

DENZIL ACKLIN.

TRANSCRIPT of OH 1098V

This interview was filmed on July 26, 2002, and October 18, 2002, for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program, under the auspices of the Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library.

In the interview, Denzil Acklin discusses a collection of photographs relating to the Industrial Mine in Superior. Most of the interview was filmed in the home of Jennie Acklin Crawford, Denzil Acklin's sister. On October 18, 2002, in the Superior Town Hall, we filmed his explanations of seven photographs of the interior of the mine. The July interview was filmed by Shirley Steele. The October interview was filmed by Liz McCutcheon.

There is, in the Maria Rogers oral history collection, an earlier interview consisting of Denzil and Jennie talking about the details of their lives growing up in the Industrial Mine Camp [see OH 1085V].

NOTE: The interviewer's questions and comments appear in parentheses. Added material, including off-camera comments, appears in brackets.

ABSTRACT: The first part of the video consists of photos of people and places in the Industrial Mine Camp in the 1930s and 40s. The next group of pictures represents the Industrial Mine, the Industrial Mine Camp, and the 1938 flood. The last seven pictures, which were taken inside the mine, show mining equipment and miners. Denzil Acklin, who grew up in the Mine Camp, discusses the photographs.

[A].

00:00 ([This interview] is made through the auspices of the Maria Roger Rogers Oral History Program. It is one of a number of interviews in cooperation with the Historical Commission of Superior to preserve the memories of persons who lived in Superior and the Industrial Mining Camp during the time when the Industrial Mine was productive. This video centers on photographs from that time. They have been collected by Denzil Acklin, who will comment on them. I am Shirley Steele, it is July 26, 2002. We are in Jennie Crawford's home in Boulder. Denzil. Do you want to tell us how you got these pictures?)

Well, just through my mother. She kept pictures from ages, from the time we moved out here until she died. Most of them were negatives. I had to have them redone.

(And the Historical Commission has them now?)

Yes.

(What about this first one?)

This one up here? That's my mother Bertie and my sister Jennie. This was the second house that we lived in in the camp, and this is after my dad painted it. It made a big improvement. This house right behind here, that is where the Rippeths lived.

(About when would be?)

The Rippeths moved there in 1935.

(So that picture would be about—?)

This was probably in the '40s. Early '40s.

(Right next to it?)

This one here? This house here is where Von [Bobby?] and Bertie McNally lived. This is my sister Jennie, this is myself, this is Mary Wood here. This was taken, probably about '36, '37, wouldn't you say Jennie? The one with Mary Wood in it? Somewhere in that area I'd say.

(Pictured here?)

That Debbie [Delbert] McNally. He was born in the camp in 1938. That was his little wagon. He would always come up—him and my dad were buddies. He always come up cause Mom had canned cherries, canned peaches and stuff and he just loved them. To this day, he still remembers the cherries.

(Is that your house in the background?)

Yes, that's our house.

(OK; we'll go over here.)

That was the houses—this is the Rippeth's house here, and that was taken before they were painted. That's my sister there on the left, LaVerne Atkinson. What was Hauffert's [?] name, Jennie? I can't remember her first name. Her last name was Hauffert. She was a friend of the family. That was probably taken around '36, '37, I imagine.

(And next to it.)

Again, my mother and my sister. This is my mother here and my sister to the left. And that was again, after the house had been painted, approximately the same time as the top picture was taken.

03:31 (The picture. There's four of them.)

Unhuh. This is my sister Jennie, myself, my cousin Norman Cutsinger from Illinois—he came out and lived with us one summer. That’s my dad right there. This also was taken before the house was painted. Norman worked on a farm that summer—the Jacobson farm—and he enjoyed it out here.

(Your dad’s name?)

Charles.

(These two look like they are dressed up.)

There’s three of them there. The first of them here is Anna Malinsky; and this is Louise Bonelli, that’s Violet’s [Gardner] daughter; and then my sister Jennie. That also was taken probably in the early ‘40s somewhere in that period.

[pause]

You’re on this one here?

(Uh-huh.)

Now this was the superintendent of the Industrial Mine, this is his wife Mert [?], she was a cut up; she was a case. And that’s Dave Kerr there, he was a nice guy, nice fellow. This was a camping trip in 1942 up at Taylor Dam. There were three families of us went up, the McNallys, and the Kerrs and ourselves, the Acklins. They had their twin daughters with them but I don’t know where their picture is at this time. They really had a good time up there.

05:31 (This one?)

