

# Oral History - Edwin A. Sanborn

Interviewed by Bob Hult

August 19, 2002

This is Bob Hult and today is Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, and I'm with Mr. Ed Sanborn at his apartment in Englewood, Colorado and we're going to be talking about his earlier experiences in Park County.



**Ed, can you tell me where and when you were born?**

I was born on a ranch about 3 miles down Tarryall Road from Jefferson, on November 11, 1917.

**So you grew up on this ranch.**

I grew up part of the time on the ranch, however when I was two years old my mother became postmistress in Jefferson so I spent a lot of time in Jefferson and a lot of time on the ranch. Also I spent a great deal of time in my early years on what they called the "bonus place" on the lower Tarryall which is the place where Tarryall Dam is

located now. And I don't know if I should talk about one experience I really remember when I was about six years old. It was my birthday and I spent the week before school was out and I was with my grandparents on the ranch and it snowed and actually the snow was knee deep on the horses, we made it half-way to Jefferson on Christmas day because my mother wanted me to be home on Christmas day. We got half way there by noon and we decided the horses couldn't make it. So we went back. Actually they were pulling a sled.

**So that was about 1923 then?**

Roughly, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. '23 or '24. I'm not absolutely certain. ... but the weather was different then it seems.

**That's interesting, because I've had several people tell me the same thing that they recall winters and summers being cooler and wetter.**

We were baling hay many times the first week in August and there was snow on the ground. Frost. Always had frost the first and second week of August. August! And today is the 19<sup>th</sup> of August in 2002 and it's going to be about 94-95 degrees here in Denver. In the 70's or better so far.

**Yeah, I live in Bailey and it was 84 degrees in Bailey yesterday. And that's at eighty eight hundred foot elevation. So, yeah, I think the weather has changed considerably.**

**So this incident when you were 6 years old is that one of the earliest recollections you personally have of the area?**

Well, it is one of the early ones. I remember the hay on that ranch at that time, I could get lost in it when I was 6-years-old. You couldn't see the top of my head. I wasn't tall but I wasn't a midget either. But I could walk in the hay field and that hay was above my

head. So that water's changed in that result, in that way too because even though there isn't much hay grown in South Park anymore there is still a lot of difference in the amount and the size and the height of it.

**RJH: Is the reason that there is not much hay being grown today because of the irrigation?**

The irrigation situation.

**So the water rights have been sold and you can't irrigate any longer.**

(Inaudible)

**In the 1920s did most farmers then still own their, their water rights at that point and the primary crop in South Park that, beside cattle and sheep, that was hay.**

They were selling a great deal of hay to Kentucky and some to London for race horses. It was considered to be the best race horse feed in the world at that time.

**They would ship it all the way to London?**

Right.

**England**

Right.

**It was that superior a grass?**

That is what they said.

**Now that would be shipped to Jefferson and then it would be ... ?**

Yeah, yes. It was hauled to Jefferson on wagons or sled and it was baled, of course, and then shipped to Kentucky and as a matter of fact, in not too many years ago, they were getting a lot of hay and selling it to the stock yards in Denver and places like that, but they loaded the hay on the C&S railroad. As a matter of fact, this is how the live stock got to Denver was on the D&S.

**Basically that train route followed the 285 highway today?**

Not really. It did in that area but then it cut down through the canyon and came out near Littleton. ? came out on the current line. If you followed 285 from Bailey, it followed 285 from Fairplay to Bailey, then it cut down and went down the Canyon.

**So it went further south than 285 does. OK 'cause there were a series of resorts that were there in that lower area south of Bailey and then it came back up through Littleton. OK.**

OK.

**OK yeah, because I've talked to people like Barbara Tripp at Glen Isle and the train used to go right past.**

Now you would get some good information from Lody Eshe on that 'cause her husband worked on the railroad, he was a railroader.

**OK, good. Good, well, she is on our list.**

Yeah.

I remember riding on it.

**Ah. Where did you go?**

Well, to Denver. It went from Denver to Como and there was a round house at Como. The train went over Boreas Pass to Leadville and the other route went to Hartsel.

**Now did you go as far as Como ever?**

Not on the train, but the first shower bath I ever had was in the Como roundhouse.

**Oh, ho? A shower bath?**

A shower bath, yeah.

**So you actually got to the roundhouse.**

Yeah, we'd go the roundhouse and take a shower once in a while. We didn't make a habit of it every week but Saturday night was bath night and we did it in the tub and ...

**Was that like the community shower?**

Well, you sort of had to know the roundhouse boss, you know. If you got acquainted with him and maybe bought him a pint of something or so you might get to take a shower.

**Now did they have, that was for their employees? That was for the engineers? For the workers?**

That was for the employees. That was the only shower in Park County at that time I think.

**(Laughter) That would be the 1920s then?**

Right.

**Interesting. Was it hot water?**

Oh, yeah.

**So that must have been a treat then.**

Oh, yeah. Good hot water in the roundhouse.

**Interesting.**

It was a heated place then. And of course the trains turned around there

**Right.**

And one train turned around. When mother was in the - had the Post Office, my job as soon as I was big enough the train came through Jefferson about noon, well soon as, about 12:30 it was, from Denver and I would take the mail sacks over to the depot so they would get on the train. I was out of school at lunch time so I'd come home and take the mail over and meet the train and if I, if the train got back, it depended on school, if the train got back from Como, stayed in Como and hour, they turned it around and went

back, and it came back through Jefferson in about an hour, so sometimes I had the job of taking the mail back when it came from Como, which wasn't much mail usually.

