Interview with Chas and Anna Porta
Tape #1070

This is Fred Stones. I am at the home of Charles and Anna Porta at 205 East Cannon St. This is April 29, 1986. This is a continuing project of the Lafayette Library for the historical section of the library and we are here talking today to Charles and Anna. Charles when were you born? October 9, 1908. And where were you born? Louisville, Colorado. Okay, and where were you born Anna? I was born here in Lafayette. And when were you born? November 16, 1913. And what was your maiden name. Lastoka. So it was Ann Lastoka. Are you related to Joe? Yes, I'm his sister. Your his sister. Alright, when were you married? July 5, 1932. And where were you married? Raton, New Mexico. Do you have any children? No children. Okay. We'll start with you first Chas. When you were born in Louisville how many were in your family? There was six besides mom and dad. Alright, and what was you mother and father's name? Henry and Edith. Henry and Edith Porta. Alright, now what was your oldest brother or sister's name? William. And then --? Della, then--, Ben - Henry Jr., then Lilly, Arthur, and me and then below me was Albert, Virginia, Elaine and Evelyn. So you had a big family? We had 11 but the first one died before any of us were born. Okay. Now let's get your family. There was five of us living but I had three, two brothers and a sister that died before my time. Okay, what was the oldest child's name? Anna. Me. You. You were the oldest? Alright, and then? Then Joe, Laddie, Effie and Helen. Okay, and what was your mother and father's name? Mary and Frank. Mary and Frank Lastoka. Did they live here in Lafayette? Yes. Okay. Let's start with you first? Chas, as you were growing up, of course you went to school in Louisville, did you go to the Catholic school? No I didn't. You went to the regular public school? How many grades did they have at the public school at that time? Eight. In the public school? Did they have a high school? Yes. Where was the high school located? Let see, I can't remember now. The four grades were in the, what is now the Senior Citizens Center and the rest of the school was in the building where the park is on Jefferson and Spruce. That's Memory Park. That's where the big square --? That's where the big square schoolhouse was. When did they build the high school up there that Fisher finally bought and remodeled? That Fred I don't remember. Alright, did you ever go to school there? Yes I did. Okay. You graduated from high school? No I didn't. Alright, we'll get back to that in just a minute. Now you went to school here in Lafayette, tell me a little bit about your schooling? As long as I remember, we just had the one school there on Baseline and I think it had the 12 grades in it. Okay, how were they split up? Gosh, I can't remember. Was the higher grades on the first floor? Or was the higher grades on the upper floor? The upper floor was the higher grades and the basement had the lower grades. And they all went to school in that one school? Yes, um um. As well as I can remember. Okay, did you graduate from high school? No. What was the --- if you don't mind telling me, how far did you go in school? Through the 8th grade. Do you remember any of the kids that were in the 8th grade with you? Oh let see. Do you mean that are here in Lafayette now? That have lived here or are here now. Well I went to school with Johnny Lewis, Agnes Ferris, Lucille Cundall, I can't think of anybody else right off hand. It's kind of hard to think back that far you know. Cause that goes back aways. I realize that. Do you remember any of your teachers? Miss Harmon, Frank Page and my first grade teacher's name was Miss Caldwell. I can remember her. Then there was Mrs. Ingersol, Mr. McCready, he was, I think, the Superintendent at one time. That's all I can remember. Do you remember any of the kids that were in your class Charles? Joe Di Sando and one of the Fisher boys, I can't remember which one but Glenn comes to me that was in my class and Lin Schreiter, I can't remember any more. Were you living in Louisville when you were married? Yes. Okay. When did you come to Lafayette? Well we come to Lafayette in about '34. And where did you live when you first came to Lafayette? Up on the corner of Public Road and Highway 7.

