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MacGregor, Pauline

February 27, 1985

Interviewed by Ted James

TJ: This is February 27, 1985 and this is Ted James interviewing Pauline MacGregor who lives at 1334 Prospect in Prospect Heights in Canon City, CO. Pauline MacGregor is the wife of Archie MacGregor, well known in this area as an old-time miner and we're going to be talking about Archie MacGregor's experiences as Mrs. MacGregor recalls them when Archie was working in the mines. The first mine, let me just back up a minute, Archie and Mrs. MacGregor were married in 1928, is that correct? 1928. Archie was working in the Terrible mine at Ilse at that time and they lived, you lived at Ilse then after you were married?

PM: Yes.

TJ: In any particular house or on the ranch or where?

PM: Right at the MacGregor house where he was born.

TJ: Oh, you lived right in the ranch house where Archie was born then.

PM: Yes.

TJ: Ok. Archie himself was born on July 19, 1893 at the MacGregor ranch and that ranch at the present time is owned by the Dilly's and that is located at Ilse. Prior to Archie working in the mine, he worked at What?

PM: He was running the pumps in the mine.

TJ: He ran the pumps in the mine.

PM: Uh huh. Keep the water out.

TJ: Now who owned the mine at first when he worked there?

PM: When he started to work?

TJ: Yes.

PM: The Eagle Picture Company.

TJ: The Eagle Picture Company?

PM: Of Joplin, Missouri.

TJ: Oh, in Joplin, Missouri. Who was managing the mine at that time, do you recall?

PM: No, I sure don't.

TJ: Ok, anyway, it was a lead mine.

PM: Yes, it was a lead mine.

TJ: About how many men were working in the mine at that time?

PM: Well, at that time when they started in, they must have been at least 70.

TJ: 70 miners?

PM: Uh huh.

TJ: Now this is what would be called a hard rock mine? Underground?

PM: Well, I guess that's what they called it. Hard rock mining.

TJ: Underground. And it was a lead mine.

PM: Yes.

TJ: Do you recall how long this mine had been in production even before Archie started working there?

PM: Oh my, yes, it must have been, let's see, he was, he had the mail route from Ilse to Rosita and it was running then.

TJ: I see. So, they started this mine probably in the early 1900s sometime?

PM: I think so.

TJ: Ok, when he started working there, did the miners who worked in the mine, did they live around that area and lived at Ilse itself?

PM: Well, they started to build up the town where they had a boarding house and they had a bunkhouse for the single men and they built houses for the married people that worked there, and some of them came from Westcliffe for a while and worked there. Some of the ranchers around there worked.

TJ: Now, the name Ilse, do you know what the background of that, how did they ever call it Ilse?

PM: I sure don't. I never heard them say that. But it's spelled Ilse.

TJ: Yes. It's just an unusual name. That was why I was just curious as to if anybody knew how it got that name.

PM: I sure never did hear them say how it ever got that name.

TJ: Now, when they did the mining there, did they take the rock out and take it some place to be, I guess what you say, separated and milled?

PM: No, they built their own mill and they had their own crusher and flotation tables and all and they separated it right there, and the good ore, they sacked it and then where they shipped it, I don't know whether it was to Leadville to the smelter or whether they shipped it to Pueblo, I don't know where they shipped the good ore to. I just don't know.

TJ: Now, by the time that Archie was working there, did they have trucks to haul it out or did they have horses and wagons to haul it out mainly?

PM: They had trucks.

TJ: They had trucks by that time.

PM: Yeah, they had trucks.

TJ: Do you recall the names of any of the other miners that worked there, by family name?

PM: Oh yes. They was Bud Ryan and his family, his nephew still lived here in Canon City. His name is Don Ryan and he worked for the gas company till he retired. And his father worked there too. They called him Red Ryan and then there was people by the name of Andersons and-

TJ: Just thinking if there were any other families that you thought of, we might think of them a little later on.

PM: Ok

TJ: Now, Archie worked there from before you were married-

PM: Yes.

TJ: And until about what year? Do you recall what year?

PM: Well, you know after the Eagle Picture Company had sold out to a Dr. R.D. Webb and where he was from I don't recall.

TJ: So, when they sold out to Webb, well then, he went up to Cripple Creek.

PM: That's when, before they sold out, Archie went to work at Cripple Creek, at the Ajax mine. He thought, well, he'd be getting more money up there than he did down here. He wasn't there just a little while till he came back when R.D. Webb had bought the place and he worked for Webb for 14 years just before the fire when they closed down. Then he was watchman for three years after the fire.

TJ: Now, when you refer to the fire, what are you talking about?

PM: Well, they had a fire started down in the mine and it caught in the hoist room and when the cable is, of course, oil and all, and it went down into the shaft and the timber caught afire and it started a big fire down there where the men didn't know about it because they were working on down or in tunnels and there was 14 of them in there and I'll never forget, it was election day.

TJ: Oh, that was 1928. Was it 1928?

