

DENZIL ACKLIN. Born 1929.

GENEVIEVE (GENNY) ACKLIN CRAWFORD. Born 1925.

TRANSCRIPT of OH 1085V

This interview was recorded on July 12, 2002 for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program, Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder Colorado. The interviewer is Shirley Steele. It is available in video format, filmed by Liz McCutcheon. It was transcribed by Shirley Steele in 2008.

NOTE: The interviewer's questions and comments appear in parentheses. Added material appears in brackets. The interviewees are identified by the initial letters of their first names. Genny has contributed a written summary which is archived in the Carnegie Library.

ABSTRACT: Denzil Acklin and his older sister Genevieve (Genny) Acklin Crawford grew up in the Industrial Mine camp in Superior, Colorado. Their father was a coal miner. They relate their experiences in this milieu, referring particularly to school, fun, family activities, work and the 1938 flood. Some experiences are personal to each of them and some reflect their being part of a very supportive, close-knit community. The interview emphasizes that theirs were happy lives in spite of not having material possessions.

[A].

00:03 (This is an interview through the Maria Rogers Oral History program from the Carnegie Library of Boulder. The narrators are Denzil Acklin and his sister Genevieve Acklin Crawford. They are being videotaped on July 12, 2002 in Genny's home in Boulder. This is one of a series of videos of people who lived in Superior and the Industrial Mining Camp and who are working with the Superior Historical Commission. The goal of the commission is to preserve the memories and experiences of those families along with their artifacts and photos. I am Shirley Steele. The videographer is Liz McCutcheon. Denzil, why don't you start by telling us how you got to the Industrial Camp and when you were born?)

00:50 Denzil Well, I was born on January 14, 1929 in Johnson City, Illinois. My dad was a coal miner, and my mother [Bertie Spiller Acklin] got sick, and the doctor told him he had to get her out of Illinois. So he came out one summer prior to [when] we moved here and got a job in the Industrial Mine. The following summer, I believe it was, we moved out here, didn't we or was it that same year? That same year.

(What year, what did you say?)

D. '32

(What were you saying?)

Genny. October, October we moved out here—Dad just came, and they came back.

(How old were you then?)

G. Seven

D. She's an old woman. [laughter] We moved into this house right here, [photo] when we first moved up into the camp, but we didn't live there very long because it was a terrible house. Right here. Then we moved from there when this house became available right down here, and that's where we stayed until 1942. They were old dilapidated houses. This picture here kind of shows—I don't know if you can get on your video or not—what some of the houses looked like. This was probably taken in the early 20s—this picture here—because the boarding house here was being used after we moved there, and they tore it down shortly after we moved there, but the houses were in terrible shape, and we have pictures out in the folder of the old houses and —let's see here, I don't know if you can get this picture here of what the house looked like when we first moved into it. All right. This is a picture [photo] after my dad painted it. Mom had flowers there. And this is the picture that we got the prize for having the best looking house in the camp. That was the prize. You got a picture. Old memories.

(Genny, I was wondering if you could remember the rooms, what the inside of the house was like.)

G. Very well. I can tell you something else though. When we came to Colorado, when we came to Superior, it was in October, and we came in a Model A Roadster with a rumble seat on the back and Mom; of course, [there] was sick and there was four, five of us in that. Of course Denzil was small, and I was small at the time. We started to drive out here, and we were stopping in Missouri to see some family, and Mom got real bad before we got there because of the fumes of the car, and so they put a thing on the back, kind of a tent like on the back of the car on the rumble seat, so she could stay back there, and then we left there, come through Kansas and hit a storm—one of those sand storms, dust storms—you could see nothing. And then we got through that of course, and Colorado wasn't much better, and we hit Superior, and it was a drought, and grasshoppers were eating the posts, the fence posts. It was that bad. It was the ugliest place I ever saw in my life. But anyhow it all worked out.

Like Denzil said we moved into this one house—then we moved into the other, and Mom and Dad papered it inside and made it better. But when the wind blew, you had to put sheets over the windows.

