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Boughton (Boots) & Leona Noble, 603 East Cleveland, Lafayette, CO. March 18, 1986
Interviewer: Fred Stones

We appreciate folks, the fact that you let us come down here and talk about your past experiences here in Lafayette. You're entirely welcome. Well, we appreciate it and we want you to know that this will be kept on file at the Library and it will be available to people to listen to but it won't be available to be loaned out.

When were you born, Boots? In 1907. Where? Lafayette, Colorado. And who were your parents? Harry Noble, Sr. and Hortense Noble. What was Hortense's name before she was married? Riggs. And where was your father born? London, England. Do you know about when he was born? In 1865. Do you know when your mother was born? October 1, 1865, same year. And where was she born? At Perrysville, Indiana. And you were born here in Lafayette? Yes, When were you married? May 29, 1929. And who did you marry? Leona Reese. On Leona's family, do you remember when her mother or her father was born? No, I'll have to pass up on that and leave it to her. All right, we'll get to that later. You were born here in Lafayette, were you born at home? Yes, 610 East Simpson Street, the Angevine residence now. And the residence is still there? Yes.

Tell me a little bit about your father. Well, my father came out here from Connecticut to bring his brother, Arthur, who had developed tuberculosis. He brought him here for health reasons, following the doctor's advise. And when he came out here, he first went to work for the Kansas Pacific Railroad which was before the Union Pacific. And he worked there a couple of years then he went to work for 11 years at the Denver Gas and Electric Company which is now Public Service Company at the Lacombe(?) Plant in Denver. Where was the Lacombe Plant? It was down about 9th and Lawrence, I believe. And then after that, the Colorado National Bank had him come out here to work for the Northern Coal and Coke Company which they controlled at the mines which in this region here, they had at that time, if I recall, about 13 mines and they had him come out here as a master mechanic at the Central Machine Shops which was at the Simpson Mine. And he came here to repair and overhaul the engines, the punching machines and the pumps and all the machinery that goes with mining. And he came here in 1902. And he worked at that until he retired in about 1926. And then for a few more years, he sold New York Life Insurance until he finally retired altogether.

Where did he meet your mother? At Greenland, Colorado. Greenland, Colorado is just between Castle Rock, Colorado and Palmer Lake, Colorado. And when were they married, do you remember? 1890, September 20th.

Tell me a little bit about your mother now. Well, I really don't know where to start. She was always on the go. You see, there was a family originally of five that kept her a-hoppin'. And mother was, of course, people that are still around would remember her, know that she was a very small woman in stature, but big in heart. And I suppose the one thing in her lifetime that stuck in my memory was the fact that one time there was some kind of a social gathering and she, at her stature, went and danced with one of the tallest men who at that time was Sterling Autrey. And she lived to practically 97 years of age. What year did she pass away? 1962. Now, you said she had five children. Yes. Where do you come in? I'm the youngest. Name them

from the oldest down, will you please? Raymond, then Mary, Ruth and Harry, Jr. And then you. Yes. Are any of them still alive? Harry, Jr. And where does he live? Hoaquim, Washington. In Washington State? Yes, Washington State.

You went to school in Lafayette then? Yes, I started to school here in 1913. You went to the old wooden school? The old wooden school. Tell me a little bit about that school. Well, that school housed the grade school and the high school. The high school was on the upper floors and the grade school was in the basement and ground level. They had all 12 grades in the one school? Yes. Do you remember any of your teachers that you had up there at that school? Well, one in particular I remember was that teacher by the name of Miss Finch. And she was strictly business too. This was in the lower grades or the upper grades? The lower grades. Did you go all 12 years to that school? Not to that one, no. I went to the eleventh grade. The twelfth grade, the new school was available, which is now Angevine Middle School. And I graduated, which was the first graduating class out of that school building which is now the Angevine Middle School. How many were in your graduating class? There were 12. Can you remember any of them? Practically all of them. Good, will you name them for me? There was Albert Edison, Albert Novac, Kenneth Rice, Isabelle Etchells, Mary Bonar, Helen Lipscomb, Margaret Edwards, Earl Wrather, I can't recall just how many. That's great. Did any of these people stay around this country? In the City, after they graduated from school? No, most of them migrated to other areas. I remember the name Wrather, I remember that. Who was principal of the high school when you graduated? A man by the name of F. M. Carhart. Do you remember any of the high school teachers? Let's see, there was Abner Johnson, Carhart was also a teacher. And then there was a man that done the science end of it, I believe by the name of Tweadwood(?). I believe Miss Sensonpapper(?) or something that was the language teacher at that time. What kind of a sports program did they have? They had basketball, baseball, football, I think they had girls' volleyball, girls' basketball also. Did they have track? Yes, they had track. Did you ever participate in the sports? In basketball. What kind of a year did they have that year in basketball? They had a fairly good year that year, in 1925 and 26 - we went up in the semi-finals against Arvada and we lost by one point - 19 to 20. That's great.

