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North Fork Oral History Project Interviews

Interview with Larry Mizner, 1/12/08
Interviewers: Shelly and Larry Means

[Part 1.]

- Shelly Means Today is January 12th, 2008. And we're interviewing Larry Mizner of Pine Grove. Shelly Means and Larry Means are conducting the interview. Larry, thank you so much for doing this. I really appreciate it.
- Larry Mizner You're welcome.
- SM Maybe you could start by just telling us how you got to this area and what you remember about Pine Grove.
- LM Well, as a kid my mom and dad rented a cabin in Sphinx Park right below the Bucksnot and they rented it for the summer, so we used to come up periodically at different times during the summer. And it was always a challenge for me, because I had motion sickness. That was initially the way my mother and father got interested in Pine. They used to come down to the grocery store for supplies, and they got to talking to the owners of the store and over a period of time, they arranged a trade for our house in Denver and we moved up here in 1958.
- SM Now, where was that store?
- LM It was the Pine store. It was right behind the Pine Emporium on Elk Creek. Originally the front of it was all store, and then the back section was just storage. After we moved up here then, there was only one bedroom. So, my dad developed the back end for me, for my bedroom and then later on over the years, there was an addition put on the back, to include a sun room and another bath.
- Larry Means Do you recall then, what was in the library building? Or Wolf's [?] place next door, that was a store.
- LM Wolf's place was a store. The people that owned it, their last name was Vaughan[?]. They had a girl and a son. And I went to school with her when I was in school. The library, at that period of time, I



don't believe there was anything in it. I don't remember it. Where the fire station is now, was the old original train station. It was still there.

SM Was it actually where the fire station building is now? Or a little...

LM It was really close to where it was. I wouldn't be surprised if when they put the foundation in, they found traces of the old foundation train station. The Pine Emporium...I can't remember what that was. But Ginny[?] and Warren had that for a number of years. A lot of the residents have changed over the years and there's been new houses built and others torn down. The area across 126 along the river consisted of probably eight or ten different residences beginning with the Wilcoxes. And then going down to Stansbury's[?]. And then down on the end by Russ _____ (3:53) place now, was the old sawmill.

SM Oh.

LM Gossages[?] had that. John Gossage. And John Gossage is still operating a sawmill up in Woodside. I see him almost all the time. And he and I went to high school together. His brother, unfortunately, was killed in a fire several years ago. And so he and I are kind of the only ones that are left around.

SM The buildings that were along the river that you're talking about, were those all railroad houses?

LM Initially yes, I believe they were. The original post office was at the Elephant Cafe. The red building. That was the original post office. And then, when mom became postmaster it was moved over to, actually it sat in the back of the store building that we had. So, you had to come through the store to get to the post office.

SM And when your folks owned that building, did they also run the store? Or had they changed?

LM Yes.

SM Okay.

- LM No, we had the store. And we maintained the store for probably four or five years after we moved up. But it became a situation where it was just not profitable. There wasn't enough traffic. So, dad closed the store down and we moved the post office to the front of the building. We have some of the stuff still from the store. I've got the old slicer. It's downstairs. We used to have an old cash register, which I wish we still had, but we don't. But we do have pictures of the inside of the store. And the exterior of the store from when we first purchased it.
- SM And you worked at the store? Or you worked in one of the other buildings? What did you do as a young man?
- LM As a kid, I worked in the store. But, well, when I first moved up here I had a paper route. Consisted of, I think eight people. Five people. And, even to my last stop was Mary Ann Brady's place.
- SM And where was that?
- LM It's the little white house right down here below me.
- SM Okay.
- LM On the right hand side. Can't think of his last name. Dave. He was at the meeting.
- SM Bob Drawe?
- LM I mean yeah, Bob Drawe's place. It was Mary Ann Brady's.
- SM Okay.
- LM Was it? Oh, yeah. Mary Ann Brady, she was quite an eccentric. Her house consisted of probably several different pathways. It was probably the model for the mice of today. But she used to pay me in silver dollars. And I still have a shoe box full of silver dollars.
- SM Oh.
- LM That she used to pay me in. She was my last stop. And then going home, then I'd go down the upper road, which was Fourth Street. And one time I lost my brakes and went across 126 and down to



the river almost. But after that, I worked in the store and through high school I wrangled horses and worked at Pine Valley Ranch on the weekends. And then eventually I worked at Crystal Lake, busing dishes and cooking and whatever needed to be done.