D. And wet towels

05:05 G. Wet them and, so the dust wouldn't get in. But anyhow, we had four rooms. We had the kitchen. We had a sink and running water. We had artesian water from the mine, and we had a table and chairs and stove, and there was a door to go down in a crawl space to put cool things. We had no refrigerators in those days, we didn't. And then, Denzil slept in the front room on a—it was kind of like a leather fold out bed, and we had that and a chair or two in the living room and a stove and we had two bedrooms. Mom and Dad had a bedroom set in their room. I had the other bedroom, and in the spring, I slept with chickens, little baby chickens. And they were so noisy and smelled so bad. And we had a wringer washer and whatever we had to go with that. And I had a closet—Dad

had built a closet in my bedroom and their bedroom. We thought it was great. That's what the house was, and we were all alike—everyone had the same type house and of course did most of the same things. I was thinking the other day, we only had radios of course, there was no TVs, and on prize fighting night, you know used to be fighting on the radio, not on TV, and all the men would run in their houses, and when the fight was over, they'd all run out and start talking about the fights but—what else?

(Well, I was wondering while you were talking, did your dad head right for Superior? How did he know to go to Superior?)

D. I don't know.

G. We had a family we knew. Their name was Bradford, and they lived here. When we came—she had come here for tuberculosis, and my mother only had double pneumonia when she came. But this family—there was four, maybe five of them—I can't remember, and we stayed with them just a short while until we could get our stuff all in our lovely home. [laughs] Anyhow, that's what we did when we first came here. And it was just a short while that we were with them because too many of us—because that was what that was like, but—

And we had this girl that came with us. She was a friend, and she was supposed to take care of us kids and cook but. She finally left, and then my dad hired another lady, and it didn't work out. My dad was Mom and Dad for a long time. And he was a good Mom and Dad. We weren't ever spanked. Mom and Dad didn't believe in spanking. They'd say, "You do this" and that was it. So we had a happy life. It sound rough but it wasn't so.

(Denzil, what do you remember about it?)

D. Well, there was always something to do. The kids always found something. We didn't have recreation centers, we didn't have skating rinks, we didn't have bowling alleys, but we always did something. We'd go up on the hill up south of the camp and scout around, doing things.

(That's on that map?)

D. Uh-huh

(The map on the bottom.)

D. We'd go down in the creek and swim down in the creek and everything. Here—what I was talking about, south of where this water tower is, shoot, back then I could name you every stump, brush and every weed there was on that hill. And we used to sleigh ride down it in the winter time at night and during the day, we'd play all kinds of games. Kick the Can, Hide and Seek. Always had something to do. Played ball, played a lot of ball, pitched horseshoes. Nobody ever got in trouble. Not like today.

(Why was that I wonder?)

D. 'Cause we were always busy. Nobody told us you had to do this, you had to do that. We did it on our own. We had our house chores that we had to do.

G. Yeah.

D. No arguments.

G. No drinking, no smoking.

10:02 (Was that true of the whole camp?)

D. No.

G. There was one family, he was an alcoholic. But otherwise we went on picnics. No beer, no nothing.

D. Even when the whole town when they'd have their yearly picnics down at the City Park in Denver—no drinking. Everybody always had a good time. Of course we were all poor and didn't know it.

G. We were all alike.

D. Well, I didn't know what rich was till we moved to Boulder.

G. I can tell you a story about—we came to Boulder to buy our groceries. Dad wouldn't buy at the store in Superior.

(Why was that?)

G. He never believed in making a debt, and usually that's what they did. They make a debt in the summer time and pay it off in the winter. Dad wouldn't do that. If he didn't have the money he wouldn't do it. But anyhow, we met this family—he was the owner of the store. I don't know whether Denzil remembers it or not.

D. Oh yeah.

G. We'd go to their house—they had a beautiful home. Had a bathroom. What was their name?

(Do you remember?)

G. I cannot remember.

D. Mattheson.[spelling?]

G. Yeah, that's their name. And they would come and visit us just like we were like family.

D. Like family.

G. And invite us to their home. I'll never forget them people because we were much poorer than they were, but we were just as happy. That's the main thing. I'll never forget those people. I did forget their names, of course. They were on Pearl Street.

D. Brandon Super Market.

G. That's been a long time ago.

D. They called it Brandon but I can't remember if they called it supermarket or not.

G. I don't remember.

D. Seems like they did. He was the manager, and they were good people.

G. We bought very little in the store—it was more expensive, of course.

D. Well, a lot of people did because it was convenient for them. I think whenever we first moved there, they had what you call the script, wasn't it? I remember a lot of people owed their life savings to the store.

(What was the script?)

D. It was pay, like money.

(From the coal company?)

D. Yeah. The coal company. When Eleanor [*sic*. Josephine] Roche took over the coal mine—things changed for the better. She was a good woman. Even the conditions in the mine changed.

(Did she take over just this mine or did she—?)

D. She took over the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company.

(She took over the whole company.)