PM: Well, it could have been because during the fire, I was already married and I know I came and got

the car, got his car and took my folks to Rosita to vote and when I come back, why, they said that something had happened down in the mine, that there was a fire. Well, I went back up and got his mother to the ranch and we came on down and they didn't know how they was going to get the men out there. They had a manway where they crawled but it was caved in somehow or another, and so there was a man by the name of Bill Callan. He volunteered to go down the ladder and notify the men that the mine was afire and they'd have to get out. And the only way they could get out was climb up the ladder. They just had a kind of little place where the ladder was down from 700 feet on up. Some was way down there, on 700 feet and they had said he went down because they couldn't ring the bell or nothing to notify these men, got them all out there, and they wet their coats in the water and some had gunny sacks and they wet the gunny sacks and put around them and one at a time climbed up and they always said that the captain went down with the ship but the box was the first one to climb out over there, and that was a Mr. Ryan. They'd climb up one ladder and then another one would go and I think Archie said he was about the fourth or fifth one. They all got out safe all right. There was all the wives and the mothers were standing around there a waiting and it was a long time, it was dark before they all got out there and I know that they, all the men that were in the mine, and Archie's mother had started it through somehow Mr. Hardy that run the paper here a long time-

TJ: Guy U. Hardy.

PM: Guy U. Hardy, he helped her and they got us a Carnegie medal for this Bill Callen and \$1000.

TJ: Ah ha!

PM: And for going down to getting the men out. Well, they was, a lot of the men went to Westcliffe to the dance at that time, and us ladies, they called the Fire Dept. from Florence and from Canon here, but before they got up there, they had a hose where they was using the water out of the water tank to keep the galas frame and the mill. They wanted to save that if possible, so the fire dept got that. And us ladies was hauling dynamite out of the storeroom to the men where they were lighting it and kicking it down the shaft to try to cave it in to save the mill and the fire department got up there and all. I'll never forget that a man by the name of McDougal, he was the boss, and R.S. Brown was the foreman there. All these here bunch that went to the dance that night, he sent them the next morning down to the office to get their checks. He fired them all.

TJ: Oh, he did! For what reason?

PM: But anyhow, they just kind of, the bunch of them that stayed there was cleaned up and Doug William, he, they sent him a telegram and he sent the telegram back and it was all he said, how many widows and orphans? Well, they was none. They were all saved, all the men were saved. So, they just kind of cleaned up around there and he said he wouldn't open up and of course, it was filling with water, the shaft was filling up with water, said it would take too much to build a new shaft or to rebuild that one and all, so he just said, well, he would close it down, just kept a few men to clean up around there and all, and who wanted to stay there, was welcome to stay there in the company houses, but of course, a lot of them didn't stay. They went looking for work somewhere else and some of them, he offered work wherever else he was. I think he was from Joplin, Missouri too, I'm not sure.

TJ: Now you are saying then that the mine was closed following that fire.

PM: The mine was closed and they put Archie, Archie was the closest one there and we was living in camp then. We lived in camp.

TJ: Now, when you say living in camp, what do you mean?

PM: The town of Ilse. They had about 100 houses there.

TJ: Oh, in other words, you're saying that you moved from the ranch then, the MacGregor ranch, into the camp

PM: His mother stayed on the ranch and we moved down right there where he could watch the mine better you know. Pretty near everybody had really left there and the post office had closed and the store had closed and a Mr. Doll had run the store and you more likely heard of Harry Bowden lived here in Canon a long time, he was their bookkeeper and the postmaster there after they moved the post office from the MacGregor ranch right to Ilse, to the town of Ilse.

TJ: How far was it from the MacGregor ranch over to the town of Ilse?

PM: Just a mile.

TJ: Just a mile.

PM: Just a mile.

TJ: So, there were 100 houses that the company-

PM: There was 100 families lived there.

TJ: What were the houses like?

PM: Well, they built pretty nice houses there. They were just, well, from four rooms to six rooms and they had a big boarding house there, a big boarding house and a big bunk house and there's still I think one house that's still there where we lived still there at Ilse and finally, when we, Dr. Webb had died, and the woman owns it now and I don't know whether she's his niece or some relation or what and-

TJ: Are you saying that Dr. Webb or somebody in the family still owns that property?

PM: Somebody in the family still holds that.

TJ: Still owns it. Did the mine ever reopen after the '28 fire?

PM: Well, yes, there was a couple of leasers that opened it. One I can remember that Archie went back to work for a while was, I can't recall the name right now, but he worked for a little while and didn't make it, so he quit. He had about, oh, half a dozen men a working for him and he couldn't make it. He quit.

TJ: Well, now, in order to reopen the mine, then they had to pump all that water out, is that it?

PM: No, they didn't open that. They worked in the pit, the pit that caved in. They worked in the pit and they worked some of the tailings over again.

TJ: About what year was that that they did that reworking?

PM: It was after the fire. Now Archie worked there for 14 years and then, he was three years watchman after that and then, we moved back up to his ranch, to the ranch because his mother was alone.

TJ: What year did you move back up to the ranch?

PM: Well, let's see. She died a little while after that when he quit. When did she die? '36.

TJ: 1936.

PM: Now, just a minute now.

TJ: Now, was that before you went up to the Ajax mine at Cripple Creek then? Or did-

PM: Oh, he went up there when he quit the Eagle Picture Company and went to the Ajax a while. Then come back and worked for Dr. Webb all this time.

TJ: Oh, now how long were you up at Cripple Creek at the Ajax mine? You went up there-

PM: I doubt if he was there a year.

TJ: He just worked up there about a year then. That would be in around the late '20s or early '30s?