SM What do you remember about both of those places? Pine Valley Ranch and Crystal Lake.

LM Well, Pine Valley was initially a corporation that held it, it had thirteen corporate owners. And they were mostly doctors. And they were essentially from all over the United States. The largest one or the principle was Dr. O'Neal[?]. And we had Miss America, what was her name...escapes me now.

SM The lady who lived in Denver?

LM Yeah. But, her sister had a little girl that was retarded and they used to bring her up all the time and I used to take her out riding on a Shetland that we kept at the property. I brought in the horses and ran the hay and did all that stuff at Pine Valley. And that was pretty much, in the summer time that was during the week and then on the weekends and at nights, I worked at Crystal Lake. And so, I was pretty busy. I didn't have much time for...And then I graduated from Evergreen High School. I worked over at El Rancho, and Highlander Inn, and several other places over in that area. Got married as soon as I got out of high school and moved to Denver. And now I'm back.

SM Where were the elementary schools?

LM Well, the elementary school for me was right there in Aspen Park. I was the first bus stop in the morning and the last one at night. And it came down 126 and picked me and probably, let me see, about seven of us up. And then we went down through Buffalo and down along the river and up Kennedy gulch. Came out on the 285 and then went to the grade school. And then junior high, we caught a bus from there to Evergreen. And then of course, it was return route. So, when you catch the bus at six thirty, quarter to seven in the morning, there was about an inch of frost on the top of the bus on the inside in the winter. And then we'd get home about, actually about five o'clock. Four thirty, five o'clock. It was a long trip.

- SM Talk some more about the building that was the post office. You said there was a train car out back.
- LM Yeah. When we originally purchased the property there was a railroad car sitting in the back yard. Some of the old pictures show a spur coming off the main line and it was a sidetrack that dead-ended in the back of our yard and when they abandoned the railway they left cars sitting on the rails at that point. And it had become a storage shed and things like that. But it was, over the years, it was just not feasible to keep it that way. My dad had it cut up and hauled off. And then the garage on the property, used to be an old ice house, I remember as a kid, I'd sell ice out of it, block ice in the summer time for the tourists that came by and that's when we had the store.
- SM So, did you help cut the ice in the winter?
- LM No. No, at that point they weren't taking it out of Crystal Lake anymore. So, we would go to town, and I can't remember the name of the place, it was down off of Larimer Street, and it was an actual ice house and we would purchase the ice in blocks and bring them up. Pack them in sawdust, and bring them up in the truck.
- L.MEANS What was the old hotel at that time? Was it a residence?
- LM It was a residence.
- L.MEANS It was.
- LM Williams had it. It's always been a residence since I've lived up here.
- SM Were there any other signs or remnants of the railroad still in Pine when you moved here?
- LM Well, the railroad car and then there was the original train station.
- SM Now, did you ever go inside that train station?
- LM Yes. It was a long time ago. A long time ago. Dr. O'Neal eventually bought it. He owned it. As well as some of the original train cars that he kept in a museum in town, in Denver. The building sat

vacant for many, many years. They didn't do anything with it and then it, unfortunately burnt down.

SM But that's about all that was left.

LM Yeah. That was all that was left.

SM Now, I don't know if it's a caboose, but a train car down at the east side of town, sitting on the south side of 126.

LM Yeah.

SM Do you know anything about that?

LM I believe that was brought in afterwards.

SM Okay.

L.MEANS Not even sure that's narrow gauge. _____(13:50) standard gauge.

LM Yeah, when the Bryn Mawr was there, the only house that was there, was right across the street and that train car was not there at that time. So...as far as remnants, I mean I used to walk through Pine Valley and walk up the old railroad beds. All the way, you could actually walk all the way up to Bailey. And of course you'd find railroad spikes and there was all kinds of cinders and stuff like that. But that was about it. That was about all that was left.

SM You ever get to the town of Crossings?

LM Mm-hm.

SM Do you remember anything of that area?

L.MEANS A few buildings left there?

