

Tapes #1079 & 1080

History of Mining - Page 1 (mainly Fred Stones talking)

Question and Answer Segment following "Toil and Rage In A New Land"

I worked in the mines up in Utah, in eastern Utah, out around Price and Spring Canyon, Helper and up in those mines up there. I started when I was 13. Was that hard coal? It was harder coal than it is here. This is a lignite coal; that up there is a bituminous coal. Most of that coal was shipped to Seattle and then trans-shipped to Japan at that time.

But, what they said about having to trade at the Company Store is true. And you was paid by script, you know, you could get script at the office and they'd take it out of your check.

My great-uncle mined up near Nederland. That was hard-rock. That was ore.

I heard someone mention a mine, out at the end of Simpson, to show where that old mine was. Oh, yeah, that was the old Simpson Mine; it was right down there. There used to be a great big dump, rock dump, right down there just this side of the railroad tracks. And it was there for years and finally, somebody bought it and leveled it out and that's where the trailer court is down there. They built the trailer court on it. Down at the end of Cleveland Street, down there.

(That rock pile was still there when my dad came here in '48.)

The Simpson, I think, was the first mine that was in this particular area. There were some over around Louisville before. The Simpson, I think, was about the biggest mine that was around here too at the time.

There was the Vulcan down there on 287, there was the Highway Mine along 287 and the Centennial was up to the west of 287.

There used to be a mine out east in Colorado; it was a soft coal mine and Dick Manzanares and his family bought that mine and then, he said that's where they went broke because they didn't know how to mine. Where is that? East of Colorado Springs.

There were a lot of Welsh miners here. Oh, yes, there were a lot around here to start with; they were all English and Welsh. That one man that was talking I'm sure was Welshy Mathias. And, of course, his brother, Joe, was on the City Council here for a long time. Welshy lived right up there next door to the old City Hall for years and years and years. But, to start with it was Welsh and English.

Mr. France used to work in the mines and when they came here, their house had a basement in it and they rented just a place for men to sleep for so much, you know. They told me about that. They couldn't either one talk English, and she can't talk it too well now.

After the Welch and the English came in here - they were really the ones. And then came the Italians and the people from Poland, the people from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and places like that. But the Welsh and the English were the original miners in this part of the country. Bohunks. Bohunks, they used to call them, Wops, yeah.

Tapes #1079 & 1080

History of Mining - Page 2 (mainly Fred Stones talking)

Question and Answer Segment following "Toil and Rage In A New Land"

No, I didn't come here until 1933. I never did work in the mines around this part of the country. The mine that I worked in up there, I was working in four foot coal. We were bent over all day long. You couldn't straighten up. If you had to straighten up your back, you had to lay down on the floor, on the ground, you know. They would drill and shoot the coal and all we did was load it and we were paid 28¢ a ton to load the coal. It was a low car and they pushed the car over the end of the rail and we'd have about a foot and a half space to shovel this coal into that car. And, of course, we'd throw it clear up to the front of the car to start with and get as much coal, as he said in that picture, and get as much coal as you could get in the car because you didn't know how many cars you was gonna get in a day. Did they use mules up there? No, not up in Utah, not at the time I was working there. They had electric motors up there. There were a lot of mules used down around this part of the country. And the mules, after they'd been in the mine for a long time, they were stone blind. They never came out of the mine. The only time they ever came out of the mine was if they were dead.

(But some of these mines around Erie, they were still open when I came here 13 years ago. Frank Garcia worked over there then; he was my next door neighbor.)

There used to be lots of coal mines right around close here. When I interviewed Ponzio Mastriano down here - he has a map of all of the mines in this coal field here. And it's amazing to see the number of mines from Frederick over to Marshall through this Boulder Valley Area out through here; there's hundreds of them.