PM: No, that was, that would be the early '20s.

TJ: Oh, early '20s.

PM: Oh, yeah. That was, he worked at the Ajax before we were married.

TJ: Oh, ok. So, in other words, as long as you were married to him, well, then, he only worked at the Ilse mine.

PM: Yeah, when we were married, that's all the work he done was the Ilse mine, and then when it all closed up and all and his mother passed away, we built a new house on the ranch there and we went into the sheep business.

TJ: Oh, you were in the sheep business then?

PM: We had sheep then, and the girl, she got married. She went two years to Westcliffe to high school and then graduated here from Canon, from two years. We went into the sheep business. We had sheep there and all and then, when my folks died, why, we got their ranch.

TJ: Now, what year was that approximately?

PM: When my folks passed away? Let's see, it would have to be '36, '37. My boy was boying in '36 and he was just nine months old when my dad died.

TJ: That was around '37, 1937.

PM: That would be '37, 20 days after my dad died, my mother died.

TJ: Oh.

PM: She got pneumonia. They both died in my house at Ilse.

TJ: Where are they buried?

PM: They're buried at Silver Cliff Catholic Cemetery.

TJ: Uh huh. That was their religion? They were Roman Catholic?

PM: Yes.

TJ: Uh huh. And they went to the church in Silver Cliff?

PM: Westcliffe.

TJ: Westcliffe.

PM: Yeah, and then, we had a little church they built, the congregation did, and the farmers and all, most of them was Catholic there. Little Church of they called Silver Funk, and we had a little church there and we used to go there a lots, sometimes walk. It was about five miles from our house. We'd walk to church.

TJ: Now, this was down in Custer County then?

PM: Yes, it's in Custer County.

TJ: Near where your folks lived then.

PM: Yeah, Custer County.

TJ: Near Rosita someplace?

PM: Well, right there at the Dry Lake Ranch.

TJ: Dry Lake Ranch, and the church was five miles from that then?

PM: That's where they bought, they bought the place.

TJ: Now, that brings up something interesting. Where did you go to school then?

PM: I went to school at Querida. I went to school to Silver Farm and I went to school at Ilse.

TJ: All three places! (laughing)

PM: Took them all in!

TJ: Yeah.

PM: Yeah.

TJ: Now, when, let's get back to Ilse mine. What kind of recreation did the men and the families carry on there at the Ilse mine? What were some of the recreation things?

PM: Well, they had the big schoolhouse there and every Saturday night, there was a dance.

TJ: Uh huh!

PM: Or a box supper or a pie supper and the teacher would have a program, songs, oh three, four times during the school year.

TJ: Who played the music for the dances on Saturday night? Who played the music?

PM: Everybody that knew how to play up there, and well-

TJ: In other words, it was people that lived there that furnished the music. You didn't bring in outside people.

PM: Well, yes, they had some outside people too here, Larry Smith still living over here on Prospect Heights, him and his wife used to come up there. He played saxophone. She played the piano, and they used to come up there and play a lot of times.

TJ: Now that went on even after the mine closed then?

PM: After the mine closed, why, the school closed and they tore it down and everything. Everybody moved from there. There was no children around there to go to school.

TJ: So, then, you would say that the heyday, as I call it, the heyday of the mine was in the '20s, 1920s.

PM: Well, that's when-

TJ: Because the mine fire took place in 1928.

PM: Yeah. Well, 1920, I would say, the Eagle Picture Company still had the mine.

TJ: But that was when the mine was the most active and when the community was the most active.

PM: When Dr. Webb had it.

TJ: I see, and that would have been up until, so, what I'm trying to get straightened out in my own mind is that, you said that after the fire in 1928, that the people moved out, a lot of them did.

PM: Uh huh.

TJ: Because the mine wasn't used after that time, except for just a very short period. So, I'm just trying to get some of the peoples' lives, the way they carried on things while the mine was active. Now, they had the Saturday evening recreation dances. Did you have a church right there at the mine of any kind?

PM: No, there wasn't.

TJ: There was a schoolhouse.

PM: No, but they used to have Sunday School at the schoolhouse where the children used to go. They had Sunday School.

TJ: Who conducted that?



PM: They, well, they had different ministers come up there. It wasn't no, it was just a non-denominational. Everybody went who wanted to go.

TJ: Yeah, did the minister that came up come from Canon or Westcliffe?

PM: Yes, some of them would come out like that, uh huh.

TJ: There would just be different ones that would come up. It wasn't always the same one.

PM: That's right. No, it wasn't the same one. They'd be different ones, and sometimes, why, if they couldn't come, or no one came, why, the teacher and the older parents would have Sunday school for their children.

TJ: Now, you talked about the Company Store. Was that a requirement that you used the Company Store for your needs?

PM: That's right. They just had everything there. The men that worked, if they wanted to charge their groceries, they could charge them. They had everything there, and then would, when they got their paycheck, you know, they'd take that off and they'd get their checks every two weeks there, and of course, that was big pay when they got \$4 a day, why-

TJ: That's what they got? \$4 a day.

PM: \$4 a day. That was top money.

TJ: That was top money?

PM: Yeah.

TJ: What was low money?

PM: Well, I think they went down, oh, I did hear him say, the miners, the ones that worked the hardest got the least.

TJ: What was that? A dollar or two?