LM There were a few buildings left. As I used to take the boy scouts in through Eos [?] Mill and down to the river. At that point we could drive down within probably seven or eight hundred yards of the river and they had a small parking area. And I used to take them

down there all the time. And there were a few buildings left and things. But...

SM Was it a railroad town? Is that why it started?

LM Yeah. Crossings was originally just a jump off point. When the narrow gauge used to come up through here, there was a number of people that would come up from Denver and they had cabins and things and they would just literally come up to fish. There were jump off points where they could get off and fish for a few days and camp and then catch the train back to Denver. The only person that may have been still associated with the railroad was Pop Baker.

SM Tell us about him.

LM He was a retired engineer, I believe, from the railroad. And he lived right on the corner, next to the river there, there was a place where the river runs around the point. And there's a cabin down close the river. The gentleman that used to own that, his first name was Pete. I can't remember his last name now, but Pop Baker's place was right across the road there. There's a motor home sitting there now.

SM Are you talking about on the west side of town?

LM No, just across, you know where the bridge crosses?

SM Oh, yeah.

LM Right there. That house where the motor home's sitting.

SM Okay.

LM He had a little house there.

SM And that was?

LM Pop Baker.

SM Pop Baker. Okay.

LM Yeah. That's what we used to call him. He looked like General Custer. He was tall, he was slender. He had a gray goatee and he

used to wear the same kind of hat. And he used to take me down on the river fishing. And he taught me a lot about, he had a split bamboo fly rod that he used all the time, which I still have. But we used to go fishing together right there on the river. But he would be the only person that I would remember that was associated with the railroad.

SM Someone told us that there may have been a retired engineer, when you get off 126, as you're going to the open space. And there's a house right down very low. Morleys[?] live there now. Right across from the White Pines.

LM Oh, yeah.

SM And then there's another house that Shelly and Vic live in, I believe. That maybe someone there was associated with the railroad originally.

LM Vic's and Shelly's place.

SM Yeah.

LM A gentleman built that. He was retired service.

SM Okay.

L.MEANS Those aren't really old houses.

SM Well, no. No, but...

LM Yeah, no. He was retired service. Used to call him Sarge. Because at that period of time in Pine, a lot of people from Denver would bring their dogs up through here and just drop them off.

SM Oh.

LM And we used to have a lot of problems with dogs running deer and stuff like that. And early in the morning, you'd hear the crack of his thirty-ought six because he'd go out and sit on the front porch and he'd see some dogs running some deer across on the other side of the river. And that's the way we cleaned up the problem.

SM Was he also a gardener?

LM Yes.

SM Then we are talking about the same man.

LM In White Pines, there used to be a large, white farm-like house, that sat right there next to the garage. Baldwins owned it. I went to school with Harold. His dad was a retired major. I don't remember what service, what branch of the service. But they had the cabins and everything there. And then he sold it, they moved to Mexico. Harold stayed here at that point. We had graduated from high school, just barely. And I used to live in the upper part of that house when I was seventeen. Harold and Bruce _____ (19:49) and I did. His dad ran Crystal Lake. And Bruce and I lived in the upper part of the house and all the girls lived on the lower floors. And then it burnt down also. So, it's...

L.MEANS When you first came to town, what was the, what's now the community center building? Was that empty? Or was it being used for something?

LM At that point, it was kind of like a part-time church. Over the years. As I remember it. There weren't a lot of people that lived in Pine, especially in the winter time. Summer population grew quite a bit, because all of the cabins up here on the hill were summer cabins. There were very few full time residents up here. Dad also purchased the summer water system from Williams. And we ran it for a number of years. And initially there were like 30 cabins that we serviced and then over the years, it kept just dwindling off. And the service became old. All the pipes were difficult to maintain. And then the county decided that we needed to put chlorine in the system. And at that point, I pretty much shut it down because it was not feasible to keep maintaining it.

SM Was that water system the one that Charles Date[?] developed?

LM Yes. It consisted of a series of two springs actually. The first one was actually outside the town proper, or the town city limits of Pine, up on the hill. It was forty acres. And the main spring was there. And then on the way down, it hooked into another spring that nobody really knew anything about, until years later when Dad and

I found the line. It just comes out of the side of the mountain. We don't know where it goes or anything, it was just tied into the spring.