**Your mother was Postmistress?**

She was Postmistress over 20 years. And then Mamie, Mamie Head, that family. And I gave you the name of Howes, that's her daughter, she became the Postmistress. They had the store. My mother resigned and they had the Jefferson store, which was an ideal place for the Post Office. So she had the Post Office for many years.

**Now you were living, where were you living? This is a period of time when your mother was at the Post Office?**

My mother lived at the Post Office and I lived at the Post Office during the school year and I lived at the ranch during the summer or I went to the ranch. My Dad, actually, after she got the Post Office, for the most part lived in Jefferson. But they had the ranch there and then he also had some leased property in different areas of the county. You've got the Buffalo Peaks Ranch leased the last place he had in addition to his homestead in Jefferson.

**Now how long has that ranch been in the family?**

Well, the WR, my grandfather originally, he and Lew (Lou?) Robbins were partners and they had practically all of the property from Tarryall to Jefferson at one point in time.

**Did that go back to the 1800s? 1860s, 1870s?**

Yeah, Yeah.

**Was it homesteaded then?**

Well, some of it was homestead, some of it had been owned before and they sold some of it and it seems it got in different hands as time went on. I don't think they had all the property but they had the majority of it from Jefferson to Tarryall.

**Was it a haying operation primarily?**

Hay – well, mostly cattle and sheep. They raised both cattle and sheep but then it became hay as that became popular and it was a cash crop and it was a yearly crop and it was for financial reasons it is probably why it became mostly hay.

**So that was your grandfather who actually started the ...**

Who started it? Well actually, my great-grandparents actually started it because they settled at the confluence of Tarryall Creek and Jefferson Creek.

**How long ago was that?**

There is a house there, there is still a building there I think. We took some newspapers that they used for insulation that were dated 1876. So they went from Canon City to that place and that is where my grandmother was raised.

**Now, where did you great-grandparents come from then?**

They came originally - my great-grand parents came across the country from Ohio behind an ox team. He was on his way to California for the gold but he heard there was some in Colorado so he stopped here.

**I would think so. I believe the Sanborns and the McCartneys came about the same time.**

My mother's brother, Frank, became a doctor and he was a renowned surgeon in Colorado. They called him the Cowboy doctor because he didn't go to college until he was about 25 years old. But he studied here and then in Europe and he traveled to New Mexico and Wyoming as well as Colorado. He was the head of, chief of staff at St. Anthony's for a number of years.

**What time frame was this?**

I'm not exactly sure. Well I am sure too, in this respect. It was in the twenties. I believe he died in twenty-nine. He got erysipilas and died rather suddenly.

**What was his name?**

Frank McCartney.

**Frank, OK.**

There is a picture of him at St. Anthony's Hospital. It used to be on the walls but the last time I looked out there I didn't see his picture there.

**Interesting. So your great grandparents came out to part of the South Park, basically, and started the ranch operation. Then your grandparents took over and then your father took over.**

Yeah, on my father's side that was a different story. They came to Colorado and they settled near La Junta and then I guess he was kind of a hard guy to handle. His dad came up here and they had a meat market in Morrison.

And, yeah, originally he worked for the Rocky Mountain News. He was a typesetter for the News. I'm not sure if that was before or after, but he was a captain in the Colorado Volunteers. Actually he was in the Sand Creek Massacre.

**Was he?**

Yeah he was a captain under Chivington.

**Interesting, OK. Yeah. Well, I'm familiar with that incident. He actually participated. There was like a vigilante group that came out of Denver.**

Yeah. Well their first deal they went to New Mexico because of the, of the south was coming to the north and they were having problems with Mexicans, too. But he was in some of that shooting that occurred in New Mexico.

**Interesting, so he rode with Chivington to Sand Creek.**

Yeah.

**Wow.**

Yeah, Yeah.

**OK.**

Yeah. He was in his nineties when he passed away in California. But he lived in his later life he lived for awhile with my grandparents who had the ranch just under Kenosha Pass.

**Right. OK.**

Then he went to California and lived with other relatives and died there.

**Now you mentioned that on the ranch you were raising hay and cattle and sheep. When it was irrigated in those days, were those hand-dug wells that they were able . . . ?**

No, they came out of the streams.

**They took surface water?**

Yeah, it was all surface water. There were no wells.

**Oh.**

Other than wells for drinking water.

**Right, right. OK. So there was enough streams to irrigate so you just divert . . .**

Yeah, we'd divert. As a matter of fact, there is a ditch that comes out of the top of Kenosha, out of Kenosha Creek, that comes down around and winds down and irrigates a lot of that upper part of the Park. That part of the Park under Kenosha in that area.

**Does that end up in the Platte eventually?**

It ends up in the Platte, yeah. It ends up in Jefferson, Snyder Creek and then Jefferson Creek. It ends up in the Deckers. In the Denver water supply.

**So originally your grandparents, great- grandparents would have had their senior water rights on that land?**

They had, they had some, they had some water rights. They had water rights out of Jefferson Creek. As a matter of fact, my grandfather was at setting the water at Jefferson Lake when it flooded. There was a flood at that time. You can just see some, you could at one time, I don't know if you can see it anymore, you could see evidence of that water went over and flooded down South Park.