D. She was a good woman. I think she felt sorry for the miners. Because I know things sure changed when she took over. People were happier, miners were happier. I know Dad—you know the miners worked in the winter time real good, and then in the summer time everybody would get laid off. Dad would go to work for the farmers or go up to the timber and work up in the timber or in the mines, hard rock mines. He never did do without work.

G. One summer we went to Gunnison and stayed all summer. Three families of us from Superior, and they cut timber and made fairly good money.

D. Back then.

G. We were there all summer.

D. Yeah, that's the year they built the Taylor Dam, '36, I believe.

G. I can't remember.

D. You remember when we took that ride over Tin Cup pass, and Dad had to build rocks underneath the tires?

G. We drove over the railroad track. It's a wonder we hadn't got killed.

D. Old '32 Chev.

G. When we would go to Gunnison, and when we would come back—it was several months—but the people from Oklahoma were headed to California, we saw the most awful sight you ever saw. They were such poor people; they had hardly any food. I don't know how they got fuel for their cars. But they were even—on the rims.

D. Pushing. Old men and old women pushing them cars up the passes. They were so loaded down with tires, furniture.

G. Everything. You've seen *Grapes of Wrath*. We saw that. We saw people come into Superior, almost that bad.

D. It was sad.

(Were they looking for work?)

G. These people were going for gold.

D. They were going to California to get rich. That's the old days. Back then when they had that in Kansas and Oklahoma.

G. Yeah, It's terrible. We felt so sorry for them because here we had a decent car; we had tires; we had food.

D. We had money. A little, not much but we had money.

G. We never did without. Dad and Mom were good at canning. We'd buy cherries—we told you this before—and just tubs of cherries. Seed them and then we'd can them. Peaches. And then Mom—Dad used to kill hogs and he . . .

15:35 (Did you grow them or he—?)

D. No, he bought the hogs.

G. Yeah. But he would take care of them and he would cure hams.

D. Hams and bacon. Sugar cured them.

G. And then Mom would cook some of it, like chops and stuff and pour grease over it—lard, and turn it upside down and preserve that. And when you opened that, just like fresh meat. They canned everything.

D. Had a big garden all the time.

G. We never done without, ever. So—and one thing we did for recreation was went skating.

D. Ice skating. We went down and sat by the fire. [laughter]

G. I couldn't skate any how I tried but—.

(Where was the ice skating pond?)

G. It was—where was that? It's in Superior.

D. Right southeast or northeast of Superior there. It was the drainage where they pumped the water out of the Crown mine. Settling pond. The mud was probably five foot deep, and the water two feet deep.

G. Something's there, somebody told me now, one of the kids that was in Superior.

D. I think it's right about where Appleby's is, in that area.

G. We'd walk there at night no flashlight.

(How far is that from where you were?)

D. About a mile, mile and a half.

G. I'd say a mile and a half. Awful dark I know that.

D. Go down and buy a penny's worth of gas, which is about a quart to start the fire with. Wonder those kids hadn't got burned up.

G. Nobody did though. And the houses—beside the houses was a ash pit built—I mean they were pretty hot, rocks and you'd put your ashes out, they were live coals sometimes. And the wind would blow—oh, the winds were horrible—and it would blow the fire out of those ash pits. It was real scary. Never burned anything.

D. Never burned anything. You remember that house to the east of the dump—there on the side of the hill? Used to see ashes from the dump blow by their house all the time. What kept it from burning down, I'll never know.

G. They must have prayed a lot or something.

D. Oh, they had to.

G. Oh, the wind blew out there. I think it still blows some, but not like it used to. It was terrible, and [when] we walked to school, Mom used to make me wear long underwear, and I hated them. I'd have to roll them up because I thought they looked so ugly, you know, but anyhow we'd walk to school, and when the wind blew, it really hurt, and the sand, you know, would hit your legs. Girls in those days didn't wear shorts, and they didn't wear pants.

(Even in the snow?)

G. You wore long underwear. You wore long underwear and we didn't even have boots.

D. Overshoes. We'd call them galoshes back then.

G. But our school, did you ever talk about the school? How—.

(Talk about the school?)

J. We had, oh, you tell about that. We have a picture up there—about the rooms and stuff.

D. Oh, I don't have that picture here. It's over there in that folder.

(Well, you can talk about it.)

G. You can tell about it.

D. I did have one picture, of that '39 class.

G. Well, that would be good enough.

D. [Photo] I meant to keep it out.

(We're going to talk about the school now. What's this picture?)