SM Are those springs still running, do you know?

LM Oh, yeah. The original spring supplies a house that I built on the forty acres. The lower spring right now, just runs out on the ground. You can see it at the Draw right up here. And there's an old foundation up there that, from what I understand, was a still. When I was a kid, there was not a lot of fences and property lines and things around and I used to hike a lot. And there was an old dump up in there, almost behind Sphinx Park. This road goes up around behind there and then goes almost up to Stage Coach. Or used to. And there was a dump up there. And it had a couple of '27 T's in it. And a couple of '32 Fords. And I used to walk up in there a lot. But from what I understand there was some still activity because of the spring.

SM Mm-hm.

LM As well as underneath the original building where my mom and dad lived. There was a spring and a still underneath the building. My dad, when we purchased the property, the floors were quite uneven. And you had to get underneath, and there was no way to get underneath the building. So he cut a hole in the floor and it just so happened that it was right above a staircase. And when we went down underneath, there was the original still, the copper kettle with big axe marks in it and some of the original long neck bottles. So, when it was a bar, or a saloon, they were making their own stuff.

L.MEANS By axe marks, do you mean when it was destroyed?

LM Yes. Well, this is long gone. I ran into another one years ago. Rex Grove[?] was the foreman at Pine Valley Ranch, when I was working up there. He had a son. And he used to come up every now and then. And he brought a _____(24:41) with him one time. And we went above the lake there, and went up Buckskin Gulch, back on the forest. And we were back in there running around and we came across a road. And we started following it and it headed towards Buffalo. And it was back across the ridge line behind Balance Rock, back in there. And we came across a cabin that had...the place settings were still on the table. The silverware,

the plates, the cups. Everything was undisturbed. And outside in the back in a shed was another still, with the axe marks. And you know, it was virtually undisturbed. It was like they just got up and left, or were hauled off, or whatever. But then we stayed on that road and we got almost to Buffalo and got in a canyon and ran out of gas.

SM Oh.

LM We had to carry that _____(25:51) up over the edge, and came out in Buffalo. I had to call my dad to come and bring the truck down, and get us out. But that road used to be exist back then, I'm sure it still does.

SM It's probably in the National Forest now.

LM Yeah, it is.

SM Yeah.

LM Unfortunately with the fires, it was probably destroyed, so. Yeah, there was some activity up there.

L.MEANS Was there any mining activity up here? We've heard tales of a few shafts or tunnels, somewhere around Buffalo.

LM There's a few around.

L.MEANS Kind of surprised me. Because this is not considered the mineral belt.

LM No. It's not considered a mining area. In fact, there was one right back here, right up on top of the hill, where they have dug out. And they dug out probably, oh, maybe ten feet down. And I don't know exactly what they were looking for. The rocks and everything were still there. And over the years, I've ran across a couple of areas where they have dug, you know, maybe a hole six, eight foot deep. But no really mining activity so to speak.

L.MEANS Probably basic prospecting holes.

- LM Yeah. There were some places on upper Elk Creek, I believe, that they even tried to mine for some gold but I don't think they ever found anything because we used to get a lot of quartz around. Long Scraggy had a lot of quartz on it at one time. But that's probably it.
- SM Do you remember anything about the dam that was on Elk Creek? Or was it gone by the time you guys got here?
- LM No. It was gone. Just some articles that I read on it, there's still the old, the word escapes me but it's a pipeline, that's right on the side of that mountain. Right there next to the dam. And it's all built out of cement and clay pipe and part of the old pipeline is still there.
- L.MEANS Heard Wolf talk about that.
- SM Was the dam right under Elephant Rock?
- LM Essentially.
- SM Okay.
- LM It was just down from it, just a little bit. But it was right under Elephant Rock.
- SM Okay. Right under.
- LM Yeah. There's still some remnants there of the dam. You can see it.
- L.MEANS So, was it for a water system? Or was it for recreation?
- LM It was for a water supply initially.
- L.MEANS For the town or for sawmills? Or something?
- LM For the town. For the railroad.
- L.MEANS For the railroad. Yeah, they'd use a lot of water too.
- LM More storage than anything else.
- L.MEANS You know what took out the dam? Was it a flood or...?

