

Interview with Polly Simpson Morgan, April 21, 1975, by Judy Reich. Elmo Lewis was also present.

JR: You were just going to tell about your grandfather..... PM: Yes, I told her about my grandfather Simpson and how this main street was named for him. JR: Right. Now tell me again. Why did he come to Lafayette? PM: I don't get what she wants. EL: What was the reason your family came to Lafayette? PM: Oh, they came from England. EL: But why did they come here? PM: Well, there must have been some of their sons here. I don't know why. EL: Of course, that was before the Simpson Mine was sunk, but did they do mining work around the area? PM: That was the biggest mine in northern Colorado, you know. James Simpson, he was a stubborn Englishman, and John Simpson, his oldest boy. JR: Was that your grandfather? PM: No, John Simpson was my uncle. JR: Then did he start the mines? EL: Yes, that's right...he and his son. JR: So were you born in Lafayette? PM: No, I was born in Louisville. My sister was the first baby girl born here in Lafayette, you know. JR: How many brothers and sisters did you have? PM: Her. JR: You just had one sister. PM: No, two sisters. JR: Were you the oldest? EL: No, Rose is the oldest. PM: I'm older than Jeannie, of course.. JR: And so did your family live in Lafayette? You were born in Louisville and did you live there awhile? PM: Yes, and then my father moved to Lafayette. He worked in this Simpson Mine, his father's mine. JR: What did he do while he was working in the mine? PM_ He was an engineer.. JR: And how about you, what did you do? PM: Me? EL: She went to school in Denver for a short time and she got homesick and came back. JR: Did you live at the school in Denver? PM: Oh, I just went to business school for awhile and I didn't like it and I quit. JR: Did you go to school when you were little in Lafayette? PM: Yes. JR: What was it like? PM: Oh, I don't know? JR: Was it big or little? PM: Kind of small. JR: Where was the school at? PM: It was up on....you know, the one that burned down. EL: And they only went to the 8th grade, right? PM: Yes, because there was no high school here. JR: Did you walk to school?

PM: Oh, yes, it was only two blocks. EL: Her home is right across the street from the library. Right next to the new bank, that's where she was raised. As we look back to an earlier day. What type of entertainment did you have? Did you have dancing? PM: Well, there was a picture show, right next to where I lived. EL: And did you have dancing at the Union Hall? PM: Yeah, we went there all the time. We used to go up there just to watch them sometimes. Things were so much different than they are now. EL: And you had parties, church parties? PM: Yeah. We lived right across from the Congregational Church and we went there all the time.. EL: Then, in what year were you married? PM: 1901, I think. EL: And this house where she is living now was bought in 1904. And you married Dick..... PM: Richard William Morgan. EL: He worked in the coal mines for a while, didn't he? PM: Yes, he did. EL: And then he was elected to the Senate....the Colorado State Senate- PM: To the legislature, first. EL: Oh, the House of Representatives. PM: He was the youngest member in the Senate. JR: How old was he when he was elected? Son (I think): 29 years old.. EL: And he served many terms. How many years, do you remember? PM: Two in each one, I think. EL: During that time he traveled back and forth to Wales and England. PM: Yes, he took me and my two little girls. I didn't know where I was going, I just went. He had a sister there that he hadn't seen for 20 years so he wanted to see her. EL: After he came back, he practiced law in Lafayette. PM: Yes. He was taking a correspondence course. He wanted to be a criminal lawyer and he was doing very good, but his health got him. EL: That's right. In fact, he was holding a criminal case in Judge McKeown's office and he had a stroke at that time. Right? PM: Shortly after. EL: That's right. Right after that, through the pressure, he had a stroke. PM: He was in the Town Hall, pleading a case and he was pointing at the criminal, you know, and he said he felt it go up his arm. Instead of coming home he walked to Burden's office and that made him all the worse. Son: He had a gun fight with a Mexican out on the old sheep ranch. He was the undersheriff. He

killed the Mexican. That started him in politics. JR: How did that start him into politics? Son: Well, he became well-known. The gun fight was publicized quite a bit.

EL: Let's go back to the 1910 Strike. Do you remember the 1910 strike? PM: Yeah. EL: You were living here, then. PM: Yeah. I didn't ever live anywhere but here, Elmo. You know, he and Mr. Radfield had that Senator Mine and he kept it going and he'd go back and forth and, you know, they would holler at him and call him names, but he kept going. EL: He and Radfield operated that mine down there, didn't they? PM: Yeah. EL: Do you remember any of the shooting that was going on? PM: Yes, I can remember. EL: Do you remember when the militia came in? PM: Yes. You know, we had some hard times then. EL: That's right, we had some real hard times. JR: Did you ever see any shooting? PM: No, I didn't see it.