D. This one here, if she's ready. This one here is the '38-'39 class of the whole school. [Note: This picture is also in Herbert Morrison's archive file and includes the names of the students.] This is what we used to call the big building. It was a single building. It had the 7th and 8th grade. It had an auditorium in it. We had a stage there where we had our plays and stuff. It had a big pot bellied stove that you used to freeze by.

G. This is the one—you got that one up there? This was the teacher that was mean. She died not too long ago, so I won't talk about her.

20:29 D. We had good teachers, though. This man up there was the principal. His name was Mr. Hauser. This is Mrs. Gaines right here—she was—I can't remember what grade she taught.

G. 3rd and 4th.

D. Mrs. Irwin back here who became the principal later on. She was a good woman, good teacher. This is Mrs. Thompson here. She was also a good teacher.

G. 1st and 2nd

D. 1st and 2nd. And then, all the kids I can name except two of them. I don't know if you want to hear all the names or not.

(Are you in there?)

D. Yep.

(Start with you.)

D. I'm right here. And there is Russell Kupfner beside me. Tommy Grasso, Arthur LePinski.. This is Bobby Chavez, John Grasso, Bert Ruben, Charles Forrest, Paul Snyder, Max—can't think of his last name, not Max Javez—I'll think of it. There's John LePinski, there Lombard, Bill Lombard, Jean Abbott, Vickie Sekulich, Nick Bobrich. This guy right here is Bobby, that's Max's brother, _____ Phyllis Ambrose, Frances Winkler, Genevieve right here, Ruth Kupfner Dorothy Machin, Judith Winkler, Rose Bokridge, Nardine Wood, Veronica Irvin, can't see this one. Oh, who is that right there? I can't see enough, Mary Griffith, Vera Chaussart, Frank Mc Nulty, What's Wood's name? Wilbur Wood. Oh, I named her wrong, Helen _____ Ambrose, this is Phyllis down here. Joyce Price, Delores Chavez, what was Delores' sister's name, Darleen Chavez, This is Biella, June Biella, Annie Kerr, Ruth Forrest, Helen Sekulich, Eleanor Gomez, _____. What was the Wood girl's name, Darleen? Mary, Mary Wood, Margie Machin, Rosemary McNulty. Down here is Bob Morgan. You interviewed him. This is Jimmy Everill, Carl Morrison, Albert Abbott, Bob Griffith, Max Ortega, Ted Atkinson, Billy Forrest, no, that's Don Forrest and that's the Herrera boy, I can't think of his first name. This is Billy Forrest here, Charles Everill, Herb Morrison, Frank _____. And this is Morrison's two little cousins, that his mother babysat and this is Harry Harder and Max Chavez. [Note: there is a picture of this group with names in Herbert Morrison's file in the archives of the Carnegie Library.]

25:25 (Quite a memory.)

G. Half of them are gone.

D. More than half.

G. It's sad to look at them. Well, we remembered a lot, most of them, actually, except that one picture, I don't remember those.

D. I don't either. Now this picture down here is the class of '34, 1st to 4th grade.

G. Mabel Schmidt in that one?

D. Yeah.

(Is that Genny there?)

D. Yeah, Genny, I'll get to her here in a minute. Jeannie Abbott again, Johnny Grasso, Paul Snyder, Bobby Chavez. There's John LePinski, Max Chavez, and that's a Cantor boy—I can't remember—I think his name was Ed Cantor, there's Clarence McNulty again, and this boy is—I said it not long ago—Billy Lombard. Of course I said Jean Abbott. These girls here, this is that little Cantor girl, what was her name—Sara Canter. Let's see, that girl I can't place, but this is Helen Bockridge, Rose Bockridge, that's the other Cantor girl, Miss Thompson, not Miss Thompson, but that teacher that you didn't like.

G. Mabel Schmidt. I won't forget that name.

D. Miss Bonelli, she was a good teacher, June Biella, Annie Kerr. There's Genny [Acklin] right there, Francis Ruppert [spelling?], Melba Ambrose. Back row, I'm not sure who that is but then—Billy Autrey, I think that one is, and him I'm not sure of either Micky Sekulich, Doug McNulty, and that girl, the tall girl.

G. Edna Admire.

D. Yeah, Edna Admire, and then the one next to her, right there this girl,

G. Is that one of the Bockridges [spelling?]

D. No. Next to her is Eunice Winkler, then Billy Autrey, and who's that one next to him?

G. I don't know and then Chaussart.

D. And then Leroy Chaussart. I can't place it.

(When you graduated from eighth grade, where did you usually go to school then?)