- LM It was a flood.
- L.MEANS They didn't take it out intentionally. I figured it was taken out by a flood at some point.
- LM It was a flood. Yeah. Yeah. That's what I've read anyway. Trying to think of any other...oh, the remnants, find those around here. Pine Valley Ranch, the lodge was built by Old Man Bear[?]. Today they're not using it. I wish they would open it.
- SM Yeah. We do too.
- LM Have you guys seen the inside of it?
- SM Once.
- L.MEANS We went up there and volunteered once when they were cleaning it up. Took down a bunch of old drapes and I helped clean out three or four fireplaces and had rat skeletons and stuff in the fireplaces.
- LM It's quite a place. My dad and I, we used to replace the shingles on that building.
- L.MEANS That's quite a steep pitch.
- LM Yeah, it is. Yeah. Dad used to get up there with a rope tied around him, and we had about nine cinderblocks tied to a rope over the top and that's what kept him from falling. There was no OSHA or anything like that back then. But, that's quite a building. Unfortunately, they put the swimming pool when they added on to it.
- L.MEANS Is that the _____(30:49)? Right through the door.
- SM All right.
- LM Well, I didn't break horses, but I wrangled the horses up at Pine Valley Ranch, and spent time up there on the summers. Then we were interrupted by a bobcat.
- SM Yeah.

LM Right now. Years ago, there was a family that lived down in Pine, Stansbury family. Down next to the river. And I can't remember his name, but he was a vet and had lost an arm in the war. And he was coming down 126, he had a 19...

[End of Part 1.]

[Part 2.]

Larry Mizner Mr. Secret Service Man standing right by my side. They'd bring fish trucks in and out of that ranch for a week before he'd go fishing, so...I was fortunate enough to be able to fish on the ranch a couple times. There was a large amount of fish in that river.

Shelly Means You were at the Bear Ranch, the Pine Valley Ranch. I've read that at one point when Bears owned it they had an island with a big pavilion and like a picnic area. Is that still there?

LM Yeah. It's still there. There's an island. And it's a gazebo.

SM Oh.

LM And they would hold several social functions there in the summer. Weddings, all kinds of different things. Since it has gone to open space they put in some big, large picnic pavilions and things like that, but those were not there originally. They used to do a lot of entertaining. The ranch house, the lodge. They had a maid and a butler that were out there all the time. Rex and his wife, the foreman. We had myself as kind of a general handyman wrangler around and had a couple of high school gals usually that would come in and clean cabins and help out at the lodge and do things like that. So, there was a lot of activity up there.

SM Now, President Eisenhower didn't fish up at that lodge?

LM No. Not that I know of. No.

SM Okay.

LM It was just Swan Hereford.



- SM Okay. Perhaps you could talk to us about Crystal Lake and what some of your recollections are of that part of town.
- LM Crystal Lake, when I moved up here it was a restaurant. And they had a few cabins on the south side of the lake. I worked in the restaurant as busing and cooking and doing whatever needed to be done. Waiting tables. The Horans[?] were leasing it at that time. It was owned by a person, and his last name was Tepper[?]. And he also owned White Pines. So, there was a lot of people. On the weekends, we had people waiting. Had a nice area where there was a fireplace and very comfortable and very intimate and it was always full of people. Small bar. And it was a busy time. And then again it was one of the victims of the fires. It was burnt down for reasons unknown. And it has never really been rebuilt, except for the cabins are still over on the other side of the lake. It's more of a private area now.
- SM And then on the east side of town was the Bryn Mawr.
- LM Yeah. The Bryn Mawr. It was an original log structure. It was in fact an old bar. You'd walk in the door and you were pretty much at one end of the building and as you turned and went in the bar was on the left hand side and ran for probably thirty or forty feet. Booths next to it. Next to the windows, so you could look out onto the river. And then down towards the end of the building were more booths and eventually a pool table. Had a small kitchen. People that owned it, I can't remember their last name now, but they gave me a fishing pole and I've still got it. Seems like everybody in town gave me fishing poles. But, it unfortunately burned down also. I believe it was a grease fire in the kitchen and it went to the ground. And it was replaced by a new structure, the Elk Creek Station, on that property. It was a haunt of a lot of people. In fact, there was a gentleman that used to go in there, his name was Larry Means. Not the same Larry Means. But it was a number of years ago. He was a carpenter and kind of hung out around Pine and Buffalo area. My dad used to go in there for an occasional beer. It was a local gathering point. Served a good hamburger.
- SM Was it also a dance hall? Or was there a dance hall in town?
- LM Years ago. I mean, a lot of years ago. There was a couple of saloons in town and in fact the building that my mom had used to