This one here. That’s Mickey Sekulich. This was a Superior picnic, that’s Mickey Sekulich to the left, Ruth Kupfner, and that’s Joseph Chaussard, the one we used to call Chauksie [?]. This was also taken down at City Park in Denver in—what year would that have been Jennie? The early ‘40s? Probably in the late 30s, early 40s.

(Would that have been a town picnic or just—?)

That was a town picnic. Basically, the school’s.

(OK.)

Now this picture here is Jennie—my sister—and myself. Probably about in 1932 or 1933, one of the two, right after we moved out here. That’s the car that we moved out here, an old Model A roadster. It was quite feat back then.

(How many of you would have been in that car?)

Let's see, there would have been five of us. Would have been my dad, my mother, my sister and I, and then a lady that helped my mother.

This picture here is another town picnic and some of them I can name, some of them I can't. This is Symanski, that was one of the Symanski boys. This is his mother right here, and her name was, she was a Chaussard before they got married. Can you remember what Monk's wife's name was? Edna? No it wasn't Edna. Anyhow this was Ed Symanski's wife. That's my dad, Charles. That's Vernie [Murty?] McNally there and then my mother right behind them—behind her, and the rest I can't identify, the pictures are too far.

(Nice picture.)

It's an old one. This is the same picnic I think, over here to the right. I can't see well enough to name—that's Eddie Symanski there with his back to us. I can't see well enough to name the rest of them. Probably my dad in there also.

(Who would have been taking the pictures?)

I don't know, probably my mother. No it couldn't have been my mother, because she's in the picture. I don't know who did take them maybe me or maybe my sister. I can't remember. It was an old box camera.

All right, now here's the car.

Yes. That's Dad's 1932 Chevrolet he bought about a year or two after we moved out here and that's my sister Jennie and myself sitting on the running board. That was a good old car. Back then, they were all good. [chuckles]

(I'm interested that in almost all of these pictures there are no trees around.)

No, there were very few trees out there. A lot of weeds, grasshoppers.

(Grasshoppers?)

Oh, you can imagine—terrible.

(And this one?)

Which one?

(The one with the women with the bouquets.)

I don't know. These are the ones that—

(Is that a graduating picture?)

I don't know, it's either that or a wedding picture. I don't know who gave these pictures. I wonder if Alice Morrison gave these. I think so. [See Alice Morrison's interview, OH 1077A, in which the women are identified.]

(Take this little one down here.)

Down here?)

(Yes.)

I have no idea. I think that's one of Alice's pictures also.

(Is that a house or is that a school?)

I don't know where that was taken. It just don't ring a bell.

(This last one?)

I don't know that one either.

10:12 (And this folder with the pictures is usually where?)

Down at the [Superior] Town Hall. Heather, she's the one that's been taking care of them until we get a museum.

(So they exhibit it, just for anybody to see.)

People want to see them, all they have to do is contact Heather at the city hall, and she'll get them out for them.

Okay. Now we have another set of pictures that we will set up for. These pictures are yours aren't they?)

This one was Violet's here. Most of these are Violet's pictures. [Violet Gardner]

(What is that of?)

This is a picture of the Industrial Camp. What year it was taken, I have no idea. It had to be in—probably the '20s or '30s, early 30s. That was taken before—this right here was—we called it the hotel, but it was a boarding house for miners. It was still there when we moved in. And we moved in '32, in—let's see which house?—it would be this house right there, I think. We didn't live there very long, because the house was so shoddy, and as soon as they got the other house fixed up where we previously lived, we moved. We lived just above that boarding house. They tore it down in about '37, I think it was. I can remember—remember the boarding house and

Mrs. Samac [?], she was the manager—she was a good old lady. Matter of fact, Bob Morgan's dad lived in that boarding house. That's what the houses looked like when we lived there.

This is the mine, that's the mine stacks. There were actually three of them. One is hidden behind one of the stacks there, and it was pretty good size. In the background is the town proper— itself—Superior. Some of these buildings, I don't know, I can't recognize them. But this right down over the boarding house here, that's where the Morell place was. That's the farmhouse, and that's the barn that they're going to try to preserve.

(Going back to the picture of the stacks, what was the building under that?)

That was the boiler room—boiler room and the engine room. That's where the hoist was run by a boiler system.

(The hoist was in that building?)

Mm-hmm. The hoist was in that building. And what it was, it was a double cage. One would go up and one would come down. They hauled a lot of coal and stuff. Now when we first moved into the camp, they used mules in the mine, it wasn't mechanized. As children, we used to go out in the spring time and watch them bring the mules out of the mine. It was pitiful because they would be blind from the sunlight. There's another picture later that shows where the corral was where they put those mules when they first come out of the mine.

