

Nancy Lawthers 1:55

Tell me the rest of that about the sewage disposal drilling a hole down into the mine.

Ron Fenolia 2:00

Yeah. They would drill a hole to the old mine workings which was, had been excavated previously and then they, their wastewater and sewage was delivered to the hole and it would be dropped straight into the mine shaft. Not the shaft, but the workings, the old workings.

Nancy Lawthers 2:25

That is unusual. Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fenolia 2:31

Now that created a problem there. Well, it wasn't really a problem because after so many people were doing that, why. There was a another old mine that was on the Mayhoffer property and water begin to move up toward the surface and come out. But it wasn't a san, sanitation problem. It just formed a hot water flue. And you could notice that you'd see a lot of wildlife there in the wintertime because it wouldn't freeze. You know what the Mayhoffer property is?

Nancy Lawthers 3:20

No, I don't.

Ron Fenolia 3:22

It's on the curve, is a still a farm. There's an old mine dump there too. Now. One of the, the town was named after an old miner called Louis Nowatny.

Nancy Lawthers 3:40

Would you spell that?

Ron Fenolia 3:45

N O W A T N Y. I believe is, Nowatny. And I think that was one of the first mines that he developed there on the Mayhoffer property.

Nancy Lawthers 4:00

I see.

Ron Fenolia 4:01

And I can remember that mine dump and we would get winds like we've had here in the last few days just blowing up to 50-60 miles an hour. Spontaneous combustion would set in on the dump and set the whole dump a fire again from some of the coal that was unburned. discharged into the dump.

Nancy Lawthers 4:24

Right. Right.

Ron Fenolia 4:25

Yeah And that was it was an occurrence also on some of the other dumps in the area.

Nancy Lawthers 4:34

Yes, yes. Right. What caused these mines to close

Ron Fenolia 4:42

The mines? John L. Lewis, called too many strikes. And the people in the area were that were dependent on coal converted to gas, natural gas.

Nancy Lawthers 4:55

I see. I see. Did you live during that time, when some of the big strikes were going on?

Ron Fenolia 5:03

Not the big ones, though I lived but, uh.

Nancy Lawthers 5:07

your father did maybe? Was he involved?

Ron Fenolia 5:09

Oh, yeah. I don't remember him. I do remember a strike and it was a miner strike in the late 40s. But yes, my folks were involved in the strikes as they were miners too

Nancy Lawthers 5:30

Right. Did they ever tell you stories about it?

Ron Fenolia 5:34

Oh, yeah. The one that you saw in the paper where it was, I think in 19, 1927, 28, somewhere they called the militia out, the militia would be the National Guard. And there was shots exchanged and they killed some of the miners. At same time this occurred they were having that. strikes? Well, they weren't just local. They were statewide. They've had. Have you ever heard of the Ludlow massacre? Down at Trinidad?

Nancy Lawthers 6:25

Oh, yes.

Ron Fenolia 6:26

Yeah. Where they shot women and children and all this is this was the same period. That monument is interesting to see. But it was state militia fired on a group of women and children and killed some of them.

Nancy Lawthers 6:45

Well, why did this strike up here? Get the militia to come out? Why? Yeah, what was going on

Ron Fenolia 6:54

Well they were picketing, and they were picketing for better wages, better working conditions. And the mine owners called for help to the to the governor, apparently. And the governor sent up the Colorado state militia.

Nancy Lawthers 7:17

I see. Did women and children work in the mines up here?

Ron Fenolia 7:24

Not not well, now. Wait a minute. Women Not to my knowledge. Children Now what do you consider children? My dad went to work in the mines when he was 11 years old. So he was, they were just living right over the hill. And the Sunnyside was right there. And he worked there in the wintertime.

Nancy Lawthers 7:46

What did he do?

Ron Fenolia 7:47

Load coal

Nancy Lawthers 7:48

Well, oh, he loaded it

Ron Fenolia 7:51

With a shovel. Into the carts

Nancy Lawthers 7:54

I see. At the age of 11

Ron Fenolia 7:55

At the age of 11.

Nancy Lawthers 7:58

That must have built up the muscles.

Ron Fenolia 8:00

Yeah. Well, he was pretty husky individual.