be a dance hall. It was no more of a dance hall than a saloon or a bar. Like we discussed, the original bar was the library possibly. But I don't know. I don't know of anybody that remembers it, or knows of it. Other structures in town, the old schoolhouse, which the Green's own now. When we moved up here in 1958, they had just closed it. And so all the kids that were going to school there, and in Buffalo, they closed the Buffalo schoolhouse. We were bused up to West Jeff. Up in Aspen Park. And over a period of time, in Junior High, then we were bused from West Jefferson to Evergreen. They've since remedied a lot of that busing now, by building the new high school in Conifer. But it was a long bus ride every morning. The day I turned 16, I got my driver's license and my car and never set foot on a school bus again.

SM Had you ever been in the schoolhouse, as it was first converted into a home? Or, do you remember anything about it?

LM No, I never was able to go in it. We used to play up there a lot on the swings and as I was reminded recently, it had a merry-go-round. But, we'd play up there a lot because there was virtually nobody around up there on that side of town. Murray and Cordelia's house was the closest one. They were, I think, three houses down. All the rest of the cabins were summer cabins. In the summer there would be kids around that would come up, but in the winter time there were not a lot of people around. I can't remember how many years it sat vacant. But, it's an interesting structure. As is the schoolhouse in Buffalo. Very similar construction.

SM You mentioned, Murray Hall. Any recollections of him and maybe some of the other people in town.

LM Murray and Cordelia, Murray kind of took me under his wing when I was a kid. My dad was not much of an outdoors person. So, Murray took me hunting. Shot my first deer down on Long Scraggy. Used to go up to his house all the time. He had a rock polisher and he did a lot of rock work. And he had an extensive arrowhead collection. A lot of them that he had picked up, up 126, where the turnoff into Pine Valley Estates. The meadow right there used to be an Indian campground. And he found a lot of what he had in that area at that time.

SM Can you be a little more specific about what meadow you're talking about?

LM It's about halfway down 126 from Pine Junction. About three and a half miles down, there's a turn off that goes into Pine Valley Estates. There's a bunch of houses right there, where it opens up across from Swiss Village. In that meadow. That used to be a pretty large meadow and there were no houses in there at that time. In fact, 126, when we moved up here in 1958, they had, they didn't pave it. It was dirt, they had oiled it. And then within a year or two they came through and they paved it. But that meadow was pretty pristine. And at that time there was a small stream that ran down through there year round. And that's where Murray found a lot of these arrowheads and rocks. He was, like a lot of people up here, he was pretty much a jack-of-all trades. He could roof your house, he could build a wall, he could do a lot of different things. But he was an excellent hunter and tracker. He had a large mountain lion on the wall that he had killed. He had a large, six point bull elk that was also mounted on the wall. With an eight foot ceiling, he had to mount it pretty low on the wall because the horns would touch the ceiling. After he passed away, Cordelia had an estate sale, and I was fortunate enough to purchase the horns, which I still have. And they still have the original hunting license wrapped around the horns. He had a lot of that sort of thing around. Really an interesting mountain person. A true mountain person.

SM Did he live here his whole life? Do you know that?

LM I don't know. I don't know if he lived here his whole life. Cordelia was a teacher at the school house in Pine. I don't know how many years they had lived here, but they'd been here quite a few years. The William's that have the old hotel. It was a residence. To my knowledge it hadn't been a hotel for a long time. There is a house on the corner, when you turn to go up to the Buck Snort, Mrs. Bosler[?] had that house. She also had the Victorian that was right above it, which is being restored now.

L.MEANS That's what we know as the _____ (12:25) house?

LM I believe so, yes.

L.MEANS Yeah.