(Are these houses in the front, are they residences?)

Yes. Yeah, people lived in all—this house—let's see—right here—had burned down before we moved there. That was just a vacant lot. There was probably one or two more in there. The way the picture is angled it's hard to tell.

(What is this in front of it? Is it water?)

This was taken when there was a little snow on the ground. This is a ditch. We used to call this the Little Ditch and then there was a bigger one that came up above it here—that was about twice bigger. I remember it had two little cotton trees [*sic*] on it—us kids used to—we played up there all summer long around them ditches, in that water. Wonder we hadn't drowned. But this Little Ditch never carried much water.

(OK.)

Now you want the diagram?

(Yeah.)

I'll just put it right in front of that. Now does that show up all right?

(It will in a minute. There we go. [pause] This is sort of an outline of the camp.)

Yeah. Just kind of a diagram of the way the camp was set up.

15:14 (Where was the mine?)

The mine actually was down in this far corner down here. The air shaft was about, probably right in here because the Morgans lived there. That barn that I was talking about was up in this area here and the mine dump was in this area also. This was actually not a road here. Joe Bednar lived in this house and he kind of made a little trail down to this road. That's similar to the way it was set up.

This was the garages where people kept their cars. The bathhouse was down here, and they moved the bathhouse from here to back over to where the boiler room was later on. I can't remember, did they move that before we moved away? I can't remember. I don't think so either, because I remember the bathhouse being there all the time. That's the boarding house there and that's where we lived right above it.

Now we've got this large picture here. [adjusting the picture] This picture is the Industrial Mine itself. Now—right here is the dump where they dumped all the rock and dirt and stuff from the mine. There's the three stacks I was talking about. That's the steam coming up from the boiler room. This right here—that's the powder house—that's the powder house here. I thought you could see the place where they kept the mules but I guess you can't. It was right in this area here. That's the engine room that pulled the rock cars up on the dump. Where they kept that little engine room. I remember George Kupfner—he was the grandpa—and he had an old crooked pipe that he smoked—well, I don't know if he smoked it, he chewed on it more than anything. But it was an old crooked stem pipe, and I'll remember that til I die. Then Harry Harder, he rode the trip cars, they're several of them that did. This background here is just all out in the field there.

(Okay.)

This picture coming up—all right? That is what the tipple looked like. That's where they run the coal cars through to load them, with coal. These cars were backed up back towards where the old garages were. Double track—two tracks where they kept two different sets of cars. And of course this up here is where the wheels were. The cable went on them to pull the cages up and down, and they run down back down through here, down to the engine room. Some of this is still out there. We've got some of the old footings and stuff still out there from it. But the shaft itself is full. They filled it up. That's some of the coal cars there that they were filling with coal. Dirty. [chuckles] Okay.

Now this is on the east side of the coal dump. This is the coal dump right here. That was the office to the mine and also the weigh house, where they weighed the trucks and stuff. This right here was kind of an old farm house—it set right east of the coal dump. We all wondered why it didn't burn down from all the sparks flying from the wind. That, right there was a railroad station that they had there at one time. This street here is still in existence, there in the town. This house

is still there. There is the Morrell barn, right there is the barn, and that's the house setting in the trees, which is tore down. This picture had to be taken, probably in the twenties because the school isn't in this one. The school is set back behind these trees in here. Both of these streets are still in existence here. The Chaussards lived right down in here—the Chaussards and the Pfinneburgers. Jake Tauchter lived right back here. This is where the Ambroses lived, Albert Ambrose. That's about it on that picture.

20:34 Okay; Now, this is a picture of what the houses looked like when we first moved there. This had to be taken in probably in the early or late twenties and this is the house that Joe Bednar live in. That's the house we first moved in when we first moved there, which we didn't live there very long. I don't know why they built that fence like they did. Looked like a prisoner fence.

[Jennie's voice] The union _____ strike.

Oh, yeah; that was on account of the union strike, to keep people out.

(To keep what people out?)

The people that didn't believe in strikes.

(Ah, I see.)

[Jennie's voice: Mean [?] people.]

I guess that's it on that picture. Boy, they were rough.

Now, this is a picture of the 1938 flood that went down through there. This is a picture of [discussion of to whom the house belonged] Luxner's house. That was Luxner's house there and this is some of the damage that was done when the flood came down through there. That was in August wasn't it? [discussion about when the flood took place] May, was it that early? I can't remember. April or May? Hmm.

Now this picture here, this was Violet Gardner's house. Set right down off the creek. That's actually water and it got right up to her house—it didn't get in it, but it got up to it.