Leona, let's ask you a few questions now. When were you born? May 13, 1909. Where were you born? In Lafayette. Right here in Lafayette. Who were your parents? Lillie and Jack Reese. Where was your father born? He was born in Lafayette. And your mother was born? In Littleton. When was your father born? 1884. Do you know the date? May 18th. And your mother was born? July 3, 1887. In Littleton. Yes. And you were born here in Lafayette. Did you have any brothers or sisters? One brother, Elmer. Was he older or younger than you? Three years younger. Who did he marry? Iva Whipple - Iva Brown. As I remember, something happened to him; can you tell me a little bit about that? Well, he got typhoid fever; that's what took him. He didn't last long when he got it. How old was he then? He was 27. How long had he and Iva been married? Five years.

Now, how did you and Boots meet? Well, we just met at high school, going to school. Were you in the same class? No, he was a year ahead. How long did you go together before you were married? All through high school - five years. What year were you married in? May 29, 1929. As I remember, you only had one child. Right. And what was his name? Jack. And what year was he born? 1932 in Boulder. What date in 1932? 21st of June. Where is Jack now? He lives here in Lafayette. Who did he marry? He married Darlene Steinbaugh. Do they have any children? One. When was the child born? He was born August 16, 1973. Where is he working? He works in Boulder at NOAH.

We've covered your family now. Tell me, where did your father work? He worked in several different mines. Can you remember the mines that he worked in? Imperial, mostly. Morrison. And they lived here in Lafayette. Yes. Where did they live? Where was their house? Oh, that little house that used to be Stamps, but Ham bought it - up on Simpson. What happened to your father? Well, he had sinus trouble and he had an operation and the infection just run through his system. That was before the days of the wonder drugs. Yes, he had a lot of operations on his nose and his system just was poisoned. And I remember your mother; what year did she die? 1967. And she was how old? Would have 80 the next June.

Let's start back now - we've covered your parents and the people around you, and your wedding, your marriage, your family. Let me ask you, Boots, what do you remember in your childhood about the City of Lafayette. Well, I've been here all my life with the exception of the time I served in the Navy in World War II - I know just about everything that possibly took place here. I remember way back about all the mines here at that time. The mining camps. I remember a little about the 1910 to 1915 coal strike - a little bit about it - I was pretty young then but I still remember the controversy and the shootings and the stabbings and things that took place at that time. Where was that? Generally, it would happen around outside of the, for example, the Simpson Mine was all fenced in and generally, when people come in, which they called scabs, come in on the train to cross the picket lines, well chances are, many times fights would break out at that time. And during the first years of my school, I remember one instance where the school building that we were housed in finally was condemned on account of mine entries and workings under the school building. See the Simpson Mine, they had a main entry called Broadway that went right up under the school building and angled toward the cemetery. Well when that happened at that time, then they had to find out what means they would have in securing class rooms for the grade school and the high school. Consequently, it was during Prohibition when all those saloons on the highway were closed down. The grade school (pupils) went to almost all those (saloon) buildings on the highway there. And if I recall right, the high school (pupils) was taken care of up at the Baptist Church. The building I particularly remember which is now Anspach's Jewelry Store on the corner was the one that I went to school in in the fourth grade. So we went there for a year. Finally, they had braces under the school building itself to let us resume occupation the following school year.