There was a Conoco station up there and they had a house built right behind the Conoco station. The house that was built there is right now down on the George Waneka place. They moved it from up here down there. We lived there for about 3 months and then we got a house in Louisville. When did you buy this house? In April, we moved here in April of 1941. Who were your neighbors? Horace Davis and William Bagdonas. Bagdonas is on the right here? On the East? Yes, um um. Do you mind telling me, I know this is personal, but do you mind telling me how much this house cost you when you bought it? $1250. Describe the house to me. Well at the time that we bought it there was three rooms, a kitchen and a bath and a cellar. Dirt cellar. Have you got one lot here or two? One lot and a garage on the back and after we lived here for a while why we built on another room. Fixed this back porch into making it one liveable room and fixed the frontroom and diningroom into one big room instead of the two. I'm not trying to be - what I'm trying to do is to tell people what property used to be worth in that time frame. That was in what year did you say? 1941. 1941. Okay. I bought the house in March and we moved here in April. Who, of anybody in the town do you remember? Oh I remember alot of people. Johnny Lewis when he played ball. Harry Crews. What did Harry do? He was working in Roy Grief's filling station at that time. He was working the graveyard shift at Roy Grief's filling station that he had in front of his Chevrolet garage and I can remember Harry at the time when I had bought cars from Roy Grief, so that's one of 'em that I knew real well. I also worked with Harry for years out at the Highway Mine. We'll get into your mining in just a little bit. What businesses do you remember being in Lafayette when you moved here in 1933? Well, George Bermont and Charlie Scholes, Horace Davis' store; Lee Baker, he was still in business; Mr. Johns, he was in business, Ralph Kemp, the druggist; Mr. Clemens; Joe Roderick. Were there any other automobile places in Lafayette besides the Chevrolet place? Ford garage. And where was it? Down on Main Street. And who ran that? Down on Simpson St. I can't remember what the guy's name was. Hines. Didn't Hines run the Ford garage? Hines ran it for awhile. Somebody else before that though. Hines eventually moved up here you know and had it up here too. Who did you trade with when you came to town? When we first came to Lafayette we traded with Joe Roderick and Mr. Magusky. Now Mr. Magusky that's a new one, I've never heard of that one before. Tell me a little bit about him. Let's see, what was his first name? Was he in partnership with Joe? Yes. Well he took Joe in. See Joe Roderick's dad used to run the corner store up here and I don't know what happened but afterwards why Magusky and Roderick were pretty good friends and Magusky bought the store down on Simpson St. and Joe Roderick went to work for him. I didn't remember that. Then he took Joe in as partner afterwards. His name was Julius. Alright now Julius. I remember Julius. Julius Magusky. Alright I remember Julius.

What did you do at that time for entertainment? Now this is after you were married. We went to the show up here that Frank Carper used to run. Alright. Mr. Carper, you're the first ones to mention the Carpers. And then we used to go the Firemen dances at the Union Hall when it was on main street there where a -- on Simpson St. Describe the picture show to me. I've never had anybody do that. It was just a long building, let see they had a - the middle row was about 8 or 10 seats in the middle row and then on each side they had, I guess about 5 seats wasn't it, 5 or 6 seats on each side and then it was about 150' long. No, it didn't reach clear out to the alley. Didn't it? I thought it did. Very plain. It was a very plain

building. It had a popcorn stand in one corner, had a small porch and when we first went up here Mr. Carper had the Casegi boys running the movie pictures. He asked me if I would like to run the movie pictures because I worked for Mr. Carper in Louisville running movie pictures. Oh, he had a picture show in Louisville too? He had the one where Ted's place is right now. Did he run them both at the same time? No, he sold that one out to Mr. Sandy Biella over there and he retired for a little while then he bought this one down here. And the Casegi boys run the machines for him? And the mother run the popcorn stand. Oh, so it was kind of a family affair for them too? Where did the Casegis live? It was the big two story house in the 300 block on East Geneseo. Then they moved from there to East Geneseo where the Methodist minister now lives. Some of these people have never been mentioned on any of these tapes before. This is why I'm asking you some of these questions. You never did go to work though for Mr. Carper? No I didn't. Not in Lafayette. Do you remember how much the tickets used to be? Yes, 5¢ a piece. 5¢ a piece. The last I can remember is 10¢. How many years did he run that show? Gee I don't know. Did anybody ever take it over from him? Yes, Mr. Houser and his wife took it over. Who run the machines for him then? I believe it was still the Casegi boys. When did Mr. Miller start up there? Do you remember? No I don't remember the Millers running the show. Well I remember Frank being there and kind of managing the place. Whether it was for Houser or Mr. Carper, I don't remember. What happened to the picture show? It burned down. It eventually went out of business and then it burned down. Now that was right on the corner of Simpson. The 300 block of Simpson.