(That house is still there?)

No, they had this house moved. The Red Cross moved it for them in, I think, 1941, if I'm not mistaken. That building back there, that's the general store that the mine owned, the mining company owned. That's about it on that picture.

Somebody has a—no, I'm not sure where this picture was taken [pause]—anyhow, this is also a picture of the flood. Now this bridge right here that's washed out—that bridge had been put in probably a year-and-a-half before the flood hit. There was a flood in '36 that washed the original bridge out, and they put a cement bridge in. This bridge was washed out whenever the '38 flood

came in. They done a good job of it. The houses, I'm not familiar with there.

In this picture—this is Mrs. Wattlet standing on what's—I'm not sure, but that is the old,, old bridge that didn't get washed out. I think she's standing on it. That's Violet Gardner's house there. This right here is the general store again. This is McNulty's house in the background here. I think that's where the Canters lived, and then the Herreras lived there after the Canters moved out. The water had receded quite a bit when this picture was taken.

Now this again, is the bridge that washed out—the concrete bridge that washed out. Now the barn back here, people couldn't identify—now Fred McNulty identified it as the Autrey barn. I kind of remember it now.

25:04 (Would that be still there?)

No it's not there. No. Neither one of these—this building here, _____. They're gone _____. That's just another one of the pictures.

I don't know whose buildings those are.

(Is this part of the flood?)

This is part of that flood, that '38 flood. The buildings I'm not familiar with. I don't know if that was behind McNulty's place or not. I have no idea. Anyhow, that's part of the flood there.

And this is flood pictures again. Again, there's that Autrey barn setting in the background there. This is Violet's house here, and that's the McNulty's house there. This is taken towards the west.

Now this is a picture of Violet's house, too. The water came up, right up to the bottom here, whenever the flood came through. Almost got into her house. It got into the crawl space there. That's about all.

In this picture I have no idea. I don't know if that's the picture behind the McNulty's or not, do you? I have no idea where this—that was taken during that flood also. You can see where the flood water receded down. Too many years have passed. [chuckles] Remember what their names was?

(What is the picture of?)

I think this is the house that Luxner's grandmother—Charles Luxner's mother—probably lived in, but I'm not sure. I do know it's a Luxner's house. This was also taken during that period of time during that flood. There's one back here.

Now there's a picture of Violet's house. Again, she was—luckily they didn't get washed out. That's it on that, on the flood.

Now there's a picture of Violet Gardner's daughter, Louise. She was about what, three years old then?

[Voice in background]: (Something like that.)

That's her house in the background there.

Picture of Coal Creek. That was the flash flood, taken sometime during the '60s that came down through there. This was taken out of the Rocky Mountain News. I don't know the photographer or who did.

(What's in the background?)

I have no idea. I don't what these houses represent.

(This would have been Superior though?)

This was Superior, yes, down on Coal Creek there. It didn't flood out like in '38.

This is the first through the fourth grade in 1934. [Superior school] This has already been went through as far as names but—

(On the video I made with you.) [OH 1085V]

Yes. There's still about three or four of them in there that we don't recognize. Some day, we'll get their names, I hope.

(I'll go through this very slowly just to show the faces of the kids.)

While I'm getting this out here. You know him Jennie—Schmidt and Bonelli, yeah. Got that one?

(OK. The next one.)

30:15 This was taken 1938, 1939 phot—of the whole school.

(And that's the one that we have all the names.)[see OH 1085V and OH 1081V for complete listing of names.]

Most of the names, yes. There were some real good teachers in that picture. And this one here, I have no idea of what year. I have no idea what year. [pause] I have no idea of what year this picture was taken. I'd say—or what grades they were—probably '39 or '40, something like that, somewhere in there.

(You think that might be the whole school?)

No. That isn't the whole school.

I'd say that would probably be—oh, let's see—probably first through sixth grade, something like that. Because Ted Atkinson is a little bigger than that other school picture, so is Bob Morgan. Herb's [Morrison] not in this picture—he didn't know why. He said he played hooky that day, I guess. I'm going to find out some of the names that I don't know.

(Good.)

That's why I'm going to stop over and see Margie this morning.

[audio not picked up] —be bringing in actual miners working down in the mine. I believe there is seven pictures, and I want to find out who the miners are and what positions they were holding. I'm going to talk to Fred McNulty, because he worked in the mine, he knows most of the miners. So as soon as my daughter gets through redoing the pictures, I'll take them over and have him go through them. We can put them on the tape then.

(All right. Thank you very much, thanks for the time and all of your pictures, they're very valuable.)

