

Recording of Leland Moore, July 25, 1974: ~~47~~ 1013

Well, you said you wanted my birthday. I was born February 23, 1907, in Litchfield, Nebraska. That is a very small town on the edge of the Sand-hills. Then very early in life we moved up to the Platte Valley at Deering and we lived in Deering and Scotts Bluff until, oh, I was about 10 years old, I imagine. Then we moved to Ogalala, Nebraska, where I spent my high school days. Then after graduating from high school, my father.....I should say that at Ogalala, he left there and came to Colorado when I was in my junior year so I stayed there and went to school after he left. And so immediately after graduation I came to Colorado. My father lived at Limon and I went to Flagler and worked in a lumber yard there. My father had been a lumberman and hardware man all his life so it was kind of natural for me to step into the lumber and hardware business. You know, you hear it over the table every day and you naturally absorb some of it so I was a fairly decent hand, as we say, as the old farmers say, I was a pretty good hand when I was just a boy. So I worked there and was sent by the company I worked for to Merino, Colorado. That yard was sold to another company and I, of course, went to work for them. When I was 21 they sent me up to Weldona, Colo., to run a lumber yard there for the company so I went up there and spent 9 years. I'd always wanted to work for myself so in the efforts of trying to raise money just after the depression; it was pretty hard. But finally when Mr. Eddert down at Broomfield, Colorado, loaned me the money with what little money I had, which amounted to \$1800, I moved to Lafayette and I bought the lumber yard here and I spent....\$10,000 is what it cost me for all the real estate and the lumber and all the equipment. That sounds rather strange now in these days of inflation. I was 30 years old when I came here and I've spent the rest of my life or 37 years here in the lumber business. and I have no regrets about it. We all think of the wonderful things that we could have done if we just had known, but I've had some wonderful experiences here.

The mines were.....the Columbine Mine was still working here and the miners.....we depended mostly on the miners for our stock and trade. The agriculture or farmer business was never very good because we were surrounded so by so many good towns such as Brighton, Longmont, Boulder, and Broomfield. Although we did have some farmer business, we depended mostly on the miners. Of course, along about 1940 or sometime during that era, the mines kind of petered out---one by one they just went by the wayside. No other mines were started because the gas was coming in. For a long time people were patriotic about not putting in gas because of the coal miners. They didn't want to do anything that would hurt the coal miner, but finally that feeling diminished and pretty soon here in Lafayette we had gas. Even the coal miners put it in. But Lafayette never seemed to falter from losing the coal miners----they all went to work in Denver or Boulder or other places and and Lafayette has always, it seems to me, been a better town each year. It has never gone backwards. I've never seen a time in Lafayette when you could get rentals until now. There are a number of vacancies around here now because of all these new apartment buildings. When I came here 37 years ago I tried to find a place to rent. I looked and looked and this house that I live in now was the only place that was available. The man who ran the lumber yard prior to my coming lived in this house. I could rent it but the lady wanted to raise the rent by \$5.00 a month and I thought that was pretty bad so I was looking for something else but I never found it so I rented this house. I've lived in it ever since. I bought it after I'd rented it for about 3 years or something like that. But Lafayette has always been a good town.

I think of the many people who have lived here and have made a wonderful living and a fortune, in some cases. I think the biggest trouble with Lafayette has been that many of the people that worked here lived out of town. They came here and made their money here, but they wanted to live in Boulder or some place

else so they didn't live here. That hurt Lafayette as far as the social and the churches would have been better and the social part of Lafayette would have been much better if those people would have lived here, because they were usually bankers and doctors, etc., who would have been a great boost to the town. But nevertheless Lafayette has been a wonderful town and it has been good, awfully good to me.

When I first came here there was a WPA program going on putting in curbs and sidewalks. There were no curbs or sidewalks around the house that I live in or the lumberyard. (E.A.: The WPA put in a lot of the sidewalks and curbs here then?) Yes, you paid for the cement and they did the work. Then later I was on the town board, a couple of years after I came here, and the WPA program was still on, and I remember we bought a rock crusher and gravelled all the streets. I remember we thought that was wonderful, we put in 6 inches of new gravel on every street in town. We thought we were doing a wonderful thing and, of course, we were because at that time we had mud holes around town here. There was one outside the lumberyard that just stood there. We'd had a rather wet summer and the hole stood there for so long that we put up a sign "No Fishing" in it. We thought this new gravel was a wonderful thing and, of course, it was.