**When was that?**

I don't know. I don't know exactly when. It was when my father was, I think, a youngster.

**Your father was born ... well let's see here. I don't have dates on those, but your father was probably born ...**

Ninety-eight.

**Yeah.**

Well, that was the turn of the century.

**Yeah. Exactly. OK. So he operated the ranch for some period of time and apparently was successful raising this premium hay. It's probably had to be a pretty successful operation then.**

Well, I don't know if you would call it. I remember hauling hay to Jefferson to the railroad. At that time they were getting a premium \$18 a ton. That's not bad; actually, that is about 25 bales.

**Yeah.**

That was pretty good money in those days.

**Yeah, I would think so and this was, you were born in 1917, so this would be in the twenties.**

Yeah, that was in the twenties.

**Yeah. Absolutely. And that continued for how long, did he have that ranching operation?**

Till he died. Some of it. During the twenties when they had a real bad depression situation, the cattle thing, they lost a lot of that land. He and his brother worked it together for a time, Frank, Bill and them, have you talked to them?

**No.**

Yeah.

**No. So you had, so you were affected, your father was really affected by the Depression.**

Yeah. That was actually prior to the Depression, but they were kind of coming back when the Depression hit.

**The farmers still needed hay, right?**

Oh, Yeah, they were still selling, they were selling hay up until Colorado Springs and Denver bought up the water.

**In a case like that did your father sell of the water rights first?**

Honestly, I don't know what happened to the Jefferson water rights. I don't think they owned the Kenosha water rights. Although we used it, but I don't think they got it originally. I don't think so.

**OK. So when did the operation finally close down?**

Well, my father's death.

**OK.**

He still had the homestead, which was the place south of Jefferson and he had the Buffalo Peaks ranch leased.

**Now did you ever intend to take over?**

No, I took off. I left when I was 17. I came to Denver and worked there and then I went to Seattle and I worked out there for about 9-10 years.

**So you spent the first 17 years basically in South Park.**

Yeah.

**Yeah. Now when you were going to school, what was the school like in Jefferson?**

The school was like, I remember, one year there were three of us.

In the school. (laughter) And I remember, I think the most there was, one year they finally got so many kids that, that, this was about the time I was in high school, they got 40 kids or so and they divided the school into two rooms and we had a two-room school instead of a one-room school. We had the kids from the first to the seventh in one room and the eighth through high school in the other.

**Two teachers or one?**

Two teachers. Oh, yeah, we were big-time then. We always had one teacher up to that point in time.

**Wow.**

One teacher, sometimes three kids sometimes. I remember one year my aunt, my folks raised, she lived with us a good part of the time, she and I and one other youngster were there and then the Schattingers showed up, so that put three more kids to school. So we gradually gained some momentum.

**It must have been kind of nice having that kind of attention with a teacher and six students.**

I guess. (laughter).

(phone rings)

**We're talking about having the school with six students and you were in there basically in your high school . . .**

I was there my whole period of school with the exception of one winter my grandparents took a trip to Seattle and they had a Model T Ford and they had a truck and they rigged up a canvas over it like a Saratoga wagon and we went to Seattle. It took us a month to get there. The first thing we did before we got to Laramie we broke a spring, so many chuckholes in the road. But it took us a month going and it took us about a month coming back.

**What was the objective of going to Seattle?**

His brother lived there and his brother and another brother had died, and they had some things to settle and he decided he'd never been north and he wanted to see what it was like in Seattle. His brother was a conductor on the tramway system in Seattle.

**Oh, OK, that must have been quite a trip.**

Yeah, it was quite a trip, really. I had a little dog and we found out that traveling in the truck with my grandmother and he and me and the dog was one too many so the dog had to go off.

**OK.**



About the second day the dog found a new home.

**(Laughter) OK. Now when you were going to school you say you were at the Jefferson, living at the Post Office basically with your mother during the school season.**

Right.

**So it was very close to go to school. School was right there essentially, so that was easy. So then in the summers you worked on the ranch with your father?**

Yeah, I spent almost all the time. I mean, you know, you started working on the ranch when you were, your first job when you started out, you got the kindling in and pretty soon you chopped the kindling and as you, sometimes in the year, especially in the wintertime, we had to haul water because the pumps would freeze up and you couldn't work the wells and the wells in Jefferson weren't very good anyway, the surface water was so high. At that time there was so much irrigation the surface water was practically at the surface, so there was very little, very little well water that was very good. There were one or two wells in that town that were really potable water.

**Wow, OK. So that was your source of water?**

We hauled water.

**Now did you have a well at the house, at the ranch?**

We had a well, yeah, we had a really good well at the ranch. It was piped quite away. It was great in the summer time, but in the wintertime we hauled water from Jefferson on a stone boat.

**On a what?**

A stone boat.

**What's that?**

Well, it's like a drag, you know, it's a common phrase there, it's like a raft with some runners on it.

**So you'd fill it with water.**

Just, no, no. we'd fill cream cans with water.

**Ah.**

Load the cream cans on it. They'd call it a stone boat because when they dragged the meadows there would be stones pop up, so it was like a drag, that you would drag the meadows then you'd put the stones on it on the stone boat so it wouldn't . . . as a matter of fact, one of my Dad's, my father told me, that one of his main jobs as a youngster, when he was small, was to drag the meadows and pick up buffalo bones and heads and horns and so on, on the drag.