Well, to me they are, yeah.

(Other people, too. Thanks.)

[NOTE: The following section of the video was taped on October 18, 2002. Denzil Acklin continues as commentator. We are in the Superior Town Hall at the time of a meeting to present the preservation project to citizens of Superior, so there is unavoidable background noise along with comments about the photographs. The pictures being described are of machinery and personnel of the Industrial Mine.]

32:52 (This is October 18 [2002]. Denzil [Acklin] is going to continue with his seven mining pictures. OK, Denzil. What's this one we're looking at?)

These pictures were taken by Dave Kerr, the superintendent of the mine. This was taken back in 1941. The first machine here is a cutting machine. It cut underneath the bottom of a coal seam just like a big chain saw. This man right here is cleaning the waste from the cutting machine [outside comments] that the cutting bar brings out. [?]

This trailer right here is what they bring the machine on in the mine. They have to take it off and—I think it's on some kind of a track or wheels—to get it over into position. They have to work with it that way. I don't know any of the men in these pictures. It's hard to tell.

This is the first stage of the coal. Then they come down here and they drill; they drill into the coal seam—just how deep, I don't know, but they go deep enough for what they call Cardox or

compressed air cylinder that shoots the coal down. This man right here is loading the coal, so whenever he gets done with his job, and they fire it off, they come in and they load it with this Joy Loader here.

(Tell us again about the Joy Loader?)

The Joy Loader is on tracks—you can see the tracks here. All it does is—picks up the coal from where it is chopped down, puts it on a conveyor, brings it back, and puts it into what they call a buggy and this buggy delivers it up to where they load it into another conveyor and goes into the coal cars which they take out and put into the—what they called it—a cage—put it into the cage, and then they shook it up to the top, and dump it, and then it goes through shakers, and it takes it from what they call slack up to big lump. And they got different bins that they put those in.

[Violet Gardener ?]: they load up them little coal cars and that's coal. Put it on the—what you call it—dump.

Dump. Run it up to the dump

[Violet]: They have a thing that pulls it up there—

A hoist up there.

[Violet]: Boy that's a big dump up there. Then it burns.

Used to shoot fire out all the time, every time the wind blew.

36:06 These—the men in this picture here, that I didn't show in the first place. This was Dave Kerr, the man that took the pictures. He was the superintendent at that time. This man right here, his name [was] Charlie Gillespie. They brought him in to teach them how to run that Joy Loader, because that was first time they ever used it in the mines This man right here was named Buck Thorne. He's the one that took over Dave Kerr's superintendency after he retired, and Dave moved to Louisville. They were all good people. Real good people.

Most of the miners—some of them are recognizable, some of them aren't—you can't recognize them. I do know that Charlie Luxner was one of them. This man here that's mucking the coal dust out from underneath the machine here, that's Merlin Price, and this man right here, driving this buggy, his name was Charlie Hoffmeyer. This man right here is called Al Romano. That's Al Romano right there. The rest I don't recognize because—I couldn't—Fred McNulty identified most of them for me, but he couldn't identify them all.

[Violet]: Those coal cars used to _____.

Oh, yeah. And you had to keep the tracks and everything up in good condition, because of moving the coal. My dad did all of this down in the mines, but his job at the present time—he was on maintenance crew and they worked the midnight shift. He never did get his picture taken.

But he kept the machinery and stuff going.

Well thank you Denzil, and thank you Violet, for your comments. We'll be able to get more later. Thank you very much, both of you.

Well, you're welcome.

[Violet]: —they worked. Two whistles, something else. One whistle was a fire whistle or something. Everybody—

Emergency.

[Violet]: All of those things. Well, my dad lost part of a leg in there; just below the knee. My brother lost the end of one finger. That's the ones that got hurt.

Yeah, I don't know how your dad worked in the mines, just on one leg.

[Violet]: When he first went in the mines, he had that wooden leg that he was always wearing. _____. And then they made it so it was light, real light—you'd never know you had it. And he'd go dancing!

Oh, yeah. He got around good with it.

[Violet]: And there were a lot of things he could do. But he had to have his—I washed all of them things that went on his _____ up here, and over the knee to pad it so that he could walk better. That strap over his shoulder.

Oh, I remember that strap. I've seen that many a time. [both chuckle]

[Violet]: Well, you'd never know he had it. But it used to be like my brother, when we were all at home, just come in and walk like my dad to scare us. So if we _____. Oh, that was something else!

(Well, we'll have to save that for the next time. Thank you.)

40:09 [End of Tape A. End of interview.]