We've always had good water here that was brought in from Boulder Creek, but we didn't have a sewer system. We later put that in, you probably remember that. There was a lot of opposition to it. I don't know why, but people sometimes seem not to want to do something because they don't want to spend the money. But, of course, we have a good sewer system now and, of course, it was quite the same with paving, as you remember. When we tried to get pavement there was a long, long fight about that. The opposition organized and had an attorney and it was carried to the Colorado Supreme Court. Finally we got it paved and, of course, everybody enjoys it now, because in the old days, when a truck would go by everybody had to keep their houses closed up because of the

dust problem. (E.A.: I remember how dusty it was, it was terrible some years.)

So the town has progressed and I'm sure it will continue to. This building program that has been going on for the last several years around town and the land that has been annexed (the city limits are over close to the Louisville cemetery now) and I'm sure it will be quite a large town sometime or another whether.....as I look back on it, everyone attended football games and the local dances and things of that kind and we used to have soft ball teams and hard ball teams in the summer-time and the townspeople were really great followers and they were worked up about that. Now the town is so big and so many things going on that that's all lost and I wonder if that is good. But, in any event, the town is progressing wonderfully and I have no regrets about it.

I've been a member of the town board and I'm a member of the Lions Club. (E.A.: Were you ever mayor here, Lee?) Never mayor, no, I never got to be mayor. I think I served 4 years on the town board. (E.A.: How has the town board changed with the say it is now? Did they have the same structure with the exception of the city manager?) No, no, of course, we used to have six members, I think, on the town board. They were elected at-large. And a mayor. I think the mayor was elected at that time. That remained the same. We had an election every two years and everyone was elected at the same time. We seemed to get along pretty well, but when we decided to talk about paving, we couldn't get the money unless we could guarantee the last 10% of the bond. You can't, under the state law, you can't set up a sinking fund for that. So we went to home rule for that reason. That is when the set-up changed and, of course, we provided for a city manager form of government. There was quite a little opposition at that time led by Dinsmore to make it a strong mayor government instead of a strong council government. I wonder now if he wasn't wiser than the rest of us because you know we've had quite a bit of trouble with city managers. I wouldn't want to

go into that because I wouldn't know any more about that than you do. It's just a question of whether the city managers were wrong or whether it was the city council wasn't giving the supervision. In any event, the new home rule has great advantages over the old set-up that comes through the state.

My wife just handed me a note here to remind me that I served on the rationing board, on the local rationing board during the war. I was on the county board of zoning and judgment for a number of years, from the time it was first started until about four or five years ago. Then it got so big that I just couldn't devote the time to it. I am, of course, a member of the Methodist Church and I've been a member of all the offices there in one form or another. I'm not saying this to brag, I'm just making a statement. (E.A.: That's the things I want to know, Lee.

Did you ever know Mrs. Lafayette Miller?) No, I never did. I knew both the Miller boys, of course, but she was gone before I got here. Of course, I've known many of the old-timers. Joking with somebody the other day, I said I knew more people up at the cemetery than I know that aren't up there. But many, many people.....Ben Cundle and Jay Culverson and Roy Green and many other people who were business men here are gone. Now it seems rather worthy old-timers now. Cliff Alderson quit, Ham Roberts quit, and I've retired, I guess it is our turn to be the old people and go on. The young people coming on, of course, think it is right. They have these new ideas and they were the same ideas that we had, but they oftentimes can execute them better because maybe the money is available. I think it is great that each generation discovers these things and does its best to make a better town, a better place to live, etc. I just believe that, regardless, Lafayette will be a fine little town.

Of course, I'm afraid it will become like Los Angeles or some of the big towns in the east and Lafayette will just be an area of Denver. It is growing so fast that it won't be too long. (E.A.: We have raised almost 2,000 people in

a couple of years. That's quite a few. We're over 6,000 now.) I think probably when I came here, I would judge it was around 2,500. Big families and lots of people lived in each house. It's unbelievable how many more houses there are. Between '37 and '42 there were lots of houses built and yet the population didn't change very much. You will remember the big families that used to be here, the Bruggers and the Beraneks and it wasn't uncommon at all for people to have 6 to 10 children and they all be at home. The school, for a number of years, remained the same although the town kept getting bigger all the time as far as the living units were concerned.

