

The History of Lafayette

by

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Born 1928

(as he saw it and lived it)

During the strike of 1910 to 1916 we had a window shot out at our house at 100 E. Cannon St., so we had to go to the basement to get out of the line of fire. Dad then took us to the Burlington depot at the end of Simpson St., and sent us to Denver to stay with our cousins. A few days later the regular army came to town, and we were allowed to come home. I can remember when Dad was told that he had to check his guns to the army and they said he would get them back as soon as the strike was settled, and approximately two years later they did give them back. During the time the army was in town lots of the kids used to go up to the army camp at supper time to get some good food to eat. Each soldier would take a little boy through the chow line, but there was one evening that the Captain got mad because we were in line to get something to eat. He started to argue with the Corporal about it. He said it was taking him too long to get his food. The Corporal said he did not want any trouble with a man that had more stripes than he had, and the Captain said don't let that bother you; we will take our coats off and we will be equal, but that was the mistake the Captain made, because the Corporal gave him the beating of his life, so we got to eat with them every night without any more arguments. Then another thing that happened during my childhood days was when we were coming home from school, we saw a fellow by the name of Ed Wickley lying on the side walk across the street from the Sportsman Inn covered with a sheet. Ed had come out of a saloon and

emptied his gun at a Mexican fellow. The the Mexican pulled his knife and stabbed Ed to death. He was released because they said that he killed him in self defense. We knew the Wickleys very well. They lived in a house with a canvas top just at the rear of 303 West Geneseo St. There were times that we would go home with the Wickley boys, and it was nothing to see a donkey in the kitchen. It was something to see when they would get ready to eat a meal, they would get their dirty dish that they had eaten in the meal before. There must have been a shortage of water, because I never saw a clean dish in the house.

I can also remember them building the Baptist Church in 1913.

Another thing that I remember was when the north end of the school building was condemned in 1918. The saloons had been closed, so they moved all the kids in to every saloon, and also the Baptist and Methodist churches. The 4th and 5th grades were where the Sportsman's Inn is now. I happened to be in the fourth grade. Another thing I remember very well was when George and Tommy Bosco killed two salesmen in the southern part of the State. George Bosco told his sister that he and Tommy had killed the salesmen and she told her husband and her husband turned them in for a \$500.00 reward. George was hung in Canon City in about 1919. Tommy was 16 years old at the time and got life. In twenty years Tommy was released after he had helped the guards by keeping the lights on at the prison during the Danny Daniels riot.

Another family that I knew was the Conn Miller family. He was a foreman on the railroad. He committed suicide, and his sons drifted away from town and one of the boys, Roy Miller, was hung in Carson City, Nevada. They lived on east Baseline and the Bosco's lived at 202 East Chester. Another thing that I remember very well was in the early twenty's when the Klu Klux Klan originated. We lived at 100 E. Cannon St. It was nothing to go out the front door and see a cross buring in front of the

Catholic Church or down where Barney McWilliams lives now, which was the house of Joseph Welder. The reason they picked on Joseph Welder was because he was a close friend of Father Roberts.

During the last twentys we had a Governor by the name of William Sweet who promised if he was elected he would give us the Jacksonville scale of \$7.96 per day, and he was elected and he lived up to his word. Then two years later the miners that belonged to the Klu Klux Klan could not stand prosperity so they ran a fellow by the name of Tom Morley to run against William Sweet, and Tom Morley was elected and he cut our wages back to \$5.22 per day. Then in the later years he was sent to prison for stealing the funds of the Klu Klux Klan. He was the Grand Marshall.