**RJH: Really! It was just like a sled that would be dragged on the ground. It didn't have wheels.**

It didn't have wheels.

**It was just dragged on the ground and pick up stones or whatever needed to be moved.**

Whatever, yeah.

**Ah. I never heard the term before.**

It's the same, yeah, it's like a drag that they drag the meadows with but it's not as big as a drag and it is more like a sled is what it really is.

**Would a horse pull it or a mule or something?**

No, a pair, a team.

**A team, so that would be, they would be harnessed and they would pull this you would be along driving the team?**

You'd ride on it.

**Oh, you'd actually ride on it? OK. It was wooden? Now, would you make things like that out at the ranch?**

Yeah, that's what they made, sure.

**So everything that you?**

Not everything but the sleds they actually used in winter were actually sleds but the stone boat was just like a drag. It just had some, like runners, a couple like ties and they were chopped off in the front so they weren't square, it's a little easier . . .

**Rough lumber and you'd fabricate this thing yourself?**

Rough lumber, yeah.

**It was interesting, when I was introduced to the ? (Eos?? ) brothers, I asked them what caused their father or grandfather I guess it was to start a sawmill. He said, 'To build a house,' 'cause that is what was needed. It used a lot of wood and they had no wood so they, he started a sawmill so he could make his own lumber to build a house. And apparently that is what was done. I mean, whenever you needed something you had to go, you couldn't go running down to the store you had to pretty much fabricate whatever it is that was needed at the time.**

Yeah. The reason my Dad got into the logging business, into the sawmill business was C&S needed ties, so we primarily made ties. And later he did a lot of telephone poles.

**He did this in addition to ranching?**

Yeah.

**Did he have a sawmill at the ranch?**

Yeah.

**OK, because there were apparently several sawmills. I saw a gentleman ...**

Yeah, Arnie Wright is another one. There's somebody else ...

**There's still a gentleman in Fairplay yet who has a sawmill. I'm going to be interviewing him next week in fact.**

Arnie Wright. Now, let's see, there's one Wright left that you might see in Jefferson. Merrill lives in Jefferson in the summertime he goes to Mesquite in the wintertime. Merrill Wright, his dad had a sawmill also. He and my dad were in the same group. They had a baseball team there that they were really proud of.

**Baseball team?**

Yeah.

**Where?**

Jefferson and Como had a combination baseball team.

**Well, that's what . . .**

When they were young. When we were, when we came along there weren't enough boys to make a baseball team. We didn't have enough kids. But at that time there were more ranchers or maybe they had more kids, I don't know. But they had a pretty good baseball team. There was a baseball team in Como and Jefferson and Fairplay and Leadville and Hartsel they had a regular Little League you could play baseball.

**Where, were there ball fields specifically for that?**

Well, sort of.

**OK.**

They graded them off you know, and played on the dirt.

**I'll be darned, so there was inter-city competition and each one had their own little team.**

Yeah, yeah.

**And there were enough people in Jefferson to form a team.**

Yeah.

**Interesting. I had no idea that kind of stuff was going on, but not in the twenties when you were there?**

No, no. It sort of fell apart. I remember as a little boy going to some of, a few of the games but then, I don't know, people moved away. Different things happened and it just . . .

**It could have been the depression to cause a lot of people to move away or fail.**

Yeah, I think they had a ball club there until about '28 or '29 something like that.

**OK, so each one of these towns had their own little ball team. What else did you do for fun? You're a teenager now in Jefferson.**

We'd choose up sides and play different games. Ball, but there is a game and I've never heard of it any place else. I've talked with people wherever I've been and they've never heard of Steal the Wedge.

### **Steal the Wedge?**

OK, a wedge is a stick, right? OK. Three sticks. You draw a line across the middle. Choose up sides and there are three sticks at the outer boundary of the playing area and you line up at the middle line and somebody would break loose and run get a stick. If he got tagged why then he'd be on that side, if he got across then they got the stick. So the one that ended up with all the kids and no sticks the no sticks lost and all the kids won. But it was a cute game and it was a lot of fun, lot of running. Another type of tag. I don't know if anybody else in the world has ever heard of it, but we did it.

**Yeah. You don't need a lot of fancy equipment, that's for sure.**

Six sticks.

**Six sticks. Exactly. That's it. Well OK.**

Yeah. But then, really the only league type of game that we played when basketball came along we had a place where we could do something in the wintertime. We had a little hall; we had to have 8 foot baskets because the ceiling was too low. That was alright, we weren't very tall people anyway.

**OK.**

So we did that and then Fairplay had a team, Como had a team, Hartsel had a team, ah, Bailey had a team. We always beat Bailey, that was a kick.

**So you'd travel between these cities on the train or did you have a car.**

No, oh no, we went by car.

**You had a car. What kind of car did you have?**

My Dad's first car was a model T, but I remember when he bought a Jordan.

**A Jordan?**

A Jordan. A lot of people haven't heard of it. It was a car very similar in looks and action to a Pierce Arrow. It was about the size of a Pierce Arrow.

**Wow, that was a big car.**

That was a big car. Yeah. And my, it really, my mother called it a hearse. The first one he had, he had two of them, that was the second one. The first one he had was a touring car, it had side curtains and a touring car. But the fenders sat out so far and I remember I'd ride between the fender, hanging onto the support that held the fender on. I loved it.