Lafayette, as I have known it, is about gone. I read the paper and there's about half the people that I don't even know. Of course, out here at Stone Henge and Brownsville and all those places have Lafayette addresses, even, I think, Shannon Estates. If you figured into the population of Lafayette everyone with a Lafayette mailing address the town would be really large. (E.A.: I would imagine it would be close to 10,000 that way.) Yes, I'm afraid so.

There certainly isn't any comparison in the library that we have now with the library I knew. When I first came here, the Wednesday Study Club operated the library and it was really sad. They had dues of 25¢ a month, or something like that, and they'd have a penny drill or something where they'd put a little money in and that's all they had to buy new books with. They'd only get half-a-dozen or maybe ten books a year except for what somebody would donate. Maybe somebody would pass away and they'd leave their personal library to the library and, of course, as you know, only a small amount of a personal library amounts to too much. But, anyway, you took it on when it was in that condition and have built it up to where it is now. You are certainly to be commended for that. I don't know much about libraries. The only part I know is from the year or two that I spent on the library board. But I'm sure that it is a very fine library for this size of town. (E.A.: We now have over 17,000 books and we checked out

365 books on Wednesday of this week---in just one day.. In the record when I took over, there was 252 books. That was the biggest month they'd ever had. They'd checked out 252 books on one month. We are now checking more out in a day than they checked out in a month. So it is being used, Lee, and all the people have helped make it what it is because every member of the library board have contributed so much and all the people in the town.)

Well, it has all been fine. In leaving---I'm leaving Lafayette strictly because of my health. I hope that I will feel better and that is the only reason I'm going. I hope I'll have a few more years out there that I'm sure I wouldn't have here. In any event, I'll always remember Lafayette and the people in it because they've treated me wonderfully. I worked pretty hard but if it hadn't been for the people in Lafayette....your family, for instance, when they built that property up there in your end bought most of that material from me. I was just a little guy here with not much to sell and I had to run someplace else to get it. They could very well have traded in other places. When I came here Mr. Steinbaugh in Louisville had most of the business, and people just traded with me because they were trying to help me. I appreciate that and always will. (E.A.: Well, it's the people that make the town, Lee.) That's right. Lafayette is a good town. It has been a good town for everyone who has lived here that I know of. Even now, the people who live here are high income people, lots of them, most of them, I would say. There's always people who aren't. Most people who live here are draftsmen and skilled people.

So that's about it as far as I know. (E.A.: Well, Lee, I'm so glad we've had this talk. I wouldn't have missed it for anything.) I'm flattered that you'd want to talk to me about it. (E.A.: Well, you are an integral part of Lafayette, of the growing and changing of the town. That's what it's all about. There wouldn't be any history of a town if it weren't for men like you who make it that.) Well, I think you are doing a wonderful thing because this

the people if they're interested in going back can get these tapes of old Frank Miller, Ben Cundle, and others as they come along. I think it's wonderful to have a record of these people. (E.A.: Well, so far we have 11 of them and then I have one of Ben Cundle that's going to be given to me by the television studio that they took. I didn't get one of Ben before he passed away. That was a "oh, I'll do it tomorrow" sort of thing, you know, procrastination.) Well, he was a pretty sharp old boy for a number of years. He remembered (I've talked to him, of course) he remembered the early days, the strikes, and all those sort of things.

(E.A.: How did the Columbine Mine trouble affect Lafayette?) Well, there was still quite a marked-----I don't have the word for it, but when I first came here there was people who disliked the Lions Club, for instance, and it was very often that you would talk about somebody and they'd say, "Oh, he was a scab." It seemed to be that that strike just sort of split the town up the middle. The reason that people hated the Lions Club, it kind of represented the business part of the town and they thought that the business people had aided the owners in the mine because they wanted business, of course, and they didn't want the mines closed down so they kind of welcomed the people they brought in to operate the mines. For a long time, it's all gone now, as far as I know, but for a long time there was lots of resentment between people who were strikers, people brought in to run the mines, or company people and for a long, long time there was real resentment here. I didn't know it, it was so nearly gone, but every once in a while, I'm thinking of one fellow in particular here, he still lives in town. I was talking about him one day to some fellow, just visiting about something, and he said, "Oh, he's a scab. He was a strike-breaker and they brought him in here to break the strike. I haven't anything to do with him." This was some 20 years later, you know. (E.A.: It carried over for a long time, didn't it?) Yes, it did. But I'm sure that's all gone now. There's so very