- SM Okay.
- LM Bob's place.
- L.MEANS Yeah. Bob _____(12:30) place.
- LM Yeah. She was really an interesting lady. As a kid I used to go over there. She'd bake cookies all the time.
- SM Did you know the Hills at all? Olive Hill and Bud Hill?
- LM Yeah. Olive and Bud. Bud Hill was my mother's rural carrier for the post office. And she had the post office in Pine, and then she had a substation in Buffalo, which Green's had, and then they had a substation in Foxton. Flora was the postmaster there. Bud had been a rural carrier up here, and lived up here for a lot of years. He used to deliver mail on horseback. He had a list of the number of cars that he had wrecked coming down the Elk Creek hill that he had literally run off into the creek and totaled. Quite a gentleman. Bud retired from the post office and then they lived here until he passed away and then Olive passed away.
- SM Now, they're not buried here are they that you know of?
- LM No, they are not. Not that I know of.
- SM Okay. And they didn't have children.
- LM No. They did not.
- SM What about Murray and Cordelia? Are they buried here? Or do you even know?
- LM I don't know whether they were or not. And I don't think that Murray and Cordelia had children either. It's funny, I don't remember that. I don't remember about any of the arrangements.
- SM Do you have any recollections of the cemetery?
- LM Oh, just as a kid, the cemetery is right below what we used to call Bunker Hill. And we used to camp out on top of Bunker Hill all the

time in the summer. Spent more time on Bunker Hill and Elephant Rock in the summer than I did in my own house when I was a kid. And, you know, the cemetery being close to where we were camping was always a "oooh..." type thing. You know. But other than that, there wasn't much there. I mean, it was pretty overgrown. There wasn't a lot of grass and very few headstones.

L.MEANS You don't remember any burials in the cemetery. That was a long time ago.

LM Yeah. That was a long time ago. And in fact, the only burial that I know of in the cemetery is Fred and Jane's daughter. That's the only one I remember. I was married in the child cemetery, the church in Buffalo Creek, when I was 18. A lot of people didn't like that much, but it was kind of neat.

SM Are you talking about the little chapel?

LM Little chapel in the hills. At that time it was primarily a child cemetery. There were not a lot of adults that were buried there at that time. Of course it was different because it hadn't been remodeled and it would only seat maybe twenty people at that time. And that was 1965.

SM Do you have any stories of encounters with wild animals?

LM Yeah. As we discussed I used to walk, hike around here a lot. I was an only child. I didn't have any brothers or sisters. I'd come home from school, and drop my books, and out the back door either fishing or walking. And I used to go across the river and hike up towards Balance Rock a lot. Coming back, a lot of times I ran. Being younger you're able to do that. And I was running down the side of the hill one day, and there was a log there, and I ran and then I stepped on the log to jump over it, just as a bear raised up. And I just kept on running. I didn't want to know what he was doing.

SM Well, obviously he didn't catch you.

LM And, I've seen a lot of different animals. Over the years it's changed. We never used to see any elk at all down here. Now there are elk. A lot of it I think is due to the wildfires and the forest fires that we've had. Seen or heard several mountain lions over the

years. Bobcats we've seen. Of course a lot of deer. They've always been around. Always been a pest. Some of them have been great pets over the years. That's pretty much it. Animals up here, small animals we have to really watch, because there are a lot of predators about still today. Like, we were just enjoying the bobcat a little bit ago.

SM Absolutely. Do you have any recollections of early natural disasters? Floods, fires, anything like that?

LM There was, they called it the Elk Creek Fire. It burned across from Elk Creek over to 126, over in the Swiss Village and then burned across the highway. That was actually the only one I ever remember, my dad fought in that. I believe there were two or three guys killed in that fire.

L.MEANS Do you remember what year that was?

LM It had to have been early sixties. I know he wouldn't let me go. So, it was, it had to have been in the early sixties. And to this day, there is one mountain top over there that, that is still void of vegetation. Where it burned, it stopped. In fact, the High Meadow fire came back through there and burned around the old burn area, because there wasn't a lot of vegetation. There were a few trees that had grown back over the years and things like that. But it burned around that burn area.

SM And we're talking about the High Meadow fire of 2000?

LM So, that's the only real disaster that I know of. I mean other than having 18 inches of snow on Labor Day weekend, when we had the store, and we'd bought, I don't know how many groceries and stock and everything for the store, and we got the snow, and everybody went home.

SM Yeah.