Now, do you want me to tell you now about "Boots"? Yeah, how did you get your nickname? Well, you see at that school building that we went to, I started school in 1913 and that was the year we had that great big snow here - the storm of 1913 which we still have pictures of. I remember at that time when I started school and was going there after it stormed, the Congregational preacher, which was the minister of the Congregational Church where the old library used to be, - he had given me a pair of rubber boots with a red band up on them and when I wore those boots up to that school - I'll never forget - the high school was on the upper level and they were up on the platform waitin' for the classes to start and a lot of the high school students, when they saw me comin' with those rubber boots on, they said among themselves, "Here comes Boots". And I've packed that name all my life. That's interesting. That's the first I've ever heard that.

And this is the first I've ever heard of them going up to the closed saloons for the school. You were just up there the one year. Yes. And then they got the school back to where you could go back there the next year. Yes. And by the way, while we're on the subject, during that bad flu epidemic here, the old library building where the church was prior to that, was a place where they had set up a local hospital. That's the first I've heard that too. How long did that function as a hospital? Well, it functioned there until - well a lot of people died during that spell - but until it quieted down and they had it controlled pretty well; I would say, at least six months. And there was quite a lot of people died during that epidemic? Oh, yes, definitely. Did that just last one year here, the flu- epidemic, or was it more than one year? I believe it was just about the one year is all I can recall. That it was bad, anyhow. Of course, a year or two later, chances are some people would contract pneumonia or something like that; it was a little rough on them too.

Did you ever work in the mines? I worked at the mines, yes. The mines that I worked at, I was generally in the Maintenance Department. For instance, one mine I worked at was the Columbine Mine and I was there seven years. What I done there was I maintained and repaired Edison cap lamps for the miners to use in the mining work. Tell me a little bit about those lamps. Those lamps were not an acid battery; it was an alkaline battery. And them lamps, after the miners would use them for a shift, they would have to be recharged again for the next shift. And we had to check them out for corrosion, cleanliness and we'd have to water them with distilled water once a week. And they worked out pretty good with the exception of one time, there might have been a problem of leakage from them that would cause a burn if you didn't check it right away. Why did they go to this kind of lamps? They had to because of methane gas which is explosive gas, In other words, they had to have that kind of lamp instead of an open flame lamp so there wouldn't be a result of a mishap from explosion. What kind of lamps did they have prior to these electric lamps? Before, carbide. The old carbide lamps. Yes. And prior to that, they had the old oil wick lamp. Can you describe either one of them to me? Well, the wick lamp had a top and a bottom to it and a wick sticking out just like it would in an oil lamp and the bottom part, you unscrewed it and put your fuel oil in that. What kind of a light did it make; did it make much of a light? Well, it made as much of a light, possibly, that it was good enough for them to be able to work with. How did they hold it on their

caps? There was a little clip on the lamp itself that fastened on a special miner's cap with a slot in it to clamp it on. The same thing with the carbide lamp - the carbide had a flint and a sparker just like a cigarette lighter or something like that. But you put water in the top compartment of it and the bottom compartment had, oh say, a good handful of carbide. But all three of them were rigged for the miner's cap or helmet, a place on there to put it right on their forehead. On this electric lamp, where did they wear the batteries? On their hip, with a special belt, it had a special place to put the battery. How did they get the energy from the battery to the lamp on the head? By a little switch. A button type, similar to flashing a wall panel on in the house for an electric light. Then there was a wire that went from battery to a cable, just a regular electric cable, then. A rubber electric cable from the battery clear up over and hooked on to the lamp itself. And they furnished a good enough light? Oh, yes. And they would last for the eight hour shift? Yes. Of course, once in a while if one went down or got dim or something went wrong with it, well we always used to send extras down into the mine and then the miners inside, if anything went wrong, the motorman would bring it in on the trip of coal cars.

This is something else - what was the job of the motorman; tell me what the motorman did in the mine? Well, the motorman, he would go to what they called the park - it's just like you have a main line on the railroad - all right - and there's branch lines - well the mule drivers in those days when I was at the Columbine, would pull the cars of coal to what they called the parting and they'd assemble them together there and the motorman would collect all the cars which had been loaded with coal and take them to the bottom and then return with empty cars to be filled again.