PM: Yeah, a little, \$2.75, \$3, yeah.

TJ: Were they required to buy everything at the Company Store?

PM: No. They didn't have to. They just bought what they wanted or maybe run short and didn't want to go down before payday or something. No, they bought it there.

TJ: Now, when they went to town, did they go into Westcliffe or did they come into Canon City?

PM: No, they came into Canon or Florence.

TJ: How did you get into town?

PM: Oh, they all had little cars or something.

TJ: Yeah. Did they have any, a bus or anything that ran down there, a bus of any kind that ran down there and picked people up and brought them in, or did they just have to find their own way in?

PM: You mean down the mine?

TJ: Down at the Ilse, down at the Ilse. See, there used to be a bus that ran from Canon City down to Chandler and Rockvale and places like that.

PM: Well, I really don't know anything about that. I just don't know.

TJ: In other words, they had to provide their own transportation to get into Florence or Canon City.

PM: Oh, well, no, they seemed to have their own transportation.

TJ: Ok.

PM: Most of them did.

TJ: Now, when they came into town, they had to come over Oak Creek Grade?

PM: Oh, yes. Yeah, they had to come down the Oak Creek Grade, and at that time, on top of the hill, they used to have that road open that used to go to Rockvale.

TJ: Ah.

PM: There was a road open there, right from the top of the hill, and they'd go down that way, they'd go to Florence or maybe even to Rockvale, I don't know.

TJ: Did the county keep that road open for you?

PM: Oh, yes, the county kept it open all the time.

TJ: Even in the wintertime.

PM: Even in the wintertime, uh huh, yeah, they sure did. Why they ever closed that I don't know.

TJ: Now, you talked about the dances on Saturday night. Did the men work in the mines six days a week?

PM: No, no they just worked five days.

TJ: Just five days.

PM: Yeah, they just worked five days.

TJ: How many hours a day did they work?

PM: They worked 8 to 10.

TJ: 8 to 10 hours.

PM: Uh huh.

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TJ: Now did they have just one shift?

PM: Oh, no, they had three, I think. Three shifts.

TJ: Three shifts.

PM: each, then Archie, he got out of the mine and he got to work in the mill and he was the mill foreman, they called a millwright.

TJ: Oh.

PM: He worked there for, oh, at least seven years in the mill.

TJ: The mill was where they processed the rock as it came out of the mine.

PM: Yeah, they crush the rock, and they had tables where it separated the lead from the rock.

TJ: How did they get the rock out of the mine up to the mill?

PM: On a hoist.

TJ: A hoist. Did they use any kind of carts or mules or anything like that?

PM: No, uh uh, no.

TJ: So, they lifted it from the bottom of the mine by a hoist and did that go directly into the mill?

PM: It would come up and they would dump it into a bin, a big bin and then when they were ready to, when they got the bin full, why, they had a man there to crush, he had a gate light to open it up so far and it would crush this rock and it would go to the mill and they had about six tables I think down there and the water running all the time and this was faking, just like they do for gold you know. The tables would shake and all and they'd have that come in and that lead would get as fine as powder, as fine as powder and they said they'd use that lead for powder and paint.

TJ: Powder and paint?

PM: Uh huh, and they made, it wasn't the white paint. It was kind of a off-white paint. Yeah, that's what it was used for and that water that came out of that mine was just as cold and pure as could be, but it had arsenic in it, and they had to put signs up to, for people not to drink it. So many of them tasted it. I did too, and it was sweet, and they had to test it, you know, to make sure, and it had arsenic in it, so they had to put signs around not to drink that water because it was poisoned.

TJ: By the way, where did you get your drinking water then?

PM: Oh, they had a stream way up kind of, come from the mountain. There was a spring there and it was piped in, not into the houses but everybody had a hydrant by their house.

TJ: Everybody had a hydrant?

PM: Uh huh. The houses weren't modern. They weren't modern.

TJ: Yeah, well, what I meant was that, when you said that every house had a hydrant, did you mean that maybe a group of houses used one hydrant or something?

PM: No, everybody had a hydrant at their house where they turn on the water whenever they wanted and they'd heat it on the stove which was all wood stove, coal stove, they used to haul coal.

TJ: Now, was the hydrant outdoors?

PM: The hydrant was outdoors.

TJ: What'd you do in the wintertime?

PM: Never did freeze.

TJ: Never froze up.

PM: Never did freeze up. No, well, they had the pipes underground about 3 feet I think.

TJ: Now, did you have to buy your own coal to heat the house?

PM: Oh, yes.

TJ: You had to buy your own coal.

PM: We always hauled our wood. We'd go out in different places around and even the MacGregor ranch and we'd haul a pickup load of wood for her and pick up a load for us. We never did have to buy any coal. We hauled out own wood.

TJ: The coal, I suppose, came from some of the coal fields over around Rockvale and places like that.

PM: We used to bring them over here. They had a truck and they'd bring them over here. They had a furnace in the mill that was coal and they hauled coal there for that furnace because they had to keep that water in the mill and all from freezing and they had a big furnace in there.

TJ: Do you remember how much you had to pay for coal in those days?

PM: I think \$4 a ton.

TJ: \$4 a ton?

PM: Uh huh.

TJ: How long would a ton of coal last you in your house?