**So you're talking, what was the name of this vehicle?**

A Jordan.

**A Jordan?**

Uh-huh.

**I never even heard of the brand. That's interesting. Is that something you were able to buy in Denver then? Your father . . .**

That's where he bought it.

**How often did you get to Denver?**

We got to Denver; incidentally it was a 3 hour trip to Denver.

**From Jefferson?**

From Jefferson. And going up the hill from Bailey, Model Ts had to block unless they had a ? or a ? gear in it.

**Block, as in block and tackle?**

No, when it quit, when it couldn't go any further why you'd, somebody would jump off and grab a rock and put behind the back tire and when you got it revved up again then you'd go a little ways. And whoever was blocking it would run behind and set the rock behind it so it didn't roll back down hill.

**(Laughter). That would be like over Kenosha Pass?**

Over Kenosha, no. But primarily, what is the pass at Bailey?

**Oh, Crow Hill.**

Crow Hill.

**Really, that's what you had to do. Somebody had to ...**

With Model Ts unless they had a Rugstell (Sp?), if they had a gear shift then they'd go over it. But he didn't like that blockin' business, so he bought a Jordan. But, it was, it was a lot of fun the touring car after he got the other one, the hearse, it wasn't so much fun. So in '29 he bought a Model A. That was really practical. It worked.

**Wish you had it now. It would be a great vehicle to have these days.**

One time we made a trip to Canon City. The Wright, a couple of the Wright kids, Arnie Wright boys, Ben and Florence, I think, went with us to Canon City so we had two cars. My grandfather had a car, a Chrysler and my Dad had his Model A, so we had this picnic down to Canon City and my grandfather decided he wanted to go up on that overlook above the prison, it's real steep. Well, he lost his brakes coming down and he got it shifted down, he got down to the bottom of the hill. But that left the whole bunch of us to ride that Model T home because it was on a Sunday and nobody'd work on his car and nobody'd fix the brakes. So we all rode home, we had a most terrible rain storm we ever saw in your life and we were all piled up in that Model A, it was something to remember.

**Were the roads paved at that time?**

No paves, all dirt. Lots of rocks. Lots of rocks. If it rained probably a lot of mud.

**(Laughter) Interesting.**

Yeah, they graded the roads and later, you know, on the Tarryall road, it wasn't, of course, paved but they had a mail route that went from Jefferson down to Tarryall and it would snow sometimes so bad. I'll never forget one, one snowstorm, the mail man was in Jefferson and he came down the road and at the ranch that was, what, three miles south of Jefferson, the dog, the hired man was the only one there and he heard the dog, the dog was raising Cain and he finally, it was a blizzard and he finally went out to look

and the mailman was up on the fence post and the dog was sitting' there keeping' watch on the fence post, the man was about to freeze to death. His name was Peterman.

**(Laughter).**

Oh, man. So, some funny things happened.

**Boy, I can imagine. I can imagine. You know, over the past few years, I've only been in Park County myself just a couple of years, but forest fires seem to have been, over the past two years, especially, it has really been a big concern. When you were growing up in South Park, do you recall forest fires?**

I'll tell you a real story about a fire. The C&S railroad, you know, they had smokestacks that screens would keep the sparks from flying but sometimes they wouldn't use the screens or sometimes the little spark would get out. I remember when I was only between two and three years old, it was before my mother got into Jefferson, the Post Office, we were living on the homestead, which is out by Snyder Creek in the foothills and the hay had just been stacked, that year it hadn't been baled. It was a real dry year and the fire came down from Jefferson from the . . . and most of the crop got burned up. And I remember my mother got panicked and she and I were walking down the road to go down to the other place, south of the other place farther south of Jefferson.

**Right.**

And I remember my Dad was very unhappy because she left where she was safe to go along those foothills, but the only thing they had to fight fire with was wet gunny sacks, get some water in the ditches, but that fire burned all the way from Jefferson to the foothills. As I say, it burned Arch Head, Jean Howe's grandfather, it burned his crop, his hay and it burned my family's crop on that ranch.

**Well, it would be devastating to lose your whole crop, wouldn't it?**

The hay stacks, what could you do? Just like these trees. Well, they had the other ranches, so they survived, but it didn't help them. I'm sure it didn't help them, it helped the bank probably more than anybody.

**Wow, OK. In a case like that, was the railroad? If it was a spark from the railroad, did they do anything?**

You know I don't, I don't think they ever got any settlement. They may have. I couldn't say. I'm sure they never went to court. But they may have gotten some settlement. I'm not clear on that at all.

**I'm trying to understand where it was. You said to, from your place to the foothills, what direction was that from Jefferson?**

Well, if you call the road going South, it would be East. I think of that as South all the time, 'because I think of the road as going West.

**I think of it as going North and South.**

Yeah. So ...

**OK so that would be the east side.**

You know the foothills that are below Jefferson, right toward Tarryall?

**Sure. Yeah. OK.**

Clear to Snyder Creek, which are right along those foothills?

**What actually stopped it?**

Just the Creek. Just stopped at the Creek. We were fighting it. See, the wind primarily rose from the north to the west and it happened to be blowing from the north and it just took it down across . . . I can remember seeing, I was only three or four years, no I was less than three. I can remember seeing that fire all the way across there.

**Really.**

They were trying to fight it but it went faster than they could with the gunny sacks. They had a few people, not very many people.