Side 2

You mentioned something about your dad working on a punching machine. What was a punching machine? Well a punching machine was run by air just like - you have the same principle as you have air compressors to make air for your tires nowadays. Well, these punching machines run on that type of energy. The punching machine had a wedge shaped bit that would go in and cut the coal. See, that was the old time. The punching machine was ahead of like the Goodwin or the Oldroyd cutting machine. They punched these along the bottom of the coal? Yes, they punched it in to the length, as far as it could go in, see. What was the object of that? They could drill holes in it and shoot it down with either monabel(?) or black powder. In other words, that left a place for this coal to drop down so it wasn't a solid -. That's right. And at that time when you were working over there, did they have any loading machines at that time? Not to begin with, but later on, they got loading machines there, automatic loading machines after I left the Columbine. You say you worked at the Columbine nine years? Seven.

Where did you go when you left the Columbine? I went to the Vulcan Mine for a little bit. And where was the Vulcan Mine? The Vulcan Mine was where, practically where the Sax Store is right now, or a little bit to the south. What company owned the Vulcan? The same company that owned the Columbine but they leased it out to a man by the name of Bert Thomasen. And how long did you work there?

A couple of years. And then where did you go? I went to Louis Gasper. And that was the Regal up by the -. The Louisville Cemetery - right next to it. How long was that mine in operation? I'm trying to think, Fred, I'd say ten years. Did Louis sink that mine? No, Johnny Morgan from Louisville sunk that mine. Mr. Gasper lived here in Lafayette? Yes. In fact, he just lived over here on the corner. Right, catty-corner on the corner.

Where did you go after you left the Regal? To work for the Remington Arms company. This was at the start of the war, then. The start of the war. How long were you there? Just a couple of years. And then you went into the Navy? Into the Navy. Tell me something about your Navy career. Well, I don't know where to begin, Fred. Well, I went into the Navy and I had my Naval training out at Farragut, Idaho then from Farragut, Idaho, I shipped to Bremerton, Washington and then we were assigned from there for either shore duty or ship duty and I was assigned to the U.S. Rasos(?)#4 which is a fleet tanker and I stayed on there and worked up to a Machinist Mate Second Class before I was discharged. We were in the Aleutian Waters then we went to the South Pacific. We also went to the Phillipines, Subic Bay, that's the submarine bend there. Then we went to Okinawa - we were in that invasion there 86 days. Then after that was secured, we went up briefly for a few days into Japan then from Japan back to Honolulu. You wasn't injured during the war? No. You say you were on a tanker? Yes, oil tanker; now that's a fleet tanker - see these big Merchant Marine tankers would bring it in at nighttime and unload onto our tanker under smoke screen because, you see, we stayed right with the task force. We had cruisers, battleships and destroyers in our unit. And at Okinawa, there, it was a rough seige there for 86 days but then when they got it secured - I remember one morning there, the sixth of April, 1945, 400 of them Kamikase, that's Japanese suicide planes, came in on us and our fleet formed three rings around and before it was over with, I think only 165 of the 400 of them got back out again; the rest were shot down.

Now, you say, these big tankers would load your tanker and you would go out and load the ship of the line, in other words. In other words, yes. To whatever, whether it be a cruiser or a destroyer or a battleship that needed fuel, well then we'd go out and fill 'em up. That was kind of a dangerous job, wasn't it? Well, you just - . In other words, somebody had to do it. Well, you didn't have to - well the best thing, I would say, is just don't think about it. All right, I can agree with that.

When you got home from the Service, where did you work then? I worked 20 years for the C.A. Norgren Company. Their first plant was on Santa Fe Drive. The next plant was in Littleton where the Littleton Administrative Buildings are now. And the last was in Littleton at 5400 South Elati. What kind of a company was this? They made all kinds of pneumatic products for air lines. Industrial production type of thing. Did you retire from that company? No, I didn't. I put in the 20 years and in a way, I guess it's a good thing I didn't because by counting the last few years of work in the school district, see that was to my advantage, because it gave me another - a double retirement.