PM: Well, in the house it would last, if it wasn't too cold, well, they always had the cook stove and the heating stove, and I would say pretty near a month.

TJ: A month? So, you'd have to buy a ton, about a ton a month then?

PM: Oh, yeah, they always, everybody bought a ton. I can remember that truck, they called it Mozier's

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Truck, would come up with a load of coal every day. It'd go down, I think he lived in Rockvale or Canon or somewhere and he'd go down at night and every morning bring up a load of coal every day I remember that truck coming up there.

TJ: Now, how are the winters down there?

PM: Well, I can't say. It don't seem to me like it was as cold as it is now but we had a lot of snow, lot of snow.

TJ: Lot of snow. How, was the school conducted all year through?

PM: No, just the nine winter months, nine months in the winter, uh huh. It was started in September, just like all the schools and the teacher lived right there. One teacher had her own trailer house and another one boarded with some family there, and I think at one time, there was a teacher stayed with Archie's mother.

TJ: Now, was this run by the county, the school was run by the county or was it a company school?

PM: No, it was run by the county.

TJ: It was a county school then.

PM: yeah, it was, for years.

TJ: What was some of the other social life that you had in the camp, other than Saturday night dances?

PM: What'd they have for-

TJ: Other recreation or social life?

PM: Well, nothing right there in camp. A lot of them used to come down here and a lot of them would go to Westcliffe. There was really nothing else. Oh, a lot of these here single men, well, some of the men that was married too, they used to gamble in the bunkhouse.

TJ: Oh, in the bunkhouse?

PM: Yeah, in the bunkhouse.

TJ: Now, did they ever have anything like baseball games or-

PM: Oh my, yes! Yeah, they did. They had baseball games and they had a big doings on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

TJ: Oh!

PM: Oh, yeah. We'd have rodeos and parades gown through town and we had a big doings on 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

TJ: Now, if there were 70 miners working in the mine, does that mean that there were as many as a couple hundred people living at Ilse?

PM: Oh, yes!

TJ: As many as 200 or so?

PM: Well, at one time, they was 100 men a working. They would be over 200 because of mostly everybody had one or two or three children that were married that were there.

TJ: Do you remember how many children were in the school? Was it a one room schoolhouse?

PM: Just one schoolhouse, all grades, and I can remember when my little girl went to school there, that they had 22.

TJ: 22 children in the school? All together?

PM: All together! From the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

TJ: 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

PM: Uh huh.

TJ: Now, you said that they had big doings on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Who kind of headed up the whole plan?

PM: Just the whole camp right there, and maybe the boss Slim, the foreman, all they would start, well, we got to have something. Something else I missed too, they always had boxing too.

TJ: Oh, they had boxing matches?

PM: They had boxing, yeah, they, Mr. Brown, R.S. Brown the superintendent there, he was a boxer and he'd get some of those younger men or whoever wanted to and they'd build a platform out there and he would be a training them and boxing and the man, you must have heard of Cowboy Pagick?

TJ: Yes.

PM: Well, he was one of them. He worked there and he would train some of those boys and all, and I can remember my husband, Archie, would help him train. His wife, Mrs. Pagick, she's still living, I think, was his trainer and he was the champion boxer, Mr. Pagick was, and he'd have these here boys around there. He'd get up there and shadow box with them and say, alright, hit me. Hit me. They would try their best, never would hit him and he would just kind of laugh.

TJ: So, they had boxing matches.

PM: Yeah, they had boxing matches up there. I forgot about that.

TJ: Did you have, what you call, community picnics?

PM: Yes, oh yes. Everybody got together and they had, we didn't go out. It was just right there. They would put out in an open space picnic tables and everybody'd bring covered dishes or something and they'd have a picnic.

TJ: It was a real community affair thing.

PM: It was!

TJ: The people really enjoyed getting together?

PM: That's right. Everybody just got along fine there. There was everybody got along.

TJ: Did you have much problem with alcohol, drinking, you know, drunkenness?

PM: No, they didn't have nothing like that. They would be, some of them, the boss never allowed that. He said, if you want to drink, you got Saturday and Sunday, but don't you ever come on the job drunk because you'll be walking down the road. No, they never had nothing there like that that I can recall. Nothing at the dances. Once in a while, somebody would come in with a bottle or something and they never allowed it.

TJ: They were pretty strict then about things like that?

PM: Yeah, they were.

TJ: Now, you referred to the boss. Who was the boss?

PM: R.S. Brown was the manager there, and Mr. MacDougal. He was a big fellow. I can't remember what his first name was but it was MacDougal and R.S. Brown was the managers.

TJ: So, they were the ones that usually organized any of the community affairs.

PM: That's right. They were, and Harry Bowden. He was the bookkeeper. He would help them. Harry's gone now too, yeah.

TJ: Now, you said Bowden or Bowton?

PM: Harry Bowden.

TJ: Bowden. BOWDEN?

PM: That's right. He was there when they moved the post office down. He was the postmaster and the bookkeeper for the company.

TJ: Now, what did they do on special days like Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, things like that?

PM: Some of them like me and Archie and his mother, we always went to my folks. There wasn't a Christmas that we didn't go up to the ranch to my folks.

TJ: To your folks.

