

West Custer County Library District Local History Collection
Oral History Collection

LP2009.013.0030

Casebeer House, Silver Cliff

No date

Interviewed by unidentified interviewers, male and female, UIM and UIF

IF: This tape is part of an oral history taping series. The subject is the Casebeer House in Silver Cliff, CO.

UIF: [sound too low to hear] and it's covered with sculpture and shaped shingles on all four gables throughout on the exterior of the house. The roof originally was a wooden shingle and it was obvious when the new roof went on, that they had many chimney fires and the chimneys were removed because of the dangerous conditions. A part of a chimney is left in the attic to show the brick design as well as the mortaring between the bricks. The porch is a recessed porch. It has been closed, screened and it has the turn spindle, the original screens on the porch. The frames are original as they were found in the trash pile behind the barn and now have new screening but the old rod, iron rod, and the latticework are all original from the period of time. The doors leading into the house are handmade, which contain a stain glass window of amber, ruby and pearlized glass and these pieces of glass were set in a mixture of cement and putty which made it much more durable and could sustain the dura? Vibrations. The hardware on the two exterior doors are prop metal which was very common in the Victorian era and the hinges are an intricate small design in the doorplate and then also of the same design matching all pieces in the door. The exterior thresholds are granite and were mined locally. The window glass and many of the windows is original as one may see the imperfections of double-glazed and small streaks of glass scratches.

The interior portrays the art of the era. The ceilings were lowered due to the heating consumption and the original oak woodwork, after removing five or six coats of paint, and then finally down to the old [unintelligible] paint was of course the hardest to remove and it dovetails excellent examples of cogar oak as well as the plain, straight oak, hide oak. The walls consist of horsehair plaster and lapping.

UIM: Were you going to tell us about this wall?

UIF: This one originally was, had an enclosed wall between the kitchen and the living room. The walls were enclosed and when the wall between the kitchen and the dining room was opened, we found a small pass-through window which was revealed that the kitchen, they used the dining room primarily for their eating area. It was necessary to open because the kitchen was very dark and also because of central heating, it's much easier to heat with these walls open.

The living room-dining room wall contained a chimney. Now, there were two chimneys in this home, one in the kitchen and one in dining room. The chimney did not go completely down into the cellar area. They probably would be about halfway off the wall and the base was so small, the chimney opening was so small, and you'd have to clean it with a teacup. Now this chimney went up into the attic, had a very

long smoke shelf. Then it came out the roof peak. Now the chimney shop was built because of the mountain downdrafts and the draft coming from the mountains would slowly descend down into the stove but with a long smoke shelf, it did not affect the fire as much as a direct downdraft chimney, and so this is why they built the long smoke shelf in the chimney.

UIM: Let me get a shot. You're not boring but my picture is boring. (laughing)

UIF: Just do what you want. Ok?

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: Over there in the corner, you can see where they had barrels down underneath.

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: No, it was an old copper thing.

UIM: Ok, I'm ready when you are.

UIF: Ok. Now, the wainscoting has been restored back to the original. Now, the ridge around the top of the wainscoting shelf are picture molding and that was removed from the living room and used to finish off the top of the shelf part of the wainscoting. The bullseyes above the doorways, we have loads of theories down to the problem of the bullseyes on the doorways. These ceilings have been lowered to about 9' but the ceilings were originally over 10' high.

The flooring in this house is all fir wood and they are supported by 2x8 beams spaced 14 inches apart and they are all tongue and groove flooring forwards which is, now appears to be a petrified type wood. The doorknobs in some of the bedrooms are dated 1860. The baseboards in the bedrooms are about 9 inches high.

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: I don't know where you're at. Ok, you're above the bullseyes.

UIM: Yep.

UIF: Ok. The transoms above the bullseyes are all copper oak fixtures and these bullseyes were designed in homes for ventilation and this is why they were used and then you have the old Victorian homes in order for air to circulate as well as heat to circulate. The old wood shelf in the corner is an old original piece and this is what was used by the Casebeers to hold their old gingerbread cloth, one of the relatives told us that that was the corner where the old gingerbread cloth would sit in their dining room.

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: Nothing here came out of this place.

UIM: Is it old?

UIF: Oh, I don't know. Yeah, that's old.

UIM: Gang? Is still open.

UIF: I'll tell you about the [unintelligible]

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: [unintelligible] [Speakers have moved away from the microphone, making it very hard to hear their conversation] Around like this? It had those, the doors were about this high and about this wide and that is all [unintelligible]

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: That is a banjo [unintelligible] I sold one in 1930, now, I sold a beautiful one and it went for about \$145 but it had a lot of decorated brass [unintelligible]

UIM: [unintelligible]

UIF: My bowl was [unintelligible] and what kind of wood, rosewood, walnut?

UIM: [unintelligible] How'd they go outside, out through the window.

UIF: I think what they did is they used a ladder, a stepladder from the shop down. You want a stepladder?

UIM: I don't think I need one. If you gave me a little stepladder, I'll be up above your rafters.

UIF: They have a typical Victorian bedroom, no closets. All closets had to be built into the bedrooms. All the closets had to be built. This bedroom has a door between and it is shorter than the original entry door because it was only used for ventilation.

UIM: Got it. Can you move a little bit? [unintelligible] Was there anything unique about this one?

UIF: Naw, that was just a little [unintelligible] lodging was probably the master bedroom, in case there's one bedroom. [long pause] Can you think of anything else? [unintelligible] Ah, I guess that's it.

UIF2: How about these pictures over here? Pictures of the family.

UIF: Yeah, wonderful.

[unintelligible]

UIM: You want me to try and take them now. [unintelligible] I do my best work when I take the board and I line it up and then I'm about this far away from the, and then I put my camera and I push fadeout and then I start the camera and take my finger off the tray so that [unintelligible]

UIF: That's right.

UIM: Then I just turn it off [unintelligible]

UIF: But it was also a weapon! [unintelligible]

UIM: You're not sure that maybe that wasn't pointed.

UIF: I bet it was.

UIM: I'll tell ya, in New York City, two ladies back there [unintelligible] and they was coming up the sidewalk at you, they aim like this.

UIF: Yes, what we have here [unintelligible]

[Tape becomes more and more difficult to hear and/or understand]

End of transcription.