Do you know, those mines around Marshall that were burning, there were seven or eight of them, are they still burning? They're still burning. In the wintertime, you can see the steam and the smoke come out of it and the snow doesn't stay on that side of the mountain. The reason the government doesn't go in there and put that fire out is because that's on private land. If it was on public land, the government would go in and put that fire out. But, it's on private land so it isn't the government's responsibility. How far is Marshall from here? Marshall's about 10 miles; it's what, three miles to Louisville and five-six miles on the other side of Louisville, towards Eldorado, if you know where Eldorado is; it's between Louisville and Eldorado. It's the road that goes down past Rocky Flats from Boulder to Golden.

There were a lot of mines around here over a period of about 100 years; no it wasn't 100 years, 75 years. And there used to be terrible conditions here. In fact, they weren't too good, just when everybody went out of business, you know, when the mines went out of business. When they started getting gas into all of these towns, why that put the coal mines out of business because they couldn't compete with the gas.

(Talking about people washing on a washboard and carrying their water and all that, we all did that, any of us that have any years on us.)

Tapes #1079 & 1080

History of Mining - Page 3 - (mainly Fred Stones talking)

Question and Answer Segment following "Toil and Rage in A New Land"

Didn't they have a big war here? Yeah, that was down here at the Simpson Mine that we were talking about. They had that all fenced in there and there was shooting down there. They brought the National Guard in. What year was that? That was in 1915-16, along in there somewhere. They had a strike in 1910 that lasted for six years. And this went on over at Columbine too; that's over north-east of here; between here and - well, it isn't between here and anything now, but as you go out the road here, Baseline Road, you know where that shooting place is where they shoot? Well, it's right straight north of that about two miles, that's where the Columbine Mine was.

They had an awful lot of labor strikes down there for years. The CF&I just wouldn't recognize any kind of union or anything else and they just made the men do what they wanted done and if they didn't do that, down the canyon they went and that was all there was to it. They either did what the company said -. And where we were up in Utah, it was the same way. For instance, in 1928, the company wanted everybody to vote for Hoover, a Republican. The word went out that everybody was supposed to vote for Hoover. Well, my dad was raised a Democrat all of his life, and he put a picture of Curtis - Curtis ran against Hoover that year - he put a picture of Curtis in the front window of our house. After the election, the superintendent (my dad was the master mechanic there at the mine) and after the election, of course Hoover won, this superintendent still had it in his craw that my dad had that picture of Curtis in the window and he was in there one day and he just told him, "Go get your pay, you're through". Canned him. Because he wouldn't vote for Hoover? Because he put that picture in the window. Yeah, that's true. And we were making arrangements to move and leave the camp and then he decided he'd let him stay, so we stayed there and he gave him his job back but he fired him because he put that picture in the window.

In about 1921, wasn't there a strike or something up here? I know the militia was sent up here. From about 1908 till 1931 when Roosevelt gave the people the right to unionize and the companies couldn't say anything about it, there were periodic strikes and fights and militia and machine guns and beatings and murders and everything else in this country; it was a rough, tough country.

I was talking up here to Jack Lewis. The night that he was born, Dr. -, the doctor that was right across here, Dr. uh - ah, he was here for a hundred years; anyway, he went out to deliver this baby and they lived up there on Arapahoe as you come out, straight across from where the Erie water is out there now, the Erie Lake, right straight out Arapahoe, going towards the road to Erie. And when he went out there, he went in a horse and buggy and he had a six shooter on each hip and when he went in the house, he took the six shooters off and put them on the table and went on in and deliver the baby. Now, he was the company doctor - oh, his name escapes me, he was right over here where the clinic is now, that's where he lived. Also, his wife told me, she was a Dillon, and they lived down here in what they used to call Gooseberry Gulch, that was down in the southeast side of Emma Street, was Gooseberry Gulch. And that was all part of the Simpson campground. And one day, her father came rushing in there and told her mother to get the kids and get up to the Mathias house that there was going to be some trouble. And there was; they started shooting with the machine gun. They had the machine gun up on the tippie there at the Simpson Mine and the whole side of their house was splattered with machine gun shells and went right in there where the kids were sleeping so some of those kids would have

