

LP2009.013.111-067

Summary of Oral History Interview with William "Bill" and Inis Falkenberg

April 1990

Interviewed by Irene Francis and Ara Weimer

William "Bill" and Inis Falkenberg shared their family history and memories of life in Wet Mountain Valley. Inis's family arrived in the area around 1896, traveling by wagon from Oak Creek. She recalled her grandmother witnessing a public hanging at the Beckwith Ranch on their journey into the valley, an event that deeply unsettled her.

Mining played a significant role in the region's development, and Inis's grandfather worked at the Geyser Mine. A tragic accident occurred when her grandmother sent lunch to the mine with a young boy, who was fatally dragged through hot cinders. The Burns family, including Inis's relatives, settled in Silver Cliff, where they were among the first to marry in the newly built Catholic church.

The Falkenbergs also discussed early commerce in the valley. Ray Falkenberg ran the local Tribune newspaper, acted as a registrar for births and deaths, and provided check-cashing services in the absence of a bank. Merchants relied on him to handle financial transactions through a Canon City bank. His first wife, Laura Boss, bore four children before they separated, and he later married Lucy Lloyd, who operated an ice cream parlor and variety shop near Linder's hardware store.

Their recollections offer a glimpse into the valley's early days, from mining accidents and pioneer hardships to the close-knit community's reliance on local businesses and services.

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