I would like to have you now describe the Union Hall to me. Well it was a long building. It was about 40 feet wide, just about as wide as a lot which is 50 foot. It was about as long as the show about 125 to 130 foot long and it had a stage in it, it had a wonderful dance floor. It had two offices on the south side, one on each corner. The doorway entered through the center. It was a double door entering and it was a double door on the side for fire safety. How many union locals,do you know, how many union locals there were around the area that used the Union Hall? Did each mine have a local of their own? Each town had a local of their own. Each town, not each mine. No, not each mine. In other words there wasn't a local at just the Highway Mine? No, eventually there was but the Highway Mine and the old Centennial and the Monarch used to meet in that hall and it was all called one number. And that was one local. Those three mines were all in that same local? Well, just like right now, we're all in the same district. Oh I imagine the Simpson Mine and the Capital, the Standard and all them before that, they probably all met here too. Up here, yeah. And the Vulcan. They were mines before the Highway and the Centennial. Well the old Centennial, I remember of joining the union when I was just going to turn 16. I've been a union man ever since.

Let's get into the mining business. Will you name the mines that you can think of around Lafayette within a 3 or 4 mile radius out as far as the State Mine? You mean including the State Mine? Including the State Mine and then -----. Well the State Mine, the Columbine, Imperial, Morrison, then there would be the Blue Goose, Standard, Capital, Monarch, Vulcan, Mitchell. Was the Simpson still operating when you came to town? Yes it was operating. And so was the Standard and after they sold out to Standard, after Rocky Mountain sold out or leased the Standard why Johnny Dale's dad and one other fellow from - what was that other guy's name that come from southern Colorado that Sam Cartwright worked for down there? There was two men that took over the Standard Mine and run it. The Black Diamond too, it was in operation. And the new Centennial, and the High-way Mine, the Stratmore - no it wasn't in operation when a ------.

The Stratmore used to be here? Anna's dad worked there. And there was the Monarch, the Industrial, there was the Conda Mine in Marshal and Crown Mine in Marshall and there was a Crown Mine No. 2 in Superior. There was the Matchless Mine, the Acme Mine, Rocky Mountain Fuel run it, Centennial 1 and Centennial 2, the Highway Mine. These were all within a radius here of 4 or 5 miles? Well, yes 5 to 6 miles. So actually we have a heritage of mining here in the town. Oh yes, this was all mining. Okay, so you started when you were 16 in the mine? Started when I was 15½. What did you do when you first worked in the mine? My dad took me into the mine with my brother and we were running a set of entrys on the south side of old No. 1 Centennial. Okay. Where was the No. 1 Centennial? It was one mile south of Louisville which would be what - Short St. - that's the one that used to go out by the old Monarch Mine now, down that way? There was also the old Brooks Mine up there just on top of the hill by the Centennial No. 1. Okay. How long did you work in that mine? Well I started in there and worked there for 4 or 5 years, then when we worked that out Fred Nesbith and his dad was running that mine at the time it finished up then we went to work at the Highway Mine in 1931. Okay. When did they sink the Highway Mine? Well the Highway Mine at one time was not called the Highway Mine it was called the Eversman Coal Co. and that was sank about 4 years before I started down there which would have been '26 or '27. Okay and what happened then to the Eversman Coal Co.? The Eversman Coal Co. went broke and it stood empty for a long time. Then there was a bunch from Louisville/Lafayette and Boulder that got together and formed a stockholder's committee and people bought stock in it and finally rejuvenated the mine up to what it was. Can you tell me some of those stockholders? Jake Alderson, Steinbaugh, L. Massone, Frank Yakus, Henry Porta, Louie Eberharter, I can't remember of anybody else. You mentioned somebody from Boulder, do you remember who? No I don't remember the one in Boulder. And how long did they operate the mine? They operated from 1931 until Frank Yakus took it over in about '40 something that he took it over. It was probably about '46. '46 or '47 because I helped finish out that mine in 1954. Okay. So how long altogether were you working in the mines? 