Tapes #1079 & 1080

History of Mining - Page 4 (mainly Fred Stones talking)

Question and Answer Segment following "Toil and Rage in a New Land"

been killed if they hadn't gotten out. But these are common stories and this is what I've been doing over the past year is talking to these people about all of this. Are you making tapes of them? Yes, just like this; we're making a tape of this now. The problem is, people are afraid to talk to a tape recorder. Some of the best things I get are after the tape is shut off. When Jack told me about the doctor coming out there with the six shooters, that wasn't on the tape. He thought about that after the tape was over with. You've been doing this for a year, talking with local folks and getting some history? Yes, it's an oral history. When will we get to hear it? You can hear it now down at the library; they're all down there. What they do, they talk the tapes and then they transcribe them. You can listen to the tapes there; you can't check the tapes out. I don't know if you can check out the transcriptions either, but you can read the transcriptions there. It's like an oral history. It's an oral history of the town. Now, is the Boulder - Nederland - Ward mining area considered part of the Boulder Valley, what you're talking about? No, that's in the mountains. The Boulder Valley is where the Boulder Creek runs down through here and we're part of the Boulder Valley.

Then the two mining areas are very different in what they mine? Oh, yes, up there in Nederland and Eldora and those places up there, those were all hard rock mines. They were mining for gold or silver and that type of ore up there, and tungsten. That's what my grandfather mined, tungsten. That was during World War I, back in the teens. That's when tungsten was real necessary to the war. They did a lot of tungsten mining in that area, up in there, up around Gold Hill and Ward and all those places. And also for gold and silver and what have you. But those are hard rock mines; they're entirely different from the coal mines. They are mined differently, they have different problems. It's just a different world all together. Now, is it coal mining down in Trinidad? Now Trinidad, that's in the southern part of the state. There was a big coal field down there. The CF&I and Rockefeller and who was the other one? Anyway, they were the ones that built the steel mill there, the CF&I, the Colorado Fuel and Iron, and they used coal there in the steel mills there in Pueblo and, of course, sold it to other places too. They had lots of problems down there. Those people, their life was miserable constantly. This man said that Trinidad at one time was voted by the United States Chamber of Commerce the number one business town for that size. And this was probably true because it was the center for all of that southern central Colorado there, the trading center. They had the Ludlow Massacre; you might have heard of the Ludlow Massacre. That happened down there just west of Trinidad. There were hired gunmen that came in there and they just killed these people just indiscriminately.

There were two or three smelters up Boulder Canyon. Not smelters, as such; they were ore reduction places, you know, that would separate the rock from the ore and then they'd bring the ore down and put it on the trains. But I don't think there were actually any smelters around, I think they were just rolling(?) mills or something like that. I think maybe there was. I don't mean to argue with you but my husband went to work in the mines when he was just very young and some older man told him to get the'h'out of there or he would ruin his lungs and I think it might have been over toward Marshall, but I don't know. Well, I don't know. But I know, up the canyon there, up Boulder Canyon, up towards Nederland there, there's still two or three old relics of buildings where they processed this ore. Just above the falls there's one. Well, I guess there is; I haven't been up there for years and years.

Tapes # 1079 & 1080

History of Mining - Page 5 (mainly Fred Stones talking)

Question and Answer Segment following "Toil and Rage in a New Land"

