

Oral Histories

Number: OH 43

Date: Oct. 10, 1989

Condition:

Holdings:

Good

WP Library

Initials: DP

Interviewee: Pera, Walter

Interviewer: Davine Pera

Abstract: Side A

00-100 History of parents arrival from Finland. Occupation of father as blacksmith. Parents wedding in Telluride. Father's illness. Relatives buried in Lone Tree Cemetery in Telluride.

100-144 Mother's efforts to make a living by running a laundry from home. Walt's job was to pick up and deliver laundry using a hand pulled wagon and a sled. Brother worked for Uncle Gus in his grocery store.

144-173 Memories of transporting father to various medical facilities for medical help, travelling by boxcar on the train. Father was bedfast for 7 years. Father died at age 39.

173-298 Describes the sauna father built for health reason. Mother remodeled sauna as public bath after husband's death, to help with their income. Tells how the sauna was run for the public, by reservation, prices charged and Walt's job as a small boy to gather switches used in sauna.

298-339 Discusses different areas of town—Finn Town. Swede Town and Wap Town. Customs were maintained at Finn Hall and Swede Hall.

339-408 Christmas celebrations described, type of food served, programs were held on Christmas Eve, and everyone took all their gifts to be opened there. Describes the preparation of lutefisk for Christmas dinner.

408-485 School years. Kindergarten held in basement of church. Speaks of the different sports in school. Various lodges in town supported local baseball teams.

485-532 Talks of the depression years. Mother moved the family to Durango and worked in laundry there until she started her own. Speaks of people from "lower country" vandalizing vacant houses in Telluride during the depression.

Side B

10-55 Walter moved back to Telluride after graduating from High School, and lived with brother family home. They panned for gold for money to live on. Government gave subsidies to families to help people live. Speaks of the Smuggler Mine reopening.

55-221 He was married to Allene Winkfield July 29, 1936. Memories of their courtship and wedding. He started working for the Western Colorado Power Company in summers and worked for the mine during the winters. Describes living at the Tomboy Mine for 1 year as switchman for the Western Colo. Power Co. There was 15 feet of snow at Tomboy that winter. Describes the trip to Telluride for birth of second child.

221-470 After the year at Tomboy, they moved back to town and he worked for mine for 2 years, then started working for the Power Company full time. Describes his job as flume walker and how the flume connected power plants for West. Colo. Power Co. Talks about 1st hydro power plant built by L.L. Nunn at Ames. Explains the system used for transporting water from Lake Hope to Trout Lake and the process of closing and opening the valve twice a year at Lake Hope. He made the trips on snowshoes. They moved to Electra Lake near Durango, lived there for 15 years, moved back to Telluride for a few years, and retired to Nucla.

470-553 Memories of town baseball teams, early July 4th celebrations. Names different dairies in town and mentions other early day businesses. Talks about Bridal Veil Power Plant and Blue Lake.

Description: sound cassette (90 minutes)

Subjects: Parent's history

Mother's laundry

Sauna

Finn Hall

Christmas

School years

Depression

Side B

Depression

Living at Tomboy Mine

Western Colorado Power Co.

Various memories