30 years. Let me ask you another question that's personal and you don't have to answer it if you don't want to. Did Black Lung ever bother you? Yes. You're still bothered with it? I'm still bothered with it. Okay. Will you describe to me what causes Black Lung? Well working in a place in an entry or a big room and you have no dust protection and the dust gets in your lungs to where it cuts in and buries itself into the lung tissue and it squeezes your lungs together where your breathing comes hard. That's the only way I can explain Black Lung. Alright, then the black coal dust actually turns your lungs black. It turns it to a - it should be black but on a picture your lungs when you have it is white. Yeah, the black would show white on an x-ray. And instead of your lungs being pink the way they are supposed to be, and you can't get that black dust up out of your --- you can't get it all out. It is imbedded right into the lungs. How long does it take to contract this? Gee I don't know Fred. The job I had when I was fireboss pumping they finally put me when I wasn't on the pumping job, there was two pumpmen. When I wasn't doing the pump job I was digging the old works after the places are all worked out the entrys are automatically sealed off so that there is no gas that escapes out of there and all that dust that comes from inside of those places that are worked out settles in the cracks and crevices of the coal ribs and you dig in there to get away from any of those cracks so that gas and air doesn't get back in or out and you breath all that dust in and I went to chewing tobacco at the time that I started digging then which helped a little bit you know but not enough because if you didn't have something to quench your thirst while you were digging them seals you would just dry up. It would help the moisture in your mouth and in your throat but it didn't protect you from the dust in your lungs and you wasn't wearing a respirator or anything like that.

We didn't know nothing about respirators at that time. Is this what they call pulling a pillar? No. Pulling the pillar is when your rooms are done like when your entrys are up to the minimum like in the Highway Mine they drove their main entrys like the first and second south then the third and fourth south. Well they'd go in so far from the main entry like the main east and drive these south entrys off of that. They'd go in 300 feet then they'd start side entrys going east and west and they'd run them 300 feet apart then when you get into the end of your entrys they've run this entry here within 50 to 100 feet from where this other entry comes the first and second east would be headed for the first and second west off of the third south. Well they'd leave 150 foot barrier pillar in there so that them two entrys would never meet. Well then they'd drive rooms off both ways they'd go in that way 125 feet then they'd come back and two more rooms below that they'd go in. Well when they got this room worked up they had to leave a pillar between this room which is a wall of coal between this room--- when you finish that second room and you start back they pull that wall of coal or the pillar out. You take that coal out. Now this pillar was supporting the roof in otherwards? That pillar was supporting the roof between the first room they worked out and the second room. Okay. Then after it was brought back to within 125 feet they'd stop then they'd put a seal in that room so that nothing would seep out of them rooms. It was just a canvas seal painted with plaster then they'd come back and start two more new rooms. Now when they got the rooms all done then did they start to pull the pillars? Well when they got 5 rooms done they'd go back and pull two lengths of . Your entry pillars every 50 feet in them entry pillars they drove what they called a crosscut for air and they'd pull that back within 150 feet from the start of the entry they they'd put a seal in there to stop that. Seal that all off. And then what happened to the mine after they pulled these pillars? Well they'd just keep going right ahead or if they were into their boundry they'd just keep coming back see. Just letting it cave in? Letting it cave in. They didn't try to maintain the mine in otherwords? Oh no, they couldn't afford to maintain it, because all your water and gases would be in the back of you all the time. Okay. Now how much coal was there? How deep was the vein? Well the Highway Mine was 375 foot deep and the vein run anywhere from 2½ feet up to 7½ feet. On this 2½ foot coal, what did they do there? They just went in on that to find out if there was any bigger coal on the other side. Well we run these two entrys it would be the third and fourth north off of the main east they had 7 foot of coal up to the 11th east off of the 4th north and after we got up to there the coal split. Well when they'd cut