Most of this town here (Lafayette) is all undermined. Between the Columbine and this one that was right out here on the southwest corner and, oh what was the one down there in the field south of Sax? I can't think of it right now, but it was quite a mine. And then, of course, the Standard. We were all run in with mines all over the town. The Mitchell was right here on the north part of town. (There was one area where bought some land and then couldn't use it for that)??? That is right up here on the corner where you turn to go north - you go east on Baseline and then you turn to go north on 287 and that place, that old field in there, that's the one. What mine was that? There used to be a big slag pile there? That was the Black Diamond. They took every bit of that coal out from under there. All of the pillars and everything. You see, what they do, they drive these entries to the edge of the property that they control and then as they would work back, they would pull the coal and just let the places cave in behind them. So, that's what they called "pulling the pillars" and that has been completely mined out, that section of ground. So, they're particular about what they'll let go on there. And it's been sold several times and each time, the people found out too late that they couldn't build anything on there. So, I don't know what they'll ever do with that piece of ground. Chances are, it'll end up as some kind of a park. What was done where it caved in down here in the southeast part of town? It was just the subsidence. The mines just gradually caved in, you know. They were all timbered, of course and everything, but those timbers would rot out and then they would just cave in. Well, depending on the structure of the ground, these mines were about 375 feet deep in this part of the county. But where it caves right here, then it has a funnel effect; you see, it keeps caving up in a wider area and eventually, the core of that funnel will drop in and that's what happened - it happened down here; it happened up here on Kimbark Street one time; there was a big hole up there, you know. It happened in Louisville a time or two. It's just a cave-in. It would really be something to get up some morning and look out and see your whole back yard (caved in) - that's what happened to those kids down there. Yeah, sure, that's what happened down there on Kimbark - the whole street caved in. When we lived down here on Cleveland, right over here at 503, back in the '40s, you never knew whether you'd be able to open your doors or not. One day, you'd be able to open your bathroom door and the next day, it would be stuck shut, and so on. You know, the house was continually moving and working, you know. It's settled now; I don't think they have any problems. Most of the problems around here are from the subsidence. You get down around Thornton, they have problems with that clay down there.

Up there where I live, it hasn't been undermined. There's three layers of coal there but there isn't enough coal in all three of the layers to have made it economically feasible to mine. One of them was maybe two feet and another one was a foot and a half thick. There's an oil well right there on our ground; they're getting oil and gas out of there. They'll never get enough out of there to pay for drilling the well. Never. Particularly with the depressed prices.

What about water coming into the mines? (??) The Highway Mine, I think was the wettest mine of any of them around here. They had big pumps going there constantly day and night to keep the water out of the mine. The water would drain into the mines, you know, and they'd have to get the water out.

Tapes #1079 & 1080

History of Mining - Page 6 (mainly Fred Stones talking)

Question and Answer Segment following "Toil and Rage in a New Land"

I'm curious - when she said the mines over here at Marshall are still burning. What causes them to burn? Oh, there's several reasons that they will catch fire, electricity is one. Actually, they used to have open flame lights and I think that one has been burning ever since they had the open flame lights, like the carbide lights. It's been burning for years and years. I've been here ever since 1933 and it's been burning in all these years. There's a lot of things that can start them, spontaneous combustion, and then it just keeps going and going and going.

When I was up at Craig, there was a mine on fire - not a mine - it was just a seam of coal and it was way back off of Highway 40, back in the hills back there. Some way or other, the Bureau of Land Management had found it and it was burning. They drilled and found out where the fire was to start with and then they went in there with these big heavy machines, bulldozers and scrapers and one thing and another, and dug down and dug a trough all the way down to where it was burning and then packed it full of dirt and it burned up to the dirt and that was the end of the fire. It was on government land so they put that fire out. But they won't do that on a private piece of ground, like the one over at Marshall. Who owns that ground? I don't have any idea. And I don't know what started it. It could be spontaneous, it could be gas explosion. They were talking about that one, the Scofield explosion up in Utah; that was just about 40 miles from where we lived in Utah. And in 1924, the Castle Gate Mine blew up at eight o'clock in the morning and killed 276 men in one explosion. I was there an hour after it blew up. How old were you then? I was 12.

Tape #1080 - Page 7
Texaco Bulk Plant; Fluffy Duffy, Gambles
Fred Stones narrating

This is Fred Stones with an addition to the tape that I have already turned in. The ladies at the library reminded that I hadn't said anything about the Bulk Plant or the Fluffy Duffy or the Gambles Store in the previous tape and they wanted me to include some of the things about these three items so I will try to do this now.