**Well, yeah. You had no other resources.**

That's right.

**So you were only three years old. I can imagine that would make a big impression on you. Do you recall later on any forest fires in the hills surrounding South Park?**

Well, I remember lightening striking trees and I can remember going out a time or two putting out fires under trees but it didn't seem, things stayed more green. There was more moisture, it seemed like. It seemed like they didn't. . . there were, later, I guess, a few fires above Jefferson but really I can't remember any serious fires other than a few trees like that, that would get hit.

**Well, really, with no more irrigation in the valley, things are a lot browner than they used to be.**

Yeah, years ago.

**Now, did your father belong to any organizations, church organizations or fraternal organizations?**

He had nothing to do with any organizations. He says he was not a joiner; he said, "I am not a joiner." As a matter of fact, they had a little club house in Jefferson, it was a little shack and they had what they called the Lion's Club. The guys in town, they'd go over there and they'd play cards and drink a little. Mostly drink, but they'd play some poker, too. But he didn't drink and he wouldn't have anything, he never went to a meeting that they had I don't think.

**Well, it was three miles to the ranch, right? So it would take awhile just to get there.**

Well, of course my mother had the Post Office, so he was there part of the time but, no, he liked to play cards. I guess as a youngster he played Whist and different cards and different games but only at home, I mean he didn't go to any clubs.

**Wasn't his thing.**

Wasn't his thing.

**Well, did you have any things that you used to do just for fun yourself, any hobbies or crafts or things that you used to do? Of course in summer you were working on the ranch, you didn't have a whole lot of time.**

Sometimes we tried to do some things but we didn't have any instruction and we mostly just made our own fun, you know, with playing games like kick the can and steal the wedge.

**Did your brothers play with you?**

Well, my brother is 8 years younger than I am.

**Younger, OK.**

So we didn't have a lot together really.

**That age difference, that's probably why.**

The age difference and the school changed, he went to school in Fairplay, at least his high school was in Fairplay. But ...

**That was a pretty good haul from Jefferson to Fairplay.**

My sister drove the school bus, she was still in school but she drove the school bus from Jefferson to Fairplay.

**OK, so you do have a sister then, also?**

Yes, she lives in Phoenix.

**OK, because I just see a Frank listed here. But you do have a sister?**

Oh yeah, sister Beverly.

**Beverly. OK.**

Beverly Hand. Her husband's family ran the Fairplay Hotel.

**Ah, that's the origin of the Hand Hotel.**

They had both hotels in Fairplay.

**OK, OK.**

She has some later stuff that might be interesting to you.

**Where does she live?**

They live in Phoenix.

**Oh, they're in Phoenix. OK. That might be a little more difficult for this particular project.**

Yeah.

**OK, so there were three of you. Was she older or younger than you?**

No I'm the oldest, she is 10 years, Pete is 8 years younger and she is 10 years younger than I am.



**OK.**

She's 10 years younger and he's 8 years younger.

**OK. At least you've got, and they all lived with you and your mother?**

Oh yeah, yes.

**In summer or in the winter months and then back at the ranch. So you had three kids.**

Yeah, they worked on the ranch, too. By the time they came along my Dad had a little Fordson tractor and she used to drive that. And the girl was great with horses. She broke colts a lot. And something that was interesting. Joe Milligan who lived on, it's still the Milligan ranch, it's the ranch between Jefferson and Como on the left hand side, had thirty head of horses one year that were practically wild horses, they had never been broken. So Dad contracted one year during haying to break his horses. So that summer, that fall I should say, we broke the thirty head of horses. We had a crew of men, a haying crew. They had a lot of fun with those horses. We'd break horses to drive and some of 'em that were a little wilder they'd ride. So we had a rodeo about every week.

**Yeah it sounds like, thirty horses?**

We broke thirty horses that fall. It was interesting there is, where the house sat there is still a house here, it's a different house, there it's kind of wide and there is a lot of room there and the corals are back away from the building but we'd hook up the horses by the house, near the house. And we'd go up the highway toward Jefferson, we'd always have a bigger horse to hook with the wild, with the bronco one, and we'd go up the road. I'll never forget one, and my Dad bought that horse from Joe and kept it. Its name was called "Betts" and when we broke that horse she took off and she got so excited and we were sitting up in the front driving, driving the team and she decided to urinate and we got all, we got a spray job, we got a spray job.

**(Laughter) When you say wild horses, were they literally wild horses?**

They were literally. They had never been broken, they'd never been, they just ran up there on Michigan Hill and in that area they had Joe and Bill Milligan had those two ranches and they just roamed up there.

**They were wild.**

Yeah, I think some of them might have come from, there was a wild horse bunch up in the Elkhorn area.

**Interesting. So there were wild horse groups out there just, you think left over from the Indians or from miners?**

No, I don't think so, I don't think these were. But the place, who knows where those came from on the Elkhorn. They were there until probably in the late '30s.

**Really, they were just running wild up in those hills?**

Yeah, yeah.

**So if you were able to capture one you could keep it?**

Oh, sure. Nobody wanted 'em. They were alright. Some of 'em were loco but the horses we broke were alright.

**They could survive winters up there by themselves they could forage for themselves?**

I don't know whether Joe fed 'em a little bit in the wintertime or not. I would think he would. I don't know. Although, Michigan Hill, it cleared off pretty well most of the time, there was enough so they could eat on it, I'm sure. It was an interesting summer. Those rodeos were fun. Those cowboys trying to ride those horses.