PM: All the time, we went. Some of them went somewhere else to their folks. Some of them just stayed right there, maybe didn't have no one or maybe had some of their folks come there for Christmas. But it seemed like everybody had a Christmas tree. We even had one out, where was it, I think they had it outside in front of the store. They had a big Christmas tree out anyhow.

TJ: Oh, now who did that? Who put up the Christmas tree? Was that a community affair or was that the company?

PM: No, that was the company.

TJ: Who ran the store up there? Who ran the grocery store?

PM: A Mr. Dahl.

TJ: Dahl? Was that DAHL or DOLL like a baby doll?

PM: I can't tell you that for sure. I don't know, but it was a Mr. Dahl.

TJ: And he ran the grocery store.

PM: He ran the store.

TJ: Did they have a pretty good supply of things?

PM: Oh, they had everything. They just had everything!

TJ: Did they even have clothing?

PM: No, no kind of clothing. Just groceries and-

TJ: What about fabrics, you know, like-

PM: No, no, uh uh.

TJ: You had to come down to the town to buy-

PM: No, nothing like that.

TJ: Just groceries and meat? Did you have meat?

PM: They had groceries. They didn't have fresh meat either. They just had like weinies, baloney and just had one case there of that. They didn't have no fresh meat.

TJ: Ok, what were some of the other special events that you had up there, other than the holidays and Saturdays and summer picnics and boxing, baseball? Did they have a band? Did they have an orchestra or band of any kind?

PM: I can't think of anything else we had alright, no.

TJ: Did the baseball, did they have a baseball team that went and played other teams like that at Rockvale or-

PM: Well, it seems like to me there was. I can't remember, but it seemed to me like there was one that came from Westcliffe, and when we had that doings on 4<sup>th</sup> of July, I know there was a lot of people came from Westcliffe and even here from Canon, they got, well, a little place like that, we want to go see what they have got. Well, a lot of them was surprised because they had booths too where they were selling sandwiches, you know, and cakes and pies and soft drinks. They usually made lemonade. The ladies would get together and make five gallons of lemonade and that's what they would sell.

TJ: Did they sell this as an individual or was it a project to make money for something?



PM: No, it wasn't, no it wasn't, no, I'm not sure but it seemed like they did try to raise some money to buy fireworks, where they used to shoot them on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July at night, they used to shoot them there.

TJ: Oh, so you did have a big fireworks display then?

PM: Oh, yes, we had fireworks too. Some of the men would take a stick or two of dynamite somewhere out and shoot that off! (laughing)

TJ: Now, you said your mother was still living over on the ranch.

PM: Archie's mother.

TJ: Pardon me, yes, Archie's mother was still living at the MacGregor ranch and your folks were still down at the Dry Creek Ranch.

PM: Yes.

TJ: And your folks passed away around 1936 or 37.

PM: Yeah, 37 and 38.

TJ: Is that ranch still in existence?

PM: No, we sold the ranch to a Kansas man, his wife, name of Lee Jones.

TJ: Lee Jones. What about MacGregor ranch?

PM: Well, Dilly owns that.

TJ: Dilly owns the Dilly Ranch.

PM: Dilly owns the MacGregor Ranch and they tore all the buildings down and everything. There's no buildings. There's still a house on my folks' place but Mr. Jones has, but he don't live there. He's got somebody there that kind of looks after it that's on another ranch next to him. He's got some horses up there and pasture and that's about all.

TJ: About how many company houses were up there at one time?

PM: At where?

TJ: At Ilse?

PM: At Ilse? Oh, there must have been 100.

TJ: Well, now, what happened to all those houses?

PM: Well, they sold them. The people, here from Canon and around had bought them. They got them cheap, paid maybe \$40, 50 for a four-room house and they tore them down and brought them down here.

TJ: Oh, they tore them down-

PM: Yeah, they tore them down.

TJ: Because some of the old houses in Chandler were moved intact, you know, up on 6<sup>th</sup> St. but they didn't move the houses down. They just tore them down, is that it, just used the lumber out of them.

PM: Tore them down up there and they used the lumber and I don't know what they built. I know there was one, some church I don't know what it was, that bought several of them. Maybe a little church out of that lumber down here.

TJ: Now, a lot of these old mining towns had fires in them, you know, where the houses caught on fire. You ever have any bad fires up there?

PM: No, never did. No fire at all, only that one at the mine.

TJ: At the mine.

PM: There was another incident I didn't tell you about, but they had a cave in there at the mine. They was about seven men down the shaft that time and it caved in and they couldn't get through the signal bell to get the hoist down where they could go out cause it was caved in between that, but they had this manway to crawl out. Well, they had to go in the dark because they put out all their lights. They used to have what they call carbide lights and they put them out so they'd have air. Well, they crawled to this manway. Well, they send Archie up because he was the smallest cause he knew where and he'd get up. So, he started crawling into the manway and he took a long time to go so he'd get help. Well, he got pretty near to the top, he knew he was getting close to the top because towards the top, it was kind of light, and he said he was reaching up there, reached a man's leg, and he says, what are you doing there? Hurry up, go on up. We got to get these men up. And he shook his leg and he didn't say nothing and he says, well, he's dead. He's stiff. So, he said he kind of worked him around. He was wedged in that hole. He went and worked him around and he crawled out and he just went right on to Mr. Brown and he says, we got a cave in and a man there in the mine. You better come down there and start digging, but he says, we got Mozier's nigger dead up there in the manway.