The Texaco Bulk Plant was on the corner, the southeast corner of the 600 block of East Cleveland Street. It was approximately four lots large. It was enclosed with a high, six foot fence. There was one tank, a vertical tank, that held 17,000 gallons. This was used, for what we called at that time, Bronze or Fire-Chief gasoline. There was a horizontal tank, a two compartment tank, that had 10,000 gallons in each side. One side was used for Ethyl gasoline or Sky-Chief gasoline; the other was used for kerosine. At about 1946, diesel fuel was becoming more popular and we installed a 4,000 gallon underground tank for diesel fuel. Charlie Billington took a contract to install this 4,000 gallon tank. He dug that complete hole by hand and had to shovel the dirt up on to the shoulder of the hole and then shovel it back several times to get enough space to hold all the dirt. That was a big hole. He finally got the tank all installed by hand. We had about a 10 by 12 foot pump house with the loading dock and then there was a walkway across to the main warehouse which was approximately 30 by 50 or 60 feet with a full large platform or deck in front. I had an office about eight foot square in the northwest corner of the big building. This comprised the actual physical part of the bulk plant.

The first person that I know that operated the bulk plant was a man by the name of Hetherington. He operated the plant until approximately 1928 when Harry Grief took over the bulk plant as agent. And he was there until 1935 when Roy Grief took over as agent from Harry who was transferred to Manhattan, Kansas. I worked for Roy all the time that he had the bulk plant from 1935 until 1941 when I was installed as the agent for the Texas Company and I operated it from then until it was closed in 1950.

We stored all of our oil and roofing and everything that came from Port Arthur, Texas in the big warehouse. Our mine business was extensive and we had to store a lot of the barrels of oil out on the dock and also out on the ground in front of the main warehouse. When I needed some of these barrels of oil, I would have to roll them over and hoist them up with a chain hoist up on to the dock and then load them on to the trucks so I could deliver them to the mine. We had a lot of mine oil business and then in the late '40s, there was a move among the mines to spray what they called their stoker coal. They would spray approximately one gallon of oil on a ton of stoker coal. This stoker coal was stored in basements and in bins and, of course, it was dusty without the oil. So, the oil kept the dust down and made it more economical for the people to use the stoker coal. They charged an extra 25¢ a ton to have it sprayed and they paid 17¢ a gallon for the oil. So there wasn't much profit in it but it helped to increase the sales of the stoker coal. I made one sale over at the Eagle Mine for four boxcar loads of oil. There were 96 barrels in a boxcar so that

Tape #1080 - Page 8
Texaco Bulk Plant, Fluffy Duffy, Gambles
Fred Stones narrating

translates out to 374 barrels in one order. All of the mines used this oil and we were the main supplier of all of the oils at the mines to the Lafayette Bulk Plant.

The Lafayette Bulk Plant was there for approximately 30 years and it was supplied by the C&S Railroad that had a spur line from Louisville down to the bulk plant. They delivered all of our gasoline and our motor oil and our mine oil and the roofing. We had a full line of roofing too. The oil and the roofing came from Port Arthur, Texas. The gasoline came from Casper, Wyoming.

When the Texas Company closed the bulk plant, they dismantled everything. They sold the big warehouse to Cliff Alderson and he had it moved up back of his store. It is still there. Public Service rented it to store their transformers and extra wire and things like that and I presume they are still using it today for that type of storage. The rest of the stuff, I don't know what happened to it; it was moved out and the land cleared and was eventually sold. Of course, there's houses on the land now.