Nancy Lawthers 8:03

Did his brothers also work in the mine early?

Ron Fenolia 8:08

Who?

Nancy Lawthers 8:08

Your father's? Did He have brothers?

Ron Fenolia 8:11

Oh, yeah. Yeah, he was a he was a mine owner, yeah. And he and my uncle were together jointly in the operation in the Liley mine,

Nancy Lawthers 8:22

but he started as at the age of 11.

Ron Fenolia 8:26

My father did, yeah

Nancy Lawthers 8:28

Right, right. How about your grandfather?

Ron Fenolia 8:32

Well, I don't I can't tell but he did work in the mines down there at McAlester, Oklahoma. Oh, and then he came up here and worked in the mines also. Right. Now that McAlester is quite some country down there. Now we went down I went down to check the family records. See what I could find. And I have run across this situation there where they had an explosion where 200 miners were killed in the same mine and they buried them in a mass grave, grave right there at McAlester. But those were, you know, early days. The working conditions were not as good as they are now.

Nancy Lawthers 9:31

What do you mean, by the working conditions were not very good.

Ron Fenolia 9:34

They weren't, they had carbide lamps instead of the battery operated lamps and mines were full of methane gas and methane gas could be ignited by the carbide lamp.

Nancy Lawthers 9:50

I see.

Ron Fenolia 9:51

Yeah. And it just a matter of improvement during the years and then they had a instruments that could detect the presence of gas later on, which they didn't have before.

Nancy Lawthers 10:08

I see. Now with these mines up here, did they dig down very far?

Ron Fenolia 10:12

Where now the my, ours was, our mine over here was 355 foot. And some of them were not not that deep. Leydon mine over near Leydon was in the vicinity of 500 foot deep if you know where Leydon is

Nancy Lawthers 10:44

Yes, I do. Yeah. Yes.

Ron Fenolia 10:48

So they buried that they just had to core out the coal, find out where it was and then go to it, and how deep it was.

Nancy Lawthers 10:56

Oh, I see. What about Marshall?

Ron Fenolia 10:59

What about it?

Nancy Lawthers 10:59

Well, there were mines over there too

Ron Fenolia 11:02

Oh, that's where the center of the industry was at the time. Yeah.

Nancy Lawthers 11:07

In Marshall?

Ron Fenolia 11:07

Yeah.

Nancy Lawthers 11:08

Oh, I see.

Ron Fenolia 11:11

There were numerous mines in the Marshall Area.

Nancy Lawthers 11:13

So the coal veins then went from Leyden up through Marshall up to Louisville.

Ron Fenolia 11:19

Well, up north to Erie. The old Columbine Mine is over out of Erie. The old Eagle mine. And Frederick, Firestone, Dacono. The old Bomb mine. There was mining all over the area.

Nancy Lawthers 11:41

I see. I see. Did a lot of the coal at first go to the railroads.

Ron Fenolia 11:46

They went to the railroad and to the power plants. That's how they generated power. They delivered the coal by truck. Later on, they had train. But in the early days we delivered a lot of our coal to Valmont Plant over there.

Nancy Lawthers 12:08

Oh, you did? Oh, for goodness sake. And so these railroads were later?

Ron Fenolia 12:15

well, railroads. I don't have any idea when they put the railroad in. No, they weren't. Railroads, I can remember my folks talking about the Denver Interurban rail in shortly after World War One. Were the head of crash in 1918 or 19. Somewhere in there. And several the townspeople were killed on on the way to Denver. By by train, so they had him as far back of that, and probably before then too,

Nancy Lawthers 13:03

right. Did you ever ride on it?

Ron Fenolia 13:08

No. It was a

Nancy Lawthers 13:10

long gone

Ron Fenolia 13:11

nonexistant. Yeah.

Nancy Lawthers 13:13

I see.

Ron Fenolia 13:14

By that time, the horse and buggy went out and the automobile came in.

Nancy Lawthers 13:19

Right. When were your roads paved? Do you remember?

Ron Fenolia 13:29

I can remember going to Denver when I was in nine, about 1930 and 287 was concrete then? It was Yeah. And I can remember after the war, they set up a roadblock. Just as a matter to find out the people opinion as to whether a Boulder Denver turnpike would be feasible. And because of the survey they took, they constructed it.