TJ: Now, who was this? Who was the dead man?

PM: That's who he said it was. He says it was dark, he thought it was this Mozier that was driving the coal truck had a colored boy a working for him, a colored man working for him. That's what he was. He says Mozier's nigger is dead in the manway. Well, the first thing they did, they didn't bother about that. They sent some men down the skip to start digging for these men to get air and get out and they was digging from the other side too and they was digging from this side and they knew they were getting close. They was, oh, it was about 6 feet of rock and they said they finally got a hole big enough where the men crawled out and got into, climbed out and by that time it was dark and the other shift that went down, why, they had to clean all this out first. It was caved in. Well, they had to go to Westcliffe, well, they called Westcliffe. They had a telephone. They called Westcliffe for the undertaker and the coroner to come out that they had a dead man down there. Well, he came out and he wouldn't go down, wanted one of the men to go down and get that man out. Well, finally, it turned out to be Archie. Of course, he was the smallest. Well, he took a rope with him where he could tie it around this here man so they could pull him out. Well, when they pulled him out, they saw that it was a man that just came up there that day looking for work and he's going to stay all night and somebody knocked him in the head, threw him down the manway. Well, come to find out, later years, Archie had the letter and everything, the trial and the hearing and all. They give it to somebody and they never did bring it back.

TJ: About what year was this? Do you recall?

PM: This was just a year before the fire.

TJ: So that'd be about like 1927.

PM: Well, I would, let's say, '26, '25 or '26. Something like that.

TJ: Do you remember the man's name?

PM: Because I know we weren't married and he was telling me about this and he said they laughed and he says, later on, they had found out who did it but see, they had outside toilets and this man was a waiting for somebody else and he got the wrong man and they were both about the same height and everything and later on, this here guy bout went crazy I guess and all. He found he got the wrong man.

TJ: Was there a trial you say?

PM: Oh, yes, they had a trial and all, but they couldn't prove you know that he'd done it but before he died, he told Archie.

TJ: Oh, he did?

PM: Uh huh. He was the one that done it and he got the wrong man. Who he was trying to get was his ex-wife's husband.

TJ: Who was the victim? Who was the fellow that was killed that they found?

PM: I can't tell you what his name was now.

TJ: You don't remember his name.

PM: I can't tell you what his name was but anyhow, he came up there looking for work that day and he's going to stay all night in the bunkhouse and all these guys was in the bunkhouse and this guy was a watching. He says he knows he'll go out there to that toilet before they go to bed and he was just out there standing and he thought, here he comes and he must have hit him good because he had a big lump on his head and he killed him and then just drug and throwed him in the manway there in the hole.

TJ: So, in other words, he got the wrong person.

PM: Yeah, he got the wrong person and he thought, well, he would get by saying that he fell in there but these here big knot on his head where they hit him, they knew that he didn't kill, wouldn't have killed himself just falling there and the way he had fell, the way he was in there, he wouldn't have bumped his head. There was no rocks even there for him to bump his head to make a bump like that.

TJ: Where was the trial held?

PM: I guess down here in Canon.

TJ: Was Ilse in Fremont County? Or Custer County?

PM: Custer County, it had to be in Custer County.

TJ: So, it'd been in Custer County.

PM: Yeah, it was in Custer County.

TJ: Well, then, the person that they put on trial was really the guy that did it then?

PM: Yeah, he was the guy that did it. They suspicioned it was him and the way he acted and everything and he was ready to quit work there you know.

TJ: They couldn't prove it.

PM: They couldn't prove it; no, they couldn't prove it.

TJ: But later on, oh, he did it.

PM: Later on, in years before he died, he told Archie he was the one that done it but he got the wrong man.

TJ: Well, did he ever get the right man?

PM: Well, the right man, let's see. No, he never did get the right man but I was trying to think, did he die? Yeah, he died before this guy died that done the killing.

Tape stops and restarts.

PM: What they hauled the men up and down and the ore.

TJ: Oh, the skip.

PM: That's what they called it.

TJ: Was it like an elevator?

PM: Yeah, just like an elevator only it was, well, it wasn't a big bucket. It was like a square, like a mine car and they'd load that up full of rock and then haul it up and empty it into the bin.

TJ: And that's how the men also got up?

PM: And that's the way the men rode up and down to go to work.

TJ: How deep was that mine?

PM: Well, as far as I know, let's see, the fire started, went down to the 400, 700 feet anyhow or more.

TJ: Were there a lot of tunnels in the mine? Were there a lot of tunnels?

PM: Oh, yes, yes, lot of tunnels. They had at least four tunnels and then a big one where there's a big pit there now that's caved in and anybody, any miner or geologist, could see in that pit where right now, today even, if it doesn't cave in more, you can see a big streak of lead ore.

TJ: So, there's still lead in there that could be mined out?

PM: Oh, yeah, there's lead in there and they had a trace of gold. They had a trace of gold.

TJ: Now, who did the timbering in the tunnels?

PM: They had, I don't know, they had timbermen there.

TJ: That did just that work?

PM: Yes.

TJ: In other words, the miners themselves didn't do the timbering.

PM: Yes.

TJ: Now, over in the, where the single men stayed, did they furnish the dinner, cook the dinner and everything for the men there?