**It must have been a challenge for a horse that has never even been close to humans let alone had one ride 'em. Huh. Now, when you were living on the ranch on the thirties or maybe in the early forties, you left the ranch when you were 17, so it would have been around 1940. In the thirties did your father or mother raise food?**

My Dad always raised potatoes; he always raised a garden, too. He was one of the few people in the whole country; he loved to raise a garden. He raised a garden and they'd can a lot of stuff. Always in the late summer they'd pick gooseberries and my mother always made gooseberry jelly.

**Did you raise them or find them wild?**

Wild.

**OK, OK. It was a much more lush valley fifty years ago than it was now.**

Yeah, Yeah.

**You'd just go out and find those things?**

Yeah.

**And your mother would make gooseberry jam? Preserves?**

Yeah.

**So, did you have cattle that you would slaughter for meat?**

That's where we got our meat, yeah.

**OK.**

Matter of fact, my grandfather had a man named Henry Kaiser. Kaiser had a butcher shop in Breckinridge and my grandfather was in the cattle business so they formed a partnership, my grandfather raised the cattle and Kaiser butchered them and sold 'em in Leadville. Leadville had a lot of miners. They had a lot of activity in that area in that time. So they had a partnership going.

**Sure.**

Incidentally, in later years, that comes to mind. Somebody bought a horse from my Dad in Breckinridge and it was in wintertime and they wanted the horse right away so my Dad decided he would follow the railroad tracks and take the horse over to Breckinridge

ride one and lead the horse that he sold over Boreas. And, he checked with the depot, Bob McFarland was the man who was the depot agent in Jefferson, checked the train times and so on and apparently there was a certain time there wouldn't be any trains through the tunnel on top of Boreas. You know they had a snow shed.

**Snow shed. Oh yes, I remember, I've seen the remnants of that up there now.**

But, but, something happened. I don't know if they didn't check it right or there was an extra train sometimes they ran extras with what happened, I don't know, but just when my Dad got to the tunnel with this leading one driving one, there was lots of snow it was in winter, and he heard the train whistle and he had I guess a terrible time getting those horses off the track and out of the way and just about the time he got the horses out of the way why the train came through the snow shed.

**Lucky.**

Yeah, lucky. : It's a different life than we lead today, that is for sure.

I remember Lody's husband, Lody Eshe's husband's family bought some cattle from him one time, I don't know, it was two or three. And he and I decided to drive them from the ranch below Jefferson up to their place. And they lived, you know, when you come from Como, about a mile or two, not very far you look around to your right as you are going toward Fairplay there is a place there used to be a ranch up there snuggled in that kind of hillside. The Eshes lived there and he and I in the wintertime drove those cattle up there, we had to go through several gates. We made it but I don't think I've ever been any colder in my whole life. It was snowing and it was cold.

I walked in the early fall, I walked from the ranch to Jefferson to school and the wind always blew from the north or right in your, from the west I guess it would be, right in my face. And so, but, we were the only ones who had cows and I remember that I delivered 12 or 13 quarts of milk every day to the residents of Jefferson. I had milk in cans tied all over that horse, but it was so cold when I went to school I had to walk to keep from freezing to death. Of course, going home it was nice I rode the horse.

**Exactly. Good deal at the end of the day. I was told the railroad shut down in 1937.**

Yeah.

**So you were still on the ranch at that time.**

No, I left in '35.

**Oh, you left in '35. OK. Huh, OK. So you probably, I guess. OK. How did the departure of the railroad out of Jefferson change the situation for your father?**

Didn't change it particularly because of the trucks. People were hauling, that is one of the reasons the C&S didn't have enough freight anymore. There wasn't any, the trucks took the hay away from them. They could be in Denver in 3 hours and it took all day to get to Denver on the train.

**OK so that makes ...**

Besides that they'd lose the boxcars. I remember it would be weeks and they wouldn't know where a car was and people were screaming for their hay and "Well, it's on the

C&S" and the C&S couldn't find the car. I mean it was, there were some problems with the railroad. Which a truck took it right to where they wanted it and that was it.

**So it really wasn't a hardship when the railroad went away.**

No, not, no. but I remember in haying time. Arch Head, the Heads had the store in Jefferson; they'd order groceries by the carload. Dad would buy half a carload, whatever it took for haying, but they bought it and it was hauled on the railroad. But all that went away, too, when the trucks started.

**Sure.**

And we started living better on green vegetables and fruit which we never had before in the wintertime. People would come and peddle groceries peddle fruit and vegetables to us.

**Was there a general store?**

There was a general store. The Heads had the general store. You should see Jean Howe because her Dad her Dad had the general store. Then he had a warehouse across the street. Where the filling station or where the Jefferson store is where the store originally was. Oh, by the way, next to that was an old saloon. Before Prohibition it had been a saloon.

**OK.**

Arch Head decided to tear the saloon down and build a house there I guess. Anyway the saloon had plank floor. We kids made a killing because as soon as they took the planks out there was coins in there.

**Really!**

? to China. Yeah. We cleaned up the coins. We'd get over there with rakes and rake it and . . .

**So how many years did that saloon exist do you think?**

Oh I don't know. It was there before Prohibition and it was of course closed when prohibition came. So I'd never, it wasn't operable during my life.