We've got you pretty well now through your life, now let's go back and tell me a little bit about the town as it was when you two were growing up. The people that you remember, the businesses that you remember, how was the town, physically? Well, the town at that time, if I recall, ran around 1800. It had a lot of grocery stores. I remember on the highway, there, I believe some restaurant's there now where Tom John's store was. Then there was Lee Baker's store up around where Max Holden's Barber Shop is now. Then down at this end here, they had the Company Store, the Rocky Mountain Store; I believe, weren't you in there, the Gambles, after the Rocky Mountain? Yes. And then there was Charlie Scholes. There was Jack Gordon. And Dow's Drug Store. Jake Alderson's Clothing, Sam Lucock Clothing, the Postoffice. Oh, and up there where that cable place is now on that corner right up in there, there used to be a bank there too. And down in there, there used to be a bank where that laundromat is down in there - just east of the Rocky Mountain Store. And there were quite a few stores and in them days, they would send people around to take orders for your groceries and they'd take and prepare the food that you'd order and then deliver it to you later on in the day. Quite a difference than what it is today. Oh yeah. Yeah, I remember the old Union Hall that used to be there. And that Blue Mountain Plumbing place used to be the old picture show. When did they build the City Hall? The old City Hall. Well, it had to be somewhere around 1890, although I'm not sure. In other words, it was there when you first remember? Oh yeah. What did they used to have in the City Hall? Well, the firemen used to have the upstairs - the volunteer firemen used to have their meetings up there, in the upstairs part. You belonged to the fire department? Yes, oh yeah. I've got a five year certificate.

I want to ask you now about something is no longer in existence in Lafayette. And that's the initiation that the fire department had for new members, when they brought new members into the fire department. Well, the initiation in those - I don't know how to word it - but sometimes it was too far out, that's all. And a lot of times, they wound up probably hurtin' or causing strain or muscle aches and pains for a lot of them. How long did this initiation take? As a general rule - 30 minutes, an hours, two hours? Oh, I imagine the whole thing would go on for between an hour and two hours. Then what happened after the initiation? Well, they'd have, I suppose a - when you could get the - after 1933, when the beer came back in, why that was a different story then. Before that, why they'd have coffee or other. In other words, they'd have refreshments after. Oh, yeah.

You were married, if I remember right, in 1929. In 1929. Tell me a little bit about what the depression did to you, and what the depression did to the City. Well, the depression, especially when that stock market crashed, I know, myself for one, I never will forget - before that time, I thought I was laying some money away and that and I invested in stock and the stock before the crash of the market went up to \$68 and some odd cents per share and then it crashed and the most I could get out of that stock was \$1.75 a share, that's how hard it hit me. And I guess that's why from that time on, I've shied away from stocks. And then also, during that spell there, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company run into financial trouble too. And I remember between 1930 and 1932, it asked its employees to defer part of their wages, see, but of course, anybody, if you deferred half of it and they paid you half of it and you deferred half of it, but in event that you got in a bind

or crowded for something, then you could go to their company store and get merchandise for that deferred part. Did they have a coupon system? Yes. Explain the coupon system a little bit to me. Well, the coupon system was no more or less than a coupon book that they use for legitimate purposes nowadays. The coupon book, in those days, you could go to the mine office and say you wanted to buy a ten dollar or twenty dollar coupon book, then it would be taken out of your paycheck. You could take the coupon book to the stores and purchase whatever you wanted with it. There was one bad feature about the coupon books. A lot of people at the mines would take and draw coupon books and then take the coupon books and take a discount from somebody who'd give them - for instance, now you bought a \$10. coupon book at the store and somebody would come along there and you wanted some cold cash - well, you could pick that up - a \$10. book for \$8.00. In other words, they discounted 20% for cash. That's right. Could you use this coupon book at any of the stores here in town? Oh, no, just at the company owned. At the Company Store. Yeah. That was at the Company Store here or - at the - Or at the Columbine Mine. And they had a Company Store over in Superior too. Wherever the Rocky Mountain was. That's right.

When did you buy your first car? My first car I bought in 1926 - a Model T Ford and I paid \$100. for it. Where was that, where did you buy it? Up at Brown and Faulkners. Then I traded that in on a Chevrolet that I bought from, at that time, I believe it was Roy Grief, in 1928. Was it a new Chevrolet? Yes. How much did the new Chevrolet cost you? It cost me \$805. For a brand new car. Okay. How long did you have that car? Two years. And you bought that from Grief, Roy Grief? Yeah. Then I bought a 1930 from him. How many different kinds of cars were sold in this town? Well, let's see, there was the Chevrolet. Hines had the Ford. George Faulkner and Ken Brown, they handled the Durant. I think that's the size of it right here in Lafayette.