D. Louisville. I didn't, she did.

G. I graduated from eighth grade, he didn't.

D. We moved from there in '42, I was in the seventh grade. I would have been in the eighth grade.

(What kind of activities did you have in school?)

G. A lot.

D. A lot, we played hockey, basketball, baseball, you name it.

G. Teeter Totter.

D. Swings, Merry-Go-Round.

G. And they had a track meet every year.

D. Didn't win much but we always had fun.

G. And they competed with other schools and, it was an outside, John, you know. We had that, and we had a pump outside, to get our water.

(How was it heated?)

G. The smaller school must have been—the big school had a big stove as you walked in, a huge stove. The other one, must have had a furnace or something downstairs.

D. What, the big one?

G. Where all the classrooms were.

D. It had a stoker furnace, didn't it?

G. Yeah.

D. But the second grade had a big round-pot bellied stove.

(You said you put plays on?)

G. Neat ones. I was always an angel. I had light hair. I always hated that. Always an angel. I wasn't an angel.

D. Wasn't no devil either.

G. No.

D. We knew better.

G. We had plays and Christmas programs. Dad was always the Santa Claus. Denzil told you about that before when Dad was a Santa Claus.

D. Nobody ever knew who Santa Claus was, and I wouldn't tell.

G. The next day they would have known, he had a terrible cold. We did a lot of things in school.

D. We did a lot out of school too.

G. Yeah. I remember going to City Park and different places like that.

30:50 (With the school?)

D. People got hard up, we always went around and collected food and stuff for them. It was a good place to live.

G. Miss Oerman was the one of the best teacher anybody would ever want—she was an artist—and she would get tumble weed, huge tumble weeds, spray them with some kind of a glue or paste or something and put sparkles on them. That was our Christmas tree. It was beautiful.

D. Occasionally we had a Christmas tree there though.

G. I don't remember the Christmas trees.

D. One time we had that big one the big one.

G. At school? At home we never had Christmas trees, we didn't have a place to put a tree.

D. No room.

G. We didn't get a lot of stuff like kids do now, and we weren't spoiled brats. We appreciated what we got and—I still got some of my things that I had. It's hard—people can't realize it—we can remember people—but when you are in a community like we were, you liked everybody.

D. We knew everybody.

G. Yeah. It was good.

D. There were a few people, town people who looked down on us because we, were up in the camp.

(I was wondering about that.)

D. I always looked at it, and I'd say, "Well, you might be better than we are but, at least we've got running water." It would make them so mad.

(What happened in the camp if some disaster did strike a family?)

D. Everybody pitched in. Something happened, everybody just automatically showed up. One of those things, it wasn't expected but they did it.

G. See when the miners—we had a mine doctor.

D. Dr. Cassidy.

G. Stop. I wasn't going to mention his name because my mother didn't like him as a doctor. As a friend, yes, he was a friend.

D. He was the nicest, nicest man.

G. He's a very good friend. He was the one that told her she wasn't going to live. She didn't like it because she was a young lady at the time, and then they got another good doctor in Louisville that took over the mine doctor part. The miners had insurance through the union. We were—Dad was always union, and that's what all the quarrel was always about—the union.

(What quarrel?)

G. When they had their—when we left Illinois, it was terrible. It was gangs, and it was the union that was part of that. Dad always [had] a job, and when they got the check, they had to go in groups to take their check to the bank, or they'd be robbed. What I was going to say too is the union—they had an insurance, and that insurance paid—my dad was sick for a long, long time—that insurance paid every dime for him.

(Was he sick from working in a mine or something else?)

D. We think probably it caused it.

G. Yeah, we think that and he had Black Lung.

D. He had an accident several years ago in the mine—he was an electrician, and he got hit with 440[V] and, of course that's pretty potent electricity, and it knocked him about twenty feet into what you call a pillar, it's a big post, prop, holds up the coal and cut the back of his head and, of course he was out for a long time, but nothing ever showed up for several years, and all of a sudden he started getting these terrific headaches and stuff, and they think that probably what caused the brain tumor.

G. The insurance paid everything. I took him to Denver and to—what was the hospital—University Hospital—it was something else then. For months and months and months he went there, that insurance took care of everything he had done. Then Mom, of course, she had never been well, it took care of her, everything. When Dad died she got so much from—somehow, through the miners—I can't remember—wasn't a whole bunch of money.