few miners around any more. Of course, that was bad. They killed some people, shot, etc. One of the Kellers who lived here in town, Mr. Keller was killed over there. I think they killed about three people and, of course, that is quite a tragedy. (E.A.: When they started moving houses from the Columbine, did that help out your business? They moved quite a few of them, I know.) Yes, they did and, of course, they fixed them up. Some of them are real nice houses now. Yes, that helped. Lafayette was always-----you know when we came here there was always old houses around here. As these people began to prosper they remodeled their homes. Sometimes they put in more money than what it would cost to build a new house. That was the case, I'm sure, with your father-in-law. He put more money in that house than he could have built a new one for. And although it is a wonderful place now.....of course, even if he had built new, you have to continue to spend money. Kelly Foster down here, they've remodeled that house down there two or three times and each time it cost him several thousand dollars. I would say, he probably spent two or three thousand each time, and when I came here you could build a new house for about \$3,500. (E.A.: I know that Dad put over \$8,000 into that house.) I tried to get him to build. He lived at Fredrick at that time and I drove over to Fredrick and visited with him two or three times and I tried to get him to build without moving that in here but he moved it in here. He sure fixed that up nice. You see, \$8,000 in those days would have built really a nice house. (E.A.: I know Claude had saved all his money and he built that house for the folks, you know, and he never wanted them to build there but they wanted to because their friends were there. But one thing I've always heard them say, Lee, was that they wished they'd have taken your advise and built on the other three lots. They'd have paid for themselves through the years and that's what you told them, but they didn't think at the time that it was good to rent. They'd had poor rental experiences from a house they owned in Denver and so they were leary about taking the advise to build on the other lots. But I'm

sure many times they've wished they had.) Well, of course, sometimes it's hard to comprehend something that someone knows, but anyway, they got a nice home out of it and I guess it doesn't make any difference in the long run.

(E.A.: Well, I certainly do thank you, Lee, for this interview and I hope you have a wonderful life out in California.) Well, thank you, Effie, I'm flattered that you would want an interview. I'm sure our hearts will still be in Lafayette, but it's a move of necessity and we'll really enjoy it out there, actually. We're going into a retirement community there. We spent two months there last winter. There's everyting that you would want to do---you can dance or go to Bible school or whatever you want to do. There's something going on all the time. You can square dance, they have regular dances, you can play pool, bowl on the green (they don't have regular bowling), they have three swimming pools, shops for wood-workers, and shops for lapiderry work, any or all of different crafts, basketweaving, leatherwork,. We enjoyed it. The people are all about the same, they aren't there to prove anything. They're all people who realize where they are in life. They're all very nice people and I'm just sure we'll enjoy it. (E.A.: Well, I'm just sure, too, Lee. And thanks again.)

This recording was taken at the home of Leland Moore, 107 East Geneseo, on July 25, 1974, by Effie Amicarella.

Leland Moore

Leland H. Moore, a former resident of Lafayette, died Friday in Hemet, Calif., where he had made his home recently, following a lengthy illness. He was 68.

He was born on Feb. 23, 1907, in Litchfield, Neb., and was married on Oct. 2, 1966, in Page, Ariz.

Mr. Moore, a Lafayette resident for 36 years, was active in city and county government for many years. He was a member of the Boulder County Zoning Board, as well as a Lafayette City Councilman. He also served on the Library Board and the Parks and Recreation Board. A retired lumber dealer, Mr. Moore also belonged to the Lafayette Lodge AF & AM, (where he was a past master) the Consistory in Denver, the Lafayette Lions Club, IOOF of Lafayette and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce.

He also belonged to the First United Methodist Church, where he had been a trustee for many years.

He is survived by his wife Frances; his mother, Darlene Moore, Denver; two stepsons, Roy Roberts of Longmont and M. Leland Roberts of Arvada; a daughter, Barbara N. Moore of 833 Spruce St.; a step-daughter, Phyllis Copeland, Santa Fe, N.M.; two sisters, Wilma Moore of Denver and Eula Moore of Independence, Mo., and two grandchildren.

Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday in the First United Methodist Church of Lafayette with Dr. William Griffith officiating. Interment will be in Lafayette Cemetery. Contributions may be made to the building fund of the First United Methodist Church of Lafayette. Crist Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.