took them to Boulder. It was the county that prosecuted them in those days.

Where did they have the jail? Where was that located?

Right in the town hall in the back there. Yea, they put all them stalls upstairs and downstairs. They had no business putting that building in there without the people voting for it. This town belongs to the people by law, but it aint anymore.

Did this Cassidy ever run into any particular trouble?

Cassidy? You mean. . .

As a law enforcement, did he. . .

He was the Marshall. Had a great big star on there. He was a nice fellow, too. Well liked by people. Jack Cassidy. After the strike was over, he quit and disappeared. Well, he was getting up in age too, you know. Lots of people moved out of town. Oh, it was fun jsut the same. If somebody got in trouble, lots of people were around to see what's the matter, if you could help out. It's pitiful how the town's going to the dogs. Oh, I can't stand paying that bunch sitting around up in there.

Who came after Cassidy then? Who was town Marshall after that?

Oh, who the devil was it? By God, that's hard for me to answer. My brother, he was Clerk in Marshall, one time. Heck they didn't need a Marshall, mostly a Clerk. Ray Nobley was Clerk up there when I was sworn into the Fire Dept. His name is on my petition, you know, certificate or whatever, they call them. And he's dead. Aint hardly anybody around here anymore. That's a fact. My sister, and ah, Channel people down there and McDaniels, Aint very many.

How about celebrations in town, what were they like?

We never had no celebrations for people, no.

How about Christmans and Easter?

Well, just people at home. They never bothered that I know of. Now, they go take ((??)) of everything now. Let's see, Harry Flynt was a cop here. There's been all different cops. I heard they got seventeen cops here. Where in the heck is all the money coming from? Ask yourself, use common sense.

Cerra Flynt. Was that the name you said?

Harry Flynt. He was here with a motorcycle. Oh, he was a rowder. Oh, he would race that motorcycle and they would raise hell with him. Well, he's got up in age now and he's cooled down, but he wasn't a bad fellow, he knew everybody and everybody knew him.

What year was that?

1926, 1927, 1928, and 1930, 1935 in through there. This Stallcup used to live here before he had the job of cop. We don't need that stuff up in there paying them, what is it 28,000 or what? Look at where that money is going. That franchise money is supposed to be going into the town. From the company to the town. To pay the bills. But they won't listen to me.

Is there anything else you remember about the early days you want to mention?

Oh, you know how it is. I'd have to sit around and think. Oh, it was fun. It was a great old town. Yea, we'd walk out in the country for a walk and never notice at all. Go out after jack rabbits. And they're tough to eat. But lots of people would eat them, boy they're tough devils. but I had my own stuff. And I'd say, if I was on that town board, tell people to build nice houses and raise chickens. I like to hear the rooster crow in the morning. You know every piece of meat you eat they go and stick a needle in it. That's why I can't eat it. And you know I heard on television that oil is dangerous to cook with? Your body don't need that oil.

END OF SIDE FIVE ((rest of this side is the same as on side six -- Council meeting.))