to get the coal out of that they'd have to cut the rock bottom underneath the coal to have the height for your machine to come in then they automatically hit a fault at certain and they never did try to go through that fault. In one place they did but they never did get through it to find out what was on the other side. In otherwords there wasn't enough coal on the other side to make it financially --? They didn't know, they never got through it see. They figure on the other side of the fault the coal would run the same way it was on that side. Describe a fault to me. Well a fault is a layer of rock that starts and comes down from the top and your coal will start getting lower. You see you have two types of coal. You have a mother coal which is about 18" above the main vein and your main vein is a blacker type coal where your top vein is what they call the mother coal which is gray. It would eventually come down where it would run into a rock band of many two foot of coal and then a rock band between it and then one foot of coal above that and then it would just peel out and then it would be all sandstone. In otherwords a fault is just a rock ---- a rock formation --- where the earth has slipped or something like this that has separated the -- that is separated it would be something like an earthquake where you go down in there and then it

automatically fills up with debris and stuff. You said that you was fireboss at one time. Tell me what a firebosses job is. Well a fireboss he goes into the mine at 4 o'clock in the morning to examine all the working places, all the entrys, for broken timbers, fallen electrical lines, water in the places, dangerous gases and caveins. Then he would come out at 7 o'clock and report to his foreman what is in the mine and if the foreman thought it was okay for the men to go into that part of the mine he would leave them go in. In otherwords it was the foreman's decision not the fireboss. It was the foreman's decision. Well the fireboss had to make a decision once in awhile where there was a dangerous gas and he could shut that part of the mine down. How did you detect gas? With a safety lamp. It's a cylinder lamp and it has a aluminum top on it, it has two gauzes in it which has 784 holes to the square inch on each gauze and it has a bulb glass cylinder that fits in there and it has standards and stuff to hold that glass cylinder in there and the gas comes from the bottom of it. It has an automatic lighter in it and if your lamp goes out you just take and put it back in fresh air and automatically light it again. Now is this an open flame light? Not an open flame light it's guarded. It is a flame? It's a flame light. Okay, why couldn't it ignite the gas? Because there was too much precautions taken on the gauzes that is put in the chimney of that lamp. The gas would not penetrate that -- gas would penetrate it but that heat when that flame goes up the heat would not penetrate that gauze. I see. And they called them the upper gauzes and there was a ring on the bottom with what they called the lower gauze and it had a, what do they call that white stuff, they make gaskets out of it, they put that in these rings and then they put the glass bulb in them rings, put one on top, put your gauzes on the top of that and put your top on it and you put it down and you test your lamp in a gas filled box before you go into the mines. Okay, and you check the whole mine out? Are you the only one in the mine at the time? Two of us. There's two of you? Two firebosses. Two firebosses. Do you go together? No. You take part of the mine and he would take part of the mine? I would take the first and second south and he would take the third south and fourth south and part of the fifth north, I'd take the first south, second south and third north and part of the fifth north. Okay, how long did it take you to do that? It took us from 4 o'clock until 5 minutes to 7 o'clock. In otherwords you were in there just the two of you, you were in there for three hours. Okay now let's leave that for a minute and tell me a little bit about this pumping you was also a pump man. What was it that you did there? Well pumping, you had to lay lines that you picked up the water with, you'd set your pump after you got in so far, you'd set your pump up and lay a two inch line going in to suck this water out, every 150 to 200 feet you'd dig what they called a sump which is a hole in the rock about 4 foot deep and about 12 foot round in circumference and you'd put a pipe in that with a float in it and as you worked your way in you just kept that pipe going in and every once in awhile you'd put a stop valve so that you could shut it off to put more pipe on it and that wouldn't bother the rest of the pipe lines. When you