Back in about 1946, the Dairy Queen Company started their program of soft ice-cream and they had a place out on West 38th, out by Elitch's and every time we went to Denver, Margie wanted to go by that place and get an icecream cone or a sundae or something like that; she liked that icecream. She finally decided that we ought to build one here in Lafayette. Well, we built one ourselves. We didn't have the Dairy Queen franchise so we couldn't call it a Dairy Queen. We called it the Fluffy Duffy. Now, this is a strange name for an icecream place but we had a friend from Louisville come down one night and we were pondering what to call it and he says, "Oh, heck, why don't you just call it the Fluffy Duffy?" And that name stuck. This was a 20 foot square building where the creamery used to be and right straight across the street now from the bank parking lot. It was a full glass front building. We had two walk-up windows. We had the soft icecream machines. We served sandwiches and hot homemade pie. Margaret Nace baked our pies for us fresh every morning and we would serve homemade pie there at the Fluffy Duffy. We had a man stop one time on his way to one of the football games in Boulder and he had a piece of pie and he wrote up an article in The Denver Post about this funny little place called the Fluffy Duffy in Lafayette and if anybody was ever by there and wanted a good piece of pie, that was the place to do it. We could see an increase in our business after that got into the paper. We also served hot popcorn and candy bars, just whatever anybody wanted. We had a jukebox in there which was popular at that time and the tunes were played for a nickel a piece. We operated the Fluffy Duffy for two years and then when we were transferred to Craig, we had to sell the business. George and Belle Prather bought it because they wanted to get hold of the property so they could build their motel on the back end of the property. After they had closed the icecream place, they used that for the office for their motel. The building is still there. It is used now for a lock and key place. They have changed it somewhat; they have taken the front door out and they built on to the north side there so that the roof covers the north side. For all the time

Tape #1080 - Page 9
Texaco Bulk Plant, Fluffy Duffy, Gambles
Fred Stones narrating

we were there, we were the only place between Denver and Boulder or Denver and Longmont that had the soft icecream and it was becoming more popular all the time. And on Sundays, we'd have long lines waiting to be waited on. Mary Massaro worked for us there. Margie would run it in the daytime and after I'd get through delivering at night, I'd go up there and take over in the evening. Freddie was little at the time and he had to stay up there.

Side 2:

In 1959, I was working for the Frontier Refining Company and I found out that the Gambles Store was for sale. I immediately asked about it but it had already been sold. I told them that if anything happened that I would like to have the chance the next time it came open on the store. Well, the people that had bought the store were afraid of any type of credit. They wouldn't put out any personal credit or they wouldn't put out any contract credit. Consequently, their business just fell off to where, in six months time, they didn't have any stock, they didn't have any business; the store was essentially dead. So the company, (they had to get out) and the company contacted me and wanted to know if I was still interested in it. I talked it over with Margie, and we were; we were interested in it. They wanted us to take a store somewhere else that was in better shape than this, but we had lived here a long time in Lafayette and we knew a lot of people and we figured that we could put a store in there and make a good thing for us and for the town. So we bought the store. When we took it over, there was only \$5,000 worth of stock in the inventory so you know there wasn't much there. Most of the shelves and most of the counters were empty. We immediately started to build up the inventory and all we did was take a small salary out of there, enough for us to live on. We put everything back into the store and we rapidly built the inventory up until we had a good, workable inventory in the business. We handled furniture, we handled appliances, televisions, stereos, bicycles, linoleum, carpeting, toys, all kinds of hardware, paint, you name it, we had just about everything there was in that type of business; everything except groceries and clothes. We had just about a monopoly on everything in this part of the county in the things that we were selling. We were the only furniture store. We were the only ones that had appliances. We were the only ones that had bicycles, etc. And, to make a long story short, the store was a very successful store. We worked hard at it. We did a lot of promoting on the store. We would run different promotions, sidewalk sales. We always had a big thing - we made a big deal out of Christmas and we always had a special party for the kids at Christmas time. We would go to Denver and buy popcorn balls and we'd get a case of oranges and apples and we would get a Santa Claus. Jay Abernathy was our Santa Claus. We would fix up a place and the kids could all go and talk to Santa Claus and we'd give them an orange and an apple and a popcorn ball. I think we had kids come from all over Eastern Boulder County because the night that we would have Santa Claus there, the place would be jam-packed full of people. But, it was lots of fun and we had a good time doing this. At Christmas time, we had lots of toys on stock. I would go to