When did they build the greenhouse? Well, the greenhouse down here, this one down here, I can't remember. You see down there where the Plum Tree is now used to be the old Stratmore Mine. Right in the city limits here? Oh, yeah. That was the Stratmore Mine, right here. What other mines were close here? Well, the Standard was just east of here a mile. The Capital was about a mile. The Blue Goose was about a mile. What direction were they? They were east. The Blue Goose was kinda southeast. The Mitchell Mine was a mile north of Baseline. The Black Diamond was about a mile up, west, right up on the curve. Then I mentioned the Vulcan - the Vulcan is about 200 yards south of where the Sax store is now. And then up on the hill from there, southwest of it was the New Centennial Mine. And that's the most of them around here. Of course, there were mines where the Waneka Reservoir is now - there were two or three mines just west of that. One was called the Electric Mine, one was called the Hecla Mine and then there was Rex I and Rex II.

You mentioned when you were small you remember the fighting and the gunfire around. Did that only happen one time? No, at different intervals, that's all I can say, until the thing finally calmed down. In other words, there had to be some reason for somebody to get upset and then it would cause a turmoil. What they called "scabs" taking the union mens' jobs.

You mentioned that you worked as the maintenance man; did you have to join the union? At the Columbine, for instance? Oh, yes, I had too. You still had to join the union? Oh, yeah, sure. In fact, I was the finance secretary and treasurer there for that Local 2883 there for over five years.

Who were the men, who were the people, let's take the Columbine, for an example, who were the ones that did not have to join the union? Just the ones in the supervisory capacity. In other words, the foremen and the superintendents. All the rest of the personnel had to belong to the union. Was there more than one union at any time? No, not then. Prior to that time, you see before the United Mine Workers came in there - the year before that, the IWW tried to get a foothold in there and that caused a big disturbance of that 1927 IWW strike. And that encompassed the whole field - the whole mines field? And all around here? Yes. But they never got a foothold then, the IWW? No. And then the UMW came in when Josephine Roach got control of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. The United Mine Workers came in in 1928.

When I was working over here, Cleveland Street stopped right on the other side of your dad's place. That's right; it took a bend around the corner. And how long was that that way? Until - let's see, that street was straightened in 1954 and then two other houses were added on the 600 block on East Cleveland Street. Who put those other houses on there? The James Boys, which was called The Lafayette Construction Company. Any other houses besides those two? Yes, they built the three on the south side of the 600 block on Cleveland Street. Right across the street from you, here then. Where the old Texaco Bulk Plant was.

The Texaco Bulk Plant used to have something to do with you, Leona. What did you do there? Well, I kept books for a while. For who? For Roy Grief. Boots: for Harry. Leona: For Harry, and Roy once in a while and you. How long did you work there? Oh, about three years, maybe.

Let's go back a little bit to the time you were in the Navy. Was there anybody from Lafayette with you while you were there? Not in my company. Did you meet anybody from Lafayette in your travels? Oh, yes. I met Dan George, that's Helen McMann's brother-in-law and I met Henry Nace out at boot camp. I met Tony Guinella, he was on a destroyer; I met him up in Bremerton, Washington. I guess that's about all.

Let's go back again here in town - who were some of the kids you used to run around with in your high school days? All right, there was Earl Wrather, Cliff Alderson, Harry Fox, and of course my brother, Harry. And Don Shulz, Joe Phillips, Albert Novak, Bob Edison, Tom Davis and from time to time, I just can't recall them all, but there's a good many of them.

Were you ever on the City Council? No. Never was. Never did run for it. The only thing I was on was on that Charter Convention. I was elected on it. You were never on the school board? No. Is there anything that you have worked with through the years for the City? I believe not.

Do you remember when the streets were paved? 1953, something like that, '52. How about when the sewer systems were put in? About the same time. Do you remember how they were financed? The sewer systems - no I really don't. Do you remember how the streets were financed? Well you were assessed so much. But I can't recall just how much. In other words, each lot was assessed so much for the streets. Yeah, that's right.

What do you think about the way the city is growing today? Well, you know in the last 10 years, if I'd have gone back another 30 years and thought this would happen, I'd have probably wound up with a boggled mind. But I think it's kinda leveling off now. Do you think it's to an advantage to us to have this larger town? Well, I wouldn't say it's a disadvantage.