Nancy Lawthers 14:12

Really?

Ron Fenolia 14:13

Yeah. And look at it now. They should have kept it as a toll road.

Nancy Lawthers 14:20

Did they cross your land when they built it?

Ron Fenolia 14:23

No.

Nancy Lawthers 14:24

It was south of that.

Ron Fenolia 14:27

That's right. The proposed. The proposed Northwest Parkway is going right through the middle of our land,

Nancy Lawthers 14:41

Oh it is?

Ron Fenolia 14:44

our land is right here.

Nancy Lawthers 14:46

Yes. Oh, I see. Oh,

Ron Fenolia 14:54

I don't know whether that will come into effect.

Nancy Lawthers 14:59

Right Is this because the Boulder Turnpike is too busy?

Ron Fenolia 15:04

Well, no, the Northwest Parkway is supposed to be. Alternate to the fast route to the airport. And the I-76 on the east side of Denver.

Nancy Lawthers 15:25

Yes. Yeah. Oh,

Ron Fenolia 15:28

And it comes the it starts over in the Golden area and swings around south here by Dillon Road and then up to, in a north easterly direction toward highway, toward 160th Street where it will meet C 470. East.

Nancy Lawthers 15:53

I see. I see the ring road eventually. Eventually. Yes. When did you first see the suburban type housing coming into this area?

Ron Fenolia 16:09

In early 50s Yeah. I bought my first house in Broomfield in November of 1956. And I think Broomfield had begun somewhere in 19. Around 1954.

Nancy Lawthers 16:37

Oh it had?

Ron Fenolia 16:39

Your development came along with your financing. Little towns like Louisville and Lafayette at that time couldn't get any financing. And that's why I bought in Broomfield because it could couldn't get any financing over there. Oh. So the financing was available here. And it wasn't over there. And so that's why we purchased here.

Nancy Lawthers 17:12

Why was financing available over here in Broomfield?

Ron Fenolia 17:19

Just as a result of the developers. Bal Swan and Axel Nielsen and the remainder of their organization were acquainted in the financial field and they provided the financial resources. They got together with the developers Ensor and Joe Maroney and the rest of them and they started this little community at that time. In fact, General Eisenhower was in some way involved. I can remember seeing him come into town, he they turn in on Main and come on Agate Way And he'd wave his look at the kids as they'd going down the streets. And then it proceed up to Empire Savings and Loan building. In Broomfield here,

Nancy Lawthers 18:33

Oh for goodness sake. Yeah. So he lent his presence. Right.

Ron Fenolia 18:38

Well I'm sure he had a financial interest too.

Nancy Lawthers 18:43

Right. Right. So actually, Broomfield was always thought of as a bedroom community, wasn't it?

Ron Fenolia 18:51

Right.

Nancy Lawthers 18:52

Right.

Ron Fenolia 18:52

Right,

Nancy Lawthers 18:53

Right. Just yeah. You went to the dances in the Grange Hall down by the railroad track and that

Ron Fenolia 18:59

Oh yeah. That was a long time ago.

Nancy Lawthers 19:04

Well, I know but why did did somebody from Louisville come way up here?

Ron Fenolia 19:10

Because they had the dancehall and Louisville didn't.

Nancy Lawthers 19:16

Louisville did not have a Grange Hall?

Ron Fenolia 19:18

It did at one time had a what they call the Redmond Hall. But then they had good orchestras down here. Good country music.

Nancy Lawthers 19:31

I see good country music. Well, that's that's very important for a dance. Right. But it was all surrounded by farms out here.

Ron Fenolia 19:41

It was all farms. Or grazing land. Yeah.

Nancy Lawthers 19:46

Except where the coal mines were.

Ron Fenolia 19:49

Well, even when the coal mines were they farmed around it or. Had grazing land around it.

Nancy Lawthers 20:01

Even though there would be a coal mine dump.

Ron Fenolia 20:04

Sure. That wouldn't bother.

Nancy Lawthers 20:06

It didn't bother anybody.