Tape #1080 - Page 10
Texaco Bulk Plant, Fluffy Duffy, Gambles
Fred Stones narrating

the June sale and it wasn't anything to buy \$20,000 worth of toys. We sold toys every day throughout the year. There were always people with birthdays or measles or mumps or something where somebody wants to buy a toy for the kids so we handled toys on a daily basis throughout the year.

We sold lots of floor coverings and sold lots of tires and batteries and we had a good business going through the store. In 1962, we bought the building from the Odd Fellows Lodge and we proceeded then - nothing had been done to the building for so many years, it was in such poor condition, rundown condition - that we decided we were going to remodel the building. So we did. We hired a contractor and we put a new front on the building and did a lot of work throughout the whole building to try to make it more respectable and to bring it more in line with what the rest of the property was down there.

At the time we had the store down there, Aldersons had their clothing store. Public Service was there. Charlie Scholes was there. Roy Roberts had his grocery down there. The plumbing shop was across the street. So there was a lot of business down on East Simpson Street. It was the main business part of the City of Lafayette.

In 1967, I think it was, one morning, one Sunday morning, the telephone rang and it was Joe Bella. And he asked me if I would go up and get him a couple of gallons of paint because it was a beautiful, Sunday day and he decided he wanted to paint his back fence. I told him, yes, I would meet him up there in 15 minutes. So, when I went up, I could see the smoke boiling across the street there over Dr. Gordon's house, going south; the wind was blowing from the north. As I turned the corner there at Dr. Gordon's, one of the windows of the bank building that was just to the west of the Gambles store blew out and the flames shot out of there like a blow torch. As I went up and turned the corner, the two buildings in the front did the same thing. They exploded and the whole inside of that bank building was a mass of flame. The bank building and the Gambles store, or the old Odd Fellows building, the company store, had a common wall; there was just one wall between the two. We didn't have too much fire damage in the store, but of course, the store was filled up with a black, oily, greasy smoke that just ruined everything that we had in the store. We had just unloaded five, brand new, expensive over-stuffed sets on Friday and put them out on the floor. And there they were, in all that black, oily smoke. But, to go on with that story, they got the fire out without too much damage to our building. But it had burned out that whole west wall. The people that owned the old bank building lived in South Dakota and, of course, they just abandoned the building, they wouldn't do anything about it and the City wouldn't make them do anything about it. The tin on the sides of the building was just hanging loose and then when fall came and the winds came, that tin would be whipping around there and, actually, one time, I had to call the City and they came down and blocked off the street because the tin was blowing off that building and blowing down the street and they were afraid it would hurt somebody. We suffered through the winter, and literally, that is true, we suffered through the winter because the whole burned out wall was practically open to the elements and Grace Fuller, the lady that worked for me, and Margie Jean, my daughter and me, we would work in the store with the furnace going full blast and we'd have overcoats on and overshoes and a lot of time, gloves, to try to keep warm. There was just no way to keep warm in that building because the cold wind and the cold would come

Tape #1080 = Page 11
Texaco Bulk Plant, Fluffy Duffy, Gambles
Fred Stones narrating