**So there were a lot of coins dropped through the boards huh?**

Lot of coins through the boards. The Heads had the store on one side of the road and the warehouse was on the other side of the road. I remember that caught on fire and we had a volunteer fire department, everybody in town was a volunteer.

**Right.**

And we had a bucket brigade. And I remember Dar Schattinger, that's Lody Eshe's brother and I were on top of the building poured water down over the side of it and it was the building across the street from it that caught on fire. Actually the store is what caught on fire. At that time they were both on the same side by the railroad track. And the store caught on fire and we were on top of the warehouse with a bucket brigade. It was too late for the store.

**Wow. Where did you get the water from? The creek?**

We had people hauling water from the creek.

**Fire was a big problem in those days.**

Fire was a serious problem. I mean it; there weren't many places that caught on fire that didn't burn to the ground.

**There was a beautiful hotel in Bailey.**

The Hands owned that at that time.

**Really, I can't think of the name. Was it the Eldorado?**

I can't remember what they called it.

**But it was basically sitting overlooking a hill at the bottom of Crow Hill.**

Yeah. Well, the Hands they owned that at that time. That is before they owned the Fairplay Hotel.

**Well, that was beautiful. I've seen pictures of it and it was a beautiful.**

It was a nice place.

**Burned down to the ground.**

Then he went to Fairplay and they built, they bought the Fairplay well I think they bought the Hand Hotel first and then he got the Fairplay Hotel. I'm not sure. Betty knows.

**At one time they owned both of them in Fairplay.**

They owned both of them, yeah. My sister and her husband helped operate it when they first got married. They bought some Chuck, Chuck Hand's father bought some property in Trinidad. So when they were first married, he bought an old mill on Pennsylvania, up on Pennsylvania up by Alma, he bought that old mill and they tore that mill down and used the lumber to build the motel that they bought in Fruita. They built a motel in Fruita.

**That's a long ways. Did they haul the lumber all the way out there?**

They hauled the lumber to Fruita. Built a motel there. So they had the Fairplay Hotel, they had sold the Hand Hotel at that time. But they built a nice motel in Fruita and my sister and her husband ran that when they were first married, that is how they got started, the old man let them run the motel in Fruita.

**Did you go into Fairplay periodically?**

Oh, once in awhile, actually I think we probably went to Denver as much as we did to Fairplay.

**Travel was a lot more difficult so when you went you had to have a good reason.**

Had to have a good reason, yeah.

**Did you get seed and things from Denver?**

Oh, yeah, either that or at the store. The Jefferson store, they carried, you know, it was a general store. We even had bananas, you know. That was the only ...

**Really?**

Yeah. Now they'd get bananas on the C&S, you know in a box, a banana crate they called them. Have you ever seen one? They are a round crate and the banana stalk would sit ...

**They sent the whole stalk?**

They sent the whole stalk in there. It was insulated with paper and so on and they'd ship it all the way from South America, wherever it came from.

**Probably Mexico too?**

I assume, I don't know.

**Interesting. What did bananas cost? I can't imagine.**

I have no idea. But they weren't cheap.

**No, I can imagine; a banana in Colorado**

Probably cost you a nickel by that time, or a dime maybe.

**That would be a real treat.**

I don't know, I have no idea but we always, Arch Head kept bananas in that store pretty near year round. We could almost always get bananas. Yeah.

**As a kid what was your favorite treat?**

Oh, I guess candy bars. My grandfather would give me a nickel and I'd get a candy bar. Of course we had slot machines in all the stores, you know.

**I heard that, slot machines along 285, well tourists . . .**

every store from Denver to Leadville, I guess, or wherever, there were slot machines. As a matter of fact, I went to California on the bus in 1935 and I paid all my eating expenses out of slot machines on the way to California.

**They weren't illegal at that time.**

They weren't illegal.

**So they were open.**

They were open. In all the bus stations, you know where the bus would stop to eat or whatever, I'd sit around there and watch until the people were getting on the bus and getting off the slot machines and then I'd go and play the machine a little bit. I didn't hit any jackpots but I paid for all my, everything I ate.

**That's a pretty good deal.**

Between Denver and California, which was quite a long ride.

**Usually doesn't work that way it is the other way around. It usually works out that what you get back isn't what you put in.**

It usually the other way. Yeah.

**Sounds like you've had a lot of wonderful experiences in Park County over the years. And you have a long history in that area. So.**

Well, from the thirties on, my brother Frank, you might see him if you wanted to. He has a lot of history of the family

**Did he stay on the ranch?**

Yeah, he stayed on the ranch and he got so he ran the trucking business. He owned it. As a matter of fact, when my father died, my sister and I signed over everything to him and my mother and he ran the propane business and the trucking business, he and my Dad together.

**Where does he live now?**

He lives in Littleton.

**I'll check back with you if we might want to do that.**

I can give you his address I have it.

**Right, I have your number. So I'll check and see but that might be if they want to extend the program, I don't know what the time is. I know the initial project is to be completed by the end of this month, so there is not a whole lot of time left. But what I need to find out is if they want to extend this a bit more. I believe they have forty individuals identified. That's the extent of the initial project, but I'm finding a lot of additional people who have a lot history that would be really very, very helpful to fill out the whole package. So that we could do. I can't think of anything else at this point. I guess, is there any particular event that really made a big impression on you when you were living on the ranch or in Jefferson?**