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### **Summary of Oral History Interview with August Schultz**

August Schultz was interviewed in December, 1966 about his life, immigration from Germany, early settlement in Custer County, and his experiences as a businessman in Westcliffe.

### **Immigration and Early Work in Colorado**

Born in Germany, August immigrated to the United States in 1890 at the age of 15, traveling alone. His uncle, who had previously lived in Colorado before returning to Germany, encouraged him to come. August's passage from Germany to Cañon City cost \$85. Upon arrival, he worked in his uncle's orchard in Lincoln Park for five years before moving to the Wet Mountain Valley in 1896.

### **Life in Custer County**

After working on his cousin's farm for five years, August married in 1905 and began farming independently. However, dissatisfied with farming, he moved to Westcliffe in 1907 and sought work in town. He initially worked in a grocery store for Mr. Ray, but the business failed. He then spent six months in a hardware store before deciding to start his own business.

### **Entrepreneurial Career**

In 1909, August built a store in Westcliffe, where he operated a grocery business until 1922. He later transitioned into dry goods, running the store until 1944. During World War II, shortages of merchandise led him to sell the business. After retiring from retail, he spent winters in California visiting his children. Eventually, he returned to Westcliffe and worked in the insurance industry, selling fire and auto policies for over 26 years.

### **Reflections on Westcliffe and Silver Cliff**

August recounted how Silver Cliff was once a booming mining town in the 1880s, with a population of over 10,000. At one point, Silver Cliff was even considered for the state capital before Denver was chosen. However, by the time August arrived in the 1890s, mining had declined significantly, and businesses were moving to Westcliffe. Many buildings were physically relocated from Silver Cliff to Westcliffe using large wagons and teams of horses.

He recalled how freighters used oxen and large wagons to haul supplies from Denver to Custer County, a journey that took six weeks before the railroad was built in 1901. He also described early transportation, noting that it took an entire day to travel from Cañon City to Westcliffe by stagecoach.

### **Community and Personal Life**

August married Elizabeth Erps, and they were together for 61 years until her passing in 1989. He spoke fondly of their life together and the hardships they endured. He also reflected on historical events, including major fires in Westcliffe, the role of the German Colony in settling the valley, and how the Lutheran Church was established in 1917 with strong community support.

## Legacy

August's interview offers insights into the immigrant experience, early business development in Westcliffe, and the transition from farming to commerce. His memories provide a firsthand account of the changes in Custer County, from its mining boom to its growth as a ranching and agricultural community.

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