right through the west side. When spring came, I finally got hold of the man up in South Dakota and I bought the building, the old bank building from him and, if I remember right, I paid \$750. for it. Then we had to tear it down and move all of the junk, the burned out stuff that was there. There was a big hole underneath it; there used to be a confectionary down there and there was a path, a dugout tunnel that used to go from the confectionary around under the old company store and there were two bowling lanes down under there. They were still there, but of course, they were all dry rotted out and they couldn't be used. But, we had to fill up that great big hole and Frank Mauro was building his restaurant up on the highway and there was a lot of dirt where he wanted to put his driveway and so to move that dirt, they hauled all the dirt down and that all went into that hole and helped to fill it up. It was a real deep hole, it must have been 10 or 12 feet and the bank vault was still there and when they started to fill up the hole, they took the top off the bank vault and it was covered with mine rails and covered with brick and, of course, the sides were all bricked and everything and that's what they kept their money in for the bank when the bank was operating. Before we filled up the hole, I took out the two glass inserts that originally were in the front, in the doors in the front of the bank. They are oval shaped and beveled and I couldn't see covering them up with dirt so I took them out and I still have them in my basement. When they have more space down at the museum, I told them when they are ready for them, they can have them. Anyway, we got the hole all filled up and then we built the wall on the west side of the old company store, or the Gambles store at that time. We covered it all up and insulated it so the next year, we weren't freezing to death in there.

I went to the City and got permission to make a small park there. And I planted grass and watered it and had a nice green area there for a long time until, finally, after I sold the store and after it was changed, people just let it go and actually, it finally developed into a weed patch.

After the fire, we had a fire sale, of course, and got rid of everything that we could. And then we had to hire a crew of ladies to come in and wash everything to get that old greasy, black soot and smoke off of everything that was left and wash down all the counters and everything and then they had to be repainted and then we had to restock the store. We were out of business for about six weeks, if I remember right, before we could get back into business. We had to redo all of the counters and everything had to be done just as if we were starting out from scratch.

From then on, I had problems with my health. It wasn't just that that caused my problems, there were other things too. So, two years later, I was forced to sell the store. I sold the store to a man by the name of Ed Chavers from Aurora. He was real anxious to have the store keep going the way it was but he had some health problems too and he started to go blind so he had to sell the store and I don't remember the man's name that he sold it to. But he sold it to somebody else and they started working the store and it was there, as I remember, about a year and a half and the store caught fire again. The

Tape #1080 - Page 12
Texaco Bulk Plant, Fluffy Duffy, Gambles
Fred Stones narrating

insurance company always figured that it was an arson deal but they never could prove it but it spread so fast. They questioned me about his operation in the store but, of course, I couldn't tell them very much about it. But they always figured that, but they couldn't prove it. But that was the end of the store. The insurance company rebuilt the building but there was never any more Gambles store in the place.

The next thing that was in there was an auction house. That went on for about a year. Then he decided he was going to close the auction house. There was a carpet company went in and put in a carpet showroom and they sold carpet out of there. His name was Jerry Burk and he eventually bought the building and that was the end of my association with the building. During the time we had it, like I say, we remodeled it. We remodeled the upstairs. We cleaned it all up and fixed it up and redid all of the wiring, repainted it and made it into a halfway reasonable place to be. This was the only place in town for anybody to have a dance or to have a big party or anything like that. That was before the VFW got their place enlarged. So when any of the kids in town or when anybody wanted to have a dance or party, they would have it up there and then, of course, we would have to clean it up and get it ready again. It was the social center of the town, the upstairs of the store there. The lodges all continued to meet there - the Masons, the Pythian Sisters and the Odd Fellows and the Rebeccas and the Rainbow Girls, they all had their lodge meetings there. And there were a couple churches that held meetings up there too. It was a good place for them to have their meetings. But after I sold the store, that was the end of my association with the building and finally, it changed hands several times and finally it got into the hands of the people that remodeled it and they put it back to, essentially, the way it was when it was originally built on the outside. The outside looks about like it did when it was originally built. They changed the whole thing that we had changed. We had put a brick exterior on it and put the modern windows in. They took all that brick exterior off and put the old long windows in the way they were when they started. The only main difference of the thing is the inside of the building - they took and dug out the basement and that is all useable space now and all of the inside of the three floors is offices and places for small retail shops; where, before, it was just one big store on the main floor. Just a dirt basement downstairs and the dance floor and some offices on the second floor.