Ron Fenolia 20:08

No

Nancy Lawthers 20:08

No. Oh. And were there more than one ditch? Was there more than one ditch?

Ron Fenolia 20:15

Oh, yeah. The community ditch the farmers reservoir and irrigation company and Church's ditch company. I told you I had a book on water histories that they had. But I can't seem to place my fingers on it right now. If I find it, I'll get it to you. But there were numerous irrigation companies, the [Goodyou] up north and the Davidson Ditch and Reservoir company.

Nancy Lawthers 20:58

You said church

Ron Fenolia 20:59

Church's?

Nancy Lawthers 21:01

Was that the name of a family?

Ron Fenolia 21:03

Yeah. We're south of Broomfield here. Right. And the while there was you go to Denver, you pass right by Church's Lake? Yes. Yeah. On the highway there. But that was a ditch company. I see. And then as far there were numerous ditch companies all along that conveyed water. Out of Clear Creek, and South Boulder Creek. And to the Platte River from Denver on. Without water. This entire area would be a desolate desert. You wouldn't find irrigation farming.

Nancy Lawthers 21:53

Right? Right. You couldn't do anything at all.

Ron Fenolia 21:56

Well, you might grow dryland wheat, and that's it and graze cattle

Nancy Lawthers 22:00

Uh huh. Uh huh. And so some people did do that.

Ron Fenolia 22:03

Oh, yes. Yeah. Still are.

Nancy Lawthers 22:06

But you couldn't have trees?

Ron Fenolia 22:09

Well, you could have you took care of them and irrigated. People who had trees in their yard had to provide water for them

Nancy Lawthers 22:25

Right. When your grandparents first came to Colorado? I expect they encountered Indians again.

Ron Fenolia 22:36

I don't think so. I think it was, well, there might have been a few bands of, this was Arapaho country and I think the Arapaho had moved out. To my knowledge, I don't think they did.

Nancy Lawthers 22:58

And did you find Indian arrowheads when you were a boy?

Ron Fenolia 23:02

Oh, yeah. Yeah. In fact, I don't know whether you notice the last couple of summers. I've been down over the hill. But at the bottom of the hill, they've been parties over on the west side of the road. That's what they've been doing on the Rock Creek Farm there, been excavating for pottery and air arrowheads and so forth.

Nancy Lawthers 23:21

I see. I see was Rock Creek, a ranch or a farm or something.

Ron Fenolia 23:27

That's the old Stearn's dairy farm.

Nancy Lawthers 23:30

Yeah, I see. And that certainly is different now. Yeah.

Ron Fenolia 23:34

Well, it's owned by the county now.

Nancy Lawthers 23:37

Oh, it is

Ron Fenolia 23:38

Boulder County. Yeah, it's open space.

Nancy Lawthers 23:41

I see. I see. And there was, was there an irrigation lake over there, too.

Ron Fenolia 23:47

There still is. It's Stearns Dairy lake.

Nancy Lawthers 23:49
I guess I haven't noticed it.

Ron Fenolia 23:51
It's just right over the hill.

Nancy Lawthers 23:53
All right. I'll have to take a good look. Yeah. All right. Well, I've probably forgotten to ask you some important things about your parents life and your life here in Broomfield, but

Ron Fenolia 24:09
Well, think of them. Right. All right,

Nancy Lawthers 24:13
and I'll come back. Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

I need to add a few pieces of information that I didn't get when talking to Ronald J. Joseph Fenolia. His father's name was James Fenolia. F E N O L I A. His mother's name was Celia C E L I A, Boppinelli B O P P I N E L L I. Ron was the only child. His and his parents were both born in Louis, Louisville. His grand paternal grandfather's name was Bappist B A P P I S T, Fenolia and his grandmother's name was Louisa Buffo, B U F F O. They had six living children, four girls and two boys. One of the girls married Charles Liley. His maternal grandparents were Batista B A T I S T A Boppinelli B O P P I N E L L I and his maternal grandmother's name was Clementine Biella, B I E L L A. They had four living children, two boys and two girls. There were other children, but Ron did not seem to know how many either other grandparents had. The reason I mentioned the father's sister is because Charles Liley was an owner of the Liley mine, Liley the coal mine

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