Another thing in my life was the big coal strike in 1927. Ninety-five percent of the people working in the coal mines came out on strike. There were a few fellows who were still working in the Columbine Mine. We used to get up at 4:00 a.m. in the morning with the sound of a trumpet, so we would go out on the picket line. Some of the coal operators would give us coffee and donuts, but in November of 1927 we went to the Columbine Mine to march around the camp with American flags but when we tried to go through the fence, they had it electrified, so we crawled under the fence and as we were going down the road near a tank that they got their water from, they began throwing tear gas bombs at us. We were told not to even carry a knife so they could not say that we started the trouble, but as we approached the water tank, we saw all the machine guns lined up ready for action. Then Captain White gave the order to aim. All the miners started to run back and he said fire. There were six miners killed and thirty some wounded. American flags did not mean anything to the so-called National Guard. They shot holes through

the flags, and when some of the injured had a glad thrown over them, they beat the injured that were under the flag with the butts of their guns. Louis Brugger and myself ran behind and outside basement door at Lawrence Amicarella house at the Columbine Mine Camp. When we left, and crawled down to where our car was parked, I looked at my leather coat and it was scraped by one of the bullets. I also had three flat tires on my 1924 Studebaker.

Then in the middle nineteen sixtys Pat McGee, a brother of Mrs. Swan Edison whom I went to school with, came in the Sportsman's Inn, my place of business, and told me he was going to the west coast. When he got as far as Arizona his car broke down so he stopped an old man and stabbed him to death. He was convicted, and gased in Arizona State Prison.

They had eleven saloons in Lafayette: first, was where the Tastee Freez is now which belonged to Pete Peterson; second, where Mrs. Uran's Motel is now belonged to Tommy Oats; third, where Mike's Bar is now belonged to Forte and Nuoci; fourth, where second hand store is belonged to Billie Oats; fifth, where Deluxe Motel is now belonged to Bill Weiman; sixth, where the Bank building is now was a fellow by the name of Jake Kirk; seventh, where the Sportsman's Inn is now; then the building north of Sportsman's Inn was the eighth; where the Glen Anspach building is now was the ninth which belonged to Doggie Abernathy and Pete Peltier; the tenth was where the Roaring Bull is now located, was run by Mr. Vaughn; eleventh was the Hotel back of the Bank. Then some of the other buildings on the Hiway-just north of the Teapot was a Blacksmith shop that belonged to Dan Evans and the Nelson Brothers. Where the Teapot is located was a Garage that burned down that was run by Brown & Faulkner. Where the Dairy King is now there was a building on the corner that Ed Lyson owned. Then where the post office building is now there was a building that was called the Colorado Garage, that burned

down in 1929. Another building we had in town was where the Starkey Plumbing is now, that was a variety store. They also sold dry goods (that was before the twentys) that was owned by the Bengoffs. The buildings on Simpson St., where the Wright McGill building is now, there was a butcher shop in the early twentys which was run by Joe Bonell. Where the Joe Rodwick store is now there used to be the George Lyssey Pool hall; they also had a two lane Bowling Alley in the rear of the building. Where the Welfare building is now located there used to be a variety store that was owned by Mr. Clemmens. Where the Hale store is at present was the Bermont & Vanderburg store which was a two-story building. There used to be a Dentist office on the second floor above the store. The name of the Dentist was Dr. Raymond. Across the street from Hale's store used to be the Smith Drug store and east of the Drug store was the First State Bank, that burned down, that bank was robbed in the early nineteen twentys. They blew the safe door off the vault. Part of the door was found in the attic above the building which is now the Industrial Bank. Where the Industrial Bank is now used to be the Joe Brown shoemaker shop. And at the rear of the Smith Drugstore there used to be the Telephone Office. When the robbers robbed the bank they cut a large lead pipe which contained all the telephone wires. They shot Jake Alderson in the leg and tied Jordy Stobs, the night marshall, to a pole in back of the Telephone office. Where the Carpet store is now used to be the Company store which belonged to the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. Another building next to the Company store was the First National Bank which was run by Jigg Miller which went broke. The other Bank was closed in 1933 when Roosevelt had declared a moratorium which he had closed 516 banks in the United States. Then in later years they started a sandwich shop in the old First National Bank building which was run by Henry Peltier. Then there was the Sam Lucock Clothing store, next to him east was the Charles Scholes grocery and baker