got inside and everything was alright you'd come out and check the two big pumps on the bottom which were big centrifugal pumps and they would pump anywhere from 400 to 800 gallons per minute out of that 375 foot depth. You could pump it up the shaft then? It was higher than what the shaft was because it went up in the top of the tipple before it shot off into the water tanks. They had a water tank there for fire protection and they also had a lake down below for fire protection. Were these big pumps electrically operated? All electrical. The first mine I worked in they were air operated. The old Centennial Mine they were all air operated. Tommy Roader,at that time he was the cager at the Centennial Mine and he operated the big pumps on the bottom. What would be the benefit of having it operated electrically as over the air? What do you mean by over the air? Well the first ones were air, why did they change from the air to

electricity? Well electricity had a faster revolvement and a faster pumping action than what your air pumps had. I see. So that was the benefit then to a ----. That was the benefit of an electric pump over an air pump. Did the mines have their own generators to make electricity to run all this machinery? No. In otherwords it came straight from Public Service. Okay. The only thing that the mines had to make their own electricity was for making their generators. They had two big generators for charging lamps and the trolley lines in the mine. Okay. I mean the trolley motors. Alright, let's get into this trolley motor business. Tell me what a trolley motor is? Well a trolley motors, there's two types. There's one that is battery operated and one is electric operated. It's a big piece of machinery that has powerful motors in it, it has a seat where the motorman is protected most of the time and it has a hookup in the back and a hookup in the front. They range anywhere from two ton up to four ton heavy, they have to have big rails to run some of them motors on and they would run from parting to parting or from bottom to parting and the smaller motors run from the working place to the partings.. Okay, now let's clarify this a little bit. The big motors went from the bottom to the parting, this is what, why? They deliver the empty cars from the bottom of the shaft to the partings where they switch the empty cars into a parting and pick up the loaded trip and bring it back to the bottom to be dumped, to be put on a cage and dumped into the tipple. Alright, and then the smaller motors? The smaller motors was used on the inside of the mines for gathering the coal and bringing it out to the partings. At first, why they used to use mules. Yeah. They had three team mules to pull the coal from the partings and they used to have one mule for each entry that they had. Okay. Were they still using mules when you started in the mine? Yes, I drove a mule. You drove a mule. Okay. Were they still using carbide lamps when you started in the mine? Yes. I still have a carbide lamp. Did you ever use an oil lamp? No, I never did. They had gone out by the time you started. They had gone out before I started in the mines. They were still using the oil lamp up in Marshal when I first started in the Centennial No. 1. What was the benefit of the carbide over the oil? Well, it showed a brighter light. It showed a bluer light where your oil showed a redder light and your carbide showed a bluer. Okay. And why then did they go to the electric light? On the safety precautions of accumulation of gases in the mines. Did they ever have any problems with the carbide and the oil lamps setting off this gas? Yes. In fact when there was a like gas pockets in entrys, the fireboss would come out and he'd stop each headman that was running that entry like he'd talk to my dad and he'd tell my dad he says now there's a pocket of gas leading out of the drill hole what is left in the coal, he says make sure that that gas is burned out before you go in there. The only way you could burn that gas out was to take your lamp off and put it down close to the floor of the mine and walk into the place and get down on your back and raise your lamp up slowly till it hit the gas and exploded that or burnt that gas out. While you were laying there? While you were laying there but it wasn't enough gas for a big explosion. I see. The gas then stayed along the roof there. Right along the --- because it's lighter than air. Your methane gas is lighter than air. Your carbon dioxide is heavier than air, it goes to the floor which smothers you. And your carbon monoxide, if you're ever in that 1/10 of 1% will kill you. Okay. When you went in the mine, was you loading coal by hand? Loading coal by hand. Okay. Laying our own track, timbering our own place