LM I guess that would be considered a disaster somewhat.

L.MEANS Do you remember the early beginnings of the fire department in the valley?



- LM North Fork?
- L.MEANS Yeah.
- LM Yeah. We didn't have one in Pine. Used to have the old, they had a fire truck, I think it was a fire truck that sat in the building there next to the post office. But it was, I don't even know if it worked. They had a fire station in Buffalo. We didn't have a lot of fire protection. Point and case was the railroad station when it burned down. There was no way to save it. Not that you could have. It was all navy cut lumber from the mill and everything and as it was burning, there must have been two or three hundred like torches, there were pencils of flame that were shooting out and shooting out like two feet from all the sap and everything in the old lumber. But, there was no way to save it.
- SM So, you were here when it burned. And you saw it.
- LM Yeah.
- L.MEANS And that was in the early sixties?
- LM Mm-hm.
- L.MEANS So, there was some kind of a volunteer department in Buffalo at the time.
- LM Yes.
- L.MEANS So, that's where North Fork really began.
- LM That's where it really began. You know, I think they had a small building here and then of course they built the new building. And over the years, I mean, they've grown, they've done really well. As an insurance agent, writing insurance up here, for years it was a fire class ten, which is considered a high rate. Now, I believe they're down to a six because of their efforts and everything. They've made a lot of changes.
- SM Do you know anything about the old garage that's on 126 that...was that part of the fire department?

- L.MEANS Well, we read in the PECIA minutes, old, old PECIA minutes...
- SM Like '49 or '50.
- L.MEANS No. 1948. There was a thing about that garage, where we put the town tractor now, sometimes. Was finished at that time with volunteer materials and labor and everything. And there was a Wednesday, I forget the date, in 1948, where they said, we put the fire truck in that building for the first time. And we've never been able to figure out what kind of a fire truck it was or what that was all about. Do you know if that was connected with North Fork or if that was kind of a self-generating thing in Pine that was trying to create a fire department here?
- LM From what I understand, it was just something that was created here. Because that truck was in that shed when I moved up here. And I can't...
- L.MEANS Was it a fire truck? Or was it kind of a generic truck?
- LM No. It was a fire truck. But it was, I mean it was an old fire truck. And I can't really ever remember it ever being out of that shed. Of course, as a kid, you know, you don't pay attention to a lot of things like that. But, I know it was in there because they had the doors open one day. And I saw it sitting in there and it looked like something out of the 1930's. And that's what it looked like. But I never saw it operational.
- SM So, I wonder why they wouldn't have brought it out to stop the fire at the train station or Crystal Lake or anything.
- LM I don't know.
- L.MEANS It takes more than a truck.
- SM Well, that's true. That's true.
- LM Takes people to run it.
- SM That's true.



LM You know, I don't remember what time of the year that that train station burnt. But if it was in the winter or in the fall when there's not a lot of summer people around, there were just not that many people around at that time.

L.MEANS They would have had a hard time getting water to fight it with too in the winter time.

LM Yeah. Mm-hm. I've got an old hand pump fire extinguisher that came out of that building, I believe. It's eighteen inches in circumference and probably two feet high with what looks like a pump that came off of a bicycle pump, for a fire extinguisher. And I'm sure any amount of those wouldn't have deterred that fire.

SM Other recollections, other stories you'd like to include? Good or bad.

LM No. Not at this time. I guess the bad portion is Sphinx Park. Pete and Alan _____(26:25), when they owned it. We used to, as kids, they had square dancing up there on the weekends. And we'd go up and square dance and I was sixteen and drinking beer. And, one day Alan came down to the post office to get the mail, and it used to be kind of a gathering point sometimes for conversations. And my mother was expounding on the point that she was so proud that I was sixteen that day. And at that time it was eighteen was the legal drinking age in Colorado. So, needless to say, I went up there but I had coke for a long time. And John Gossage(27:20) and I used to, there were not a lot of people up here, and we used to road race once in a while down between Buffalo and Pine, and going up 126 with our cars. It's amazing that we made it as far as we have today. Those old memories are...only two of us left, as far as I know. Everybody else is pretty much long gone.

SM Thank you so very much for sharing. We really do appreciate it.

LM You're welcome.

[End of Part 2. End of Interview.]