PM: They had a boardinghouse.

TJ: A boarding house.

PM: They had a boarding house where they went and had their dinner. I suppose they paid for it. I don't know. They didn't get it for nothing. They paid for it.

TJ: Were there some women that were hired to do the cooking?

PM: Yes, two women and a man, I think. A man and his wife and then the waitress like.

TJ: Now they cooked three meals a day?

PM: There were three of them I know.

TJ: They cooked three meals a day?

PM: Three meals a day.

TJ: Seven days a week?

PM: Seven days a week. Yep.

TJ: Do you remember any of the name of the cooks that did any of the cooking over there?

PM: No, I sure don't.

TJ: Well, I was just curious to see if any of them might still be around.

PM: Oh, dear. One of them, yeah, I do know, was Mr. and Mrs. Peck. Art Peck.

TJ: Art Peck. PECK?

PM: Yeah, because he had three boys and he learned those two older boys to cook and bake and they could do just as good as his dad. His dad was, oh, one time, I was a baking bread at my house and he come there and, two loaves of bread and had them in the pan before I fixed one.

TJ: Are any of those people around?

PM: I think Fletcher, one of the boys still lives here in town.

TJ: Would his name be Fletcher Peck?

PM: Fletcher Peck, uh huh.

TJ: PECK? Is that how they would spell their last name?

PM: Peck. Yes. And then the youngest boy is living too but I think he's down east somewhere in La Junta or down that way someplace.

TJ: Did the women like yourself that lived up there at the camp, did you have your own garden? Did you try to grow vegetables in a garden or anything?

PM: No, uh uh.

TJ: That wasn't very good soil for planting gardens?

PM: The soil is ok but nobody seemed to have time for anything like that I guess.

TJ: What did you do during the daytime? Yourself?

PM: I worked. I used to go to the Wet Mountain Valley and pick peas.

TJ: Pick peas?

PM: Pick peas. And we'd get so much a hamper in picking them. There was three women of us, one was Mrs. Deck and myself and I can't remember who the other lady was, and we went all through the Wet Mountain Valley picking peas and we got so much a hamper and if we made \$4 a day, boy, we thought we was doing better than our husbands! I was the only one that had a car and drove, but they paid me so much every week to buy the gasoline and all and that was it. They'd pay to buy the gas.

TJ: Now, where was this in the Wet Mountain Valley that you did this picking of the peas? Where did you do the picking of the peas?

PM: Oh, I don't know the peoples' name anymore but we'd pick peas, oh, they had beautiful big peas, telephone peas, they called them.

TJ: Now was this right near Westcliffe or Silver Cliff?

PM: Yeah, the Wet Mountain Valley. Just out of Westcliffe, maybe a mile or two or something like that. All those ranchers used to put peas in and all, and potatoes and things and we used to go pick peas and potatoes whenever was harvest.

TJ: Would you refer to that as truck farming? You know what I mean? They took the peas and sold them

someplace. They evidently sold them someplace.

PM: Oh, yeah, they had a lettuce shed there in Westcliffe where they bought their lettuce and the peas, and they packed them, yeah.

TJ: Now, who was the people that ran that?

PM: Dolan. Clarence Dolan was his name that ran that lettuce shed there.

TJ: Now that was usually what time of the year, in the summer?

PM: Oh, no! No, that was in the fall. That was-

TJ: The lettuce and the peas?

PM: It was, I'd say, close to, more towards the latter part of summer or early fall.

TJ: So, he was-

PM: He'd buy them right there, pack them in that shed and ship them on the train there.

TJ: oh, they shipped them out by train?

PM: Oh, yeah, they shipped it out on the train?

TJ: They had that much?

PM: Yes, the train would come up there to Westcliffe.

TJ: Now, what did you do in the wintertime?

PM: Well, didn't do much of anything. Just stayed at home, washed clothes on the washboard, baked break and send the kids to school.

TJ: You had to wash clothes on the old board, didn't you?

PM: Washed clothes on the old washboard and heat the water on the stove and you hanged them outside.

TJ: Did you have electricity in the house?

PM: Oh, yes.

TJ: You did have electricity in the house?

PM: Yeah, we had electricity, yeah. We did have lights and that's all we had. We didn't even have Frigidaires. We had a box outside and on the north side of the house where if we bought some meat, it would freeze out there.

TJ: Now what about in the summertime? How did you keep things cool?

PM: Well, it, such as milk, we'd bring it down every day from the ranch. You know, we had one cow up

there that we milked all the time.

TJ: Did you milk the cow?

PM: Yeah, his mother milked the cow and had chickens and eggs and stuff like that. Well, we had, sounds funny, but we just had a shed, and we had meat hanging up in there and we used to have rabbits, all the time we had rabbits. We never did start them, we had them in that shed.

TJ: You didn't have any refrigerator.

PM: Never had no refrigerator.

TJ: Did they ever bring ice up?

PM: Later on, Archie's mother had an icebox. She had an icebox, yeah. And they had ponds up there where they'd get the ice when it would freeze over, get the ice and put in there and keep some meat inside there, fresh meat, we did.

TJ: Did you buy your clothes readymade?

PM: No, I used to, we sewed. I don't think I bought a dress for the girl until she started high school. I made all her dresses. I made all her

Tape ends abruptly.