shop, next to Scholes Store used to be the poolhall. Next to the poolhall there was a mortuary that was run by the Powel Brothers, that was located in part of the building that the public service co building is now, another mortuary that they had in Lafayette was in the Jim Schweiger house at 107 W. Cannon Street that was owned by Mr. White, the Dave Williams family used to live next door to the Whites mortuary it was nothing to see a dead body in a long strawwoven basket with tame white rats running all over the house. Next to the mortuary on Simpson street was a watch repair store that was run by John Art, he fixed watches and rented bicycles, then the Jake Alderson Hub store then the post office, then the John P. Dow drugstore and across the street was a large grocery store that was owned and operated by Franz & Son. This store burned down during the big coal strike between 1914 or 1915. The regular army was in town during the big fire. The soldiers formed a long line and they carried most of the grocerys across the street to where the Horace Davis store was located in later years. Across the street from where the laundromat is now there used to be a large garage that was owned by the Jim Weber family it burned down the middle of Dec. 1922, it was later rebuilt Dr. Hurt had his dentist office in the Weber building for several years. Then at the corner of 511 E. Cannon Street was the C & S Depot. We used to buy a round trip ticket to Louisville for twenty cents. The train used to make about four trips a day to Lovisville. The people from Lafayette went to Louisville to catch the Interurban that went to Denver and Boulder, it was an electric train. In 1922 two of the electric trains collided on a curve in Globeville on Labor Day. There were several people killed in that collision Two of them that I remember was one of the Helburgs he was a brother of Mrs. Dorthy James, the other was a Brennon from Erie. Then there was the Burlington depot that was at the end of the 700 block of East SimpsonSt. Then in the early ninteen hundred when Lafayette was growing we had several mines in and around Lafayette. One was the Simpson Mine, the Valcon Mine,

the Mitchel Mine, the Standard Mine, the Capital Mine, The Blue Ribbon Mine, the Strathmore Mine, the Excelsior Mine, the Blue Goose Mine, the Hole in the Wall mine, then there was a mine at the corner of Highway 287 and 7 where the Know Kuppinger house is located now, that was the Mile High Mine. The population of Lafayette was between 1600 and 1800 but with the mine camps that were owned and operated by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, it brought the population in and around Lafayette to about 3000. I can remember the hitching posts along the hiway. The people used to come to town either in buggies or riding horses or walking to town from the mine camps.

There was only three blocks in town that you could sell beer and spirits that was from the postoffice north to the Tastee Freeze. This area was called East Louisville

I can also remember the big snow storms that we used to have from 1913 to the later twentys. The Miller boys and Gus Waneka used to come up the highway with a snow "A" trying to break a lane in the highway, they would have eighteen to twenty horses. In some places the snow was up to the horses stomachs, they would be jumping trying to get the snow "A" up the highway, other people that had to get to town had to make themselves some snow shoes out of boards and a strap across the ankle.

The name of 287 highway was called the Lincoln Highway.

Another thing I remember was the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company used to pay the miners in cash. There used to be a man that picked up the cash and took it to the Columbine Mine, but on one of the paydays he decided to hide the money and claimed he was robbed. He later admitted that he had taken the money .

In the ninteen thirtys Joe Rodwick had a grocery store where the welfare building is now. There was a fellow by the name of Bill Law and a fellow left a note telling Bill that if he came to town to be sure and bring his gun because there was a fellow by the name of Bradley was going to kill him. They

were courting the same woman so that afternoon Bill Law had to come to town for groceries. Bradley had been waiting for him and when Law walked in to Joe Rodwicks store Bradley came in and told Bill he was going to kill him. He fired several shots at Bill and hit his fingers. Bill Law had to use both hands to hold his gun, but he hit Bradley in the head with his first shot but he got over the top of Bradley and shot four more holes in Bradleys head. He was released for killing him in self defense. During the shooting Jack Beranek and several other customers ran behind a walkin collar. The next year Bill Law shot a farmers pig that he was trying to steal. He got a year in Canyon City prison for that.