JR: How about, did you know about the Ku Klux Klan when they were here? PM: Oh, yes, we had that, but they didn't last very long here. JR: Did you ever see any of them? PM: No. JR: While your husband worked, did you just stay home and did you bake bread and things like that? PM: What? EL: She said, did you stay home and take care of your husband and children? PM: Oh, yes. That's all I could do.. JR: Was it a lot of work? PM: Well, I liked it. JR: What type of things did you do? PM: What, in my home? Well, just a housewife, you know, in taking care of your home. JR: Was it different than maybe what housewives do today? PM: Yeah, we were old-fashioned. EL: You washed the clothes on the washboard? PM: Yes. EL: And you ironed the clothes by the coal stove. PM: Yes. EL: And you baked your own bread and biscuits with coal, right? PM: Oh, yes. I'm still burning coal.

JR: You had two daughters? PM: Yes, two daughters. JR: And they grew up in Lafayette? PM: Oh, yes, they grew up in Lafayette and here's one of their children. This is my older daughter's son. (Note: I guess the one I've been calling a son, is probably a grandson. CB) EL: Let's see, Paul had a

sister, too, didn't he? PM: Yes, Patricia. She lives in Lakewood. EL: Your other daughter Kathleen married Clifford Arder. He was bookkeeper at the State Mine. PM: Yes.

EL: There wasn't too much excitement after the settlement of the 1910 strike. Everything kind of settled down around here and your husband, Dick Morgan, as he was known, just practiced law until he passed away. PM: You know, he was Justice of the Peace for 6 years and he had his desk there and he married a lot of people here. We had many a marriage in here. I used to have to be the bride's maid sometimes. JR: Did a lot of people come to the house hear to talk? EL: He held all his courts here and also people would come here to be married.. PM: We used to have to run over and get Albert to come be a witness.

(The next few minutes were low conversation concerning some pictures they were looking at.)

JR: Paul, do you remember anything, any stories that Mrs. Morgan has told you that we could get her to tell us? PM: His mother passed away when he was a little boy and she had said if anything ever happened to her, her mother was to have Paul and I got him. EL: That's right, and she raised him. Paul served in the service and, in fact, he used to work for me. Do you remember anything, Paul, about her life that would be of interest. Paul: My grandfather had 3 strokes. The last one killed him. We had a letter here and according to that letter, they had been considering running my grandfather for governor. JR: He was the youngest one in the Senate, is that right? Paul: Yes.

EL: I'd like to mention about your husband, Dick Morgan, as I recall back in the history of Lafayette, that he when there was dirt roads and prairies around here that he had the foresight that he tried to bring forth in the Senate to be able to pass a bill to work with Wyoming to make a road from Denver to Cheyenne. Of course, he was way ahead of his time but he brought that up in the legislature. Of course, now we have roads going everywhere.

That's one thing that I remember. He was thinking away ahead of his time.

JR: When your husband was in the Senate and had to travel to Denver. How long would it take to go all the way to Denver? PM: Then? Oh, I don't know. EL: Well, I think that maybe I can bring in that. We used to go to Denver on the C & S train., it went to Louisville and we caught the interurban in Louisville and went into Denver. We had the Burlington down here, too, but more travel was done on the C & S because of the quickness of getting into Denver.. Polly, when your husband was in the legislature in Denver, did you stay in Denver with him? PM: No. EL: Did he stay in Denver? PM: No, not all the time. He came back and forth. Paul: Back in those days, see that was 1909, he was senator over three different counties. It wasn't like it is now. There weren't so many EL: Do you remember which counties? Paul: I was looking for that, but I can't seem to find it. EL: Well, it would have had to have been Boulder and Adams Counties but I don't know which other one. PM: I had a nice book of the legislature, but my granddaughter wanted it so I don't have it any more. It was a nice book. Paul: If I remember right the three counties all had coal mines. EL: Then maybe the other county was Weld County. JR: He worked in the coal mine before he was on the legislature? EL: Yes. (There was some conversation here among several persons that I could not understand,) JR: Now, just to get it straight, John Simpson started the Simpson Mine. Paul: Yes, EL: No, according to all the information I've got it was Jim Simpson sank the shaft and, of course, your grandfather was an engineer for him down here at the mine. PM: My father was the engineer at the mine, Paul: That would have been my great-grandfather. EL: I remember her father and Jim. They lived around here, in fact, his cousins and I were great friends,...,Joe and what was the other boy? Paul: Well, there was Alfred. EL: Alfred, yes. Al and I used to always see each other. He married a VanSchaack. Paul: They are all in California now. EL: Now the Simpsons we're talking about now are the grandchildren of Jim Simpson