D. Pension and burial fund.

G. It was to help, yeah, to help .

D. Of course they already had their burial fund already paid for and burial lots and everything.

35:58 G. And that insurance would have paid for her medication and everything. She wouldn't do that. The hospital stuff—yeah—took care of it, but she took care of the other, you know. But there was a good side to the mines in that aspect there. Dad was only hurt that one time, and then he ran a pick through his foot one time in the mine. Hurt to even think about it. He died in—.

D. '64.

G. Uh-huh. He was 64 years old when he died. He had it rough. He had to have a tube put in his stomach. He couldn't swallow, and he had to have this big tube in his stomach. I had him here, I don't know for how long. Right there in a hospital bed. Mom was in the hospital, and Dad was here and, of course he didn't know any of us, and he would say, "The nurses here sure are hateful." That was me. My kids were like twelve and nine. He said, "I sure don't like the nurses here."

D. You know his mind went back in time before he died. He was back in the horse and buggy days.

G. But we had to tie him in bed because he'd pull his tube out, and I'd have to get a doctor to come out and put it in. It was sad, really sad. He never got grouchy, never. He was good to take care of. He was like a baby then. We had to do everything.

(If he went back in time then would he be talking about his parents?)

D. No, he never did talk about his parents. It was always his horses his, hogs, you name it.

G. In the summertime he'd say "Well, you got to help me get ready. We're going to go hunting." I'd say, "Dad, it's not hunting season." "Yes it is." I would never argue with him. Anyhow, he was a good man though.

(You've got a picture of your grandparents, too?)

D. Yes. This is my grandmother here [photo].

(How long ago was that taken?)

G. Southern Illinois.

D. That would be southern Illinois back in the '20s because this is my dad, and this is my mother. And they were married in 1923. This is my granddad right here.

(Was he a miner?)

D. No, he was a farmer. I don't know all the people in there. They're all relations. This is my aunt. Most of them are aunts and uncles. This is supposed to be an uncle here. I don't know them all. This is—Mom's sister Aunt Ruby here. People thought they were twins—they looked so much alike when we went back from the funeral for my aunt—was it '36 she died?

G. I can't remember. It's been a while.

D. Seems like it was '36. Whenever we went back people, [they] thought that my Aunt Ruby came back to life. They thought Mom was Ruby, she looked so much like her, but they were two years differences.

(Did the other members of the family come out here?)

D. No. We were the lonesome stragglers here.

J. We left a lot of family back there.

D. Last year's family reunion there was 135 at the family reunion. That's two families, that's not just one family. This year, I don't know how many was there just about the same crowd. My cousin sent me a bunch of pictures because we weren't able to go back this year.

40:02 (I want to change the subject just a little bit because I know you have a couple of pictures of the flood. Maybe we can talk about that.)

D. Yeah, I've got more pictures of the flood but they're out there in that folder. Does that put out too much glare there?

(When was this?)

D. This is the 1938 flood. You can see this is the remainder of the cement bridge that they had just put in prior to this flood, probably not even a year before the flood. The flood that washed the original bridge out was two years prior to that. It was in '36, and this is the remainder of the flood. This picture here, this just catches the corner of Violet's house, and this is McNulty's house right here, and this is the barn, Autrey's barn 'cause that's the one that has been identified. That bridge had just been put in, and we thought it was the greatest thing that ever happened and then, all of a sudden, whoosh, it was gone.

(Were you there when it flooded?)

D. Oh yes.

G. First, we saw it coming.

D. We heard it coming, just like a big thunder storm coming down the canyon, come right on Coal Creek. After it was over with, there were balls of hay out in the fields, big as, oh, these hay bails they have now.

G. It was a mess.

D. Oh, was it a mess.

G. We saw it was just rolling.

D. Well, it washed out Eldorado Springs, but prior to that, on the first flood. This really washed it out. Actually it didn't do too much damage to the town.

(That's right, I was wondering.)

D. No. And the bridge is still down on—what is that on 4th Street? The original bridge, it never did get washed out. The new one, it's gone.

G. It was lower than that.

D. Yeah, lower.

G. Lower bridge.

D. This is the year that Dr. Boyd lost his wife out there in Louisville. They were coming back from Denver on the old road, and he never—of course, the water had covered the bridge, and it was out. He didn't know it. He hit it. He said that he got a hold of his wife by the hair once, and that was it. I don't know if they ever found her body or not.

G. I don't think so.

D. I don't either, but he was in terrible shape. He might not come out of it himself. He was a good, good man, good doctor. Far as doing damage, I don't think it did much damage down through Lafayette, Louisville, Lafayette, either.

(Didn't do any damage to the mine?)

D. No, the mine was just up on the hill, just enough that it went down below. Schoser's house got a little bit of water, didn't it?

G. I can't remember.

D. I can't remember if it got much.

G. They all said it did.

D. Did you talk to Bill Schoser?

(No.)

D. I don't know what condition he's in. He's been fairly bad, him and his wife. Of course I talked to him a while back, and he sounded real good.

(The mine, this was in '36, the mine was still operating to capacity?)

D. Oh yeah, the mine was running three shifts back then.

(How many miners did they have?)

D. Oh, gosh, I don't know. There was a lot.

G. They came from Boulder, Louisville, Lafayette.

(They all didn't live in the same camp?)

D. Oh, no they came from—I think, even probably from Longmont.

G. There was a lot of men, a lot of them.

D. ____ big money then. That sure was. Then there were several of the mines around there then. The Glory, the Trudeau [?], lord, I can't name all of them. Crown #1 which is back up on the hill west of Superior there. Us kids used to watch us take the mules out of the mines back there. They even took them out of the Industrial.

(They had mules in the Industrial Mine?)

D. Oh yeah.

(How did they get them down there?)

D. They had a cage. Take them up and down in the cage.

G. Take them out. The mules were blind when they would come out.

D. Missed the light.

G. They would ride them like bucking broncos. It was fun to watch, but I felt sorry of the mules.

D. You know a lot of the men mistreated those animals down there. Dad got into it with a few of them guys for mistreating them. I guess it was a good thing he was around. He caught a guy beating on a mule with a two by four one day, and he came unglued. He _____ would beat him.

G. He wouldn't fight him, as far as fighting.

D. No, but he was a big man, nobody wanted to handle him.

45:43 (Did you ever go down in the mine?)

D. I went down one time. I don't remember much of it because I was scared. I had no inclining to be a coal miner. I worked on top of the Crown Mine one year back in '52, I think it was—'53. Dumping coal, loading trucks and stuff. I helped take a dead man out of Crown Mine. As far as going down, [I] never had the desire.

(Your dad didn't dig coal, he was a—.)

D. He did at the beginning. He was a maintenance man these last years, several years.

G. _____ for awhile so he had to quit work.

D. Yeah, he was a maintenance man at the Industrial too, shortly after we moved there. That's when they did the maintenance work, the graveyard shift. That's what he was. He liked that shift though.

(When did he sleep?)

D. Well, he'd get off work in the morning real early, and he'd come home and work around the house all day, and then he'd go to bed, and around 11:00 he'd get up and go to work. He liked it because he'd get a lot done at home. Back then we didn't have this Daylight Savings Time. It was interesting. I don't think any of us really suffered.

G. I think we were better off for it.

D. Oh, I know we were.

(How do you compare the children that you know today, or maybe you have today with yourselves?)

G. No comparison, no.

D. None.

(How is that?)

G. No comparison. I have a lot of neighbor children, and when we were kids, we didn't have to be told something a million times.

D. And we didn't whine for anything.

G. No, and we ate what was put down in front of us.

D. And we didn't complain.

G. And we didn't complain, and we had good food. Children nowadays are just spoiled.

D. Picky. Some kids got more toys than Wal-Mart got. We never had it. We didn't miss it, we didn't need it.

G. You know what—people, of course can't correct children like in those days. We never knew anybody that—there was just one family that he was a mean man, and dad got onto him because—like I said, we were never spanked.

D. He beat his son with a garden hose, and Dad caught him because we would hear the kid screaming. He didn't beat that kid no more with the garden hose.

G. Yeah. They moved after awhile, and that was good because people won't put up with that. Children, you don't do that to them. But, none of us kids were—a couple of kids had bikes.

D. I had a bike.

J. I never had a bike [laughs].

D. I had to pay for mine. I delivered milk—when I got enough money to pay, a whole \$4.00 I paid for that bike.

G. We really didn't need anything.

D. No. Somebody'd say, "Let's go fishing." You'd drop what you're doing and go fishing.

You didn't seem to get into any trouble though.)

D & G. No, no

D. Kids back then never got into trouble. I mean there really wasn't any activities. You made your own. Shoot, I made them old carts I used to ride. We'd go up the hill—drag it up the hill—and ride it down. Kids nowadays wouldn't do that. If Dad can't buy it for me, I don't want it. Back then you didn't nag, you didn't whine. You didn't—

G. No.

D. I think today, kids have too much. Our kids got more—my grandkids got more than I ever had.

G. Yeah, one time at Christmas—.

D. I don't even like holidays anymore. There's no joy in it.

(What would you change if you had the power to change?)

D. I'd go back to the old days where everybody knew everybody and was friendly and not, "Dog eat dog" and, "Hurray for me" and, "You know what you can do."

50:28 (Is that why you are working for the Historical Commission?)

D. Yep. A lot of it.

G. A lot of old memories.

D. Yeah, good memories.

G. I have in my neighborhood—I've got a very good neighborhood—and I know everybody, and they know me. They're always saying, "Can I help you Genny, can I help you?" Young people. It's like it used to be. Of course _____ expensive homes but that's OK. I'm a grandma, so it don't matter. It used to be just a happy time. Halloween we had a good time.

(What did you do on Halloween?)

G. Well, he can tell, he was meaner than I was. Most everybody gave us something. It was homemade, it was good. But he can tell you, he was meaner, like I say.

D. Well, there was that time people—they'd always leave town, or leave camp, whenever it came Halloween time—it was so tight, they wouldn't give the kids nothing, so our dads all got together one time—I don't know who—I know our dad was in it, and I think Von McNulty and—I don't know who all—George Griffith I think—got together. Us kids went to the ash pits and got all the old cans out of the ash pits, and these people had a porch, enclosed back porch. I don't know who had the goat, but we got a goat somewhere, and we went and dumped all them tin cans on the back porch and put that goat in there. When they come home that night they could hear that goat in there with the tin cans, and they were scared. He made her go through the house. He went out the back door with an axe—he was going to kill whoever was in there. I guess when that goat came out, he liked to died?]. They never did leave camp after that on Halloween. [laughs] And we never cleaned up the mess either. That was just a few of the—then one fourth of July, Margaret McNulty had an old antique black powder cannon. Had little cast iron wheels on it, everything—a beautiful—it was a keepsake.

(Was this a toy?)

D. No. A real cannon. It was about this big. And they were shooting black powder, you know, just fourth of July—having something to do—men, there were kids out there. They ran out of black powder so George Griffiths said, "I got some powder," so he went into the house and took some powder out of a high powered rifle shell, and he put too much in that can—but he did put in an old barrel that he had out there, and set it in the ash pit, lit it, and when it went off, I guess pieces are still flying. It blew that barrel where it looked like a sieve. It blew that ash pit up. Too bad, because that was a keepsake. _____ McNally can tell you about it. Nobody got mad over it. Part of the doings.

(So you kind of had your own fun and games?)

D. Oh yeah, they'd take pieces of pipe so long and pack it full of powder and blow it up. People didn't have money to buy these fireworks and stuff. We did buy sparklers and lady finger like stuff. Harry Harder got hold of some of them cherry bombs one time and blew his hand off. Remember his mom doctoring him for it? Those were good old times.

(So Halloween and Fourth of July were kind of noisy?)

D. A little bit, but nobody really done any damage. I mean, nothing mischievous. Not even downtown as I can recall. We never did go downtown for Halloween or Fourth of July.

(Well, I want to thank you both for giving us your time, and it's been a lot of time.)

D. Oh, not much.

55:04 (And giving us a picture of things as they were. Is there anything more that you need to say—that you want to say—right now? I know we're going to be seeing each other again.)

D. I just miss the good old times [that] is all. Miss a lot of the people. A lot of good old friends are gone.

G. Yeah, a lot of them are gone. Some of them that lived in the town part were the big shots, they most, all of them are gone too, just like all of us go. So—.)

(You've all stayed together though.)

G. Oh yeah, and we have a lot in common because we can remember a lot of things. Just things that I can't remember, he can remember, or some of the rest can remember.

D. Like Margie Asti, she knows a lot 'cause she lives here all the time. The Kupfners, if you ever get to talk to George or some of them, they have a lot of information.

(Well, I certainly thank you, and this would be a valuable thing for the collection, and I appreciate the time that you have spent. I enjoyed the stories.)

D. _____.

(Tell us about these pictures, this is our last one.)

D. Well, this is the Model A roadster that we came out to Colorado in. You can see that both of us were real young. I think Dad traded the house we had in Illinois for this car, didn't he—and the trailer?

G. I think he bought it.

D. I can't remember. Anyhow that's what we came out here in with. Man, oh man, a lot different now.

(Very nice. Thank you.)

56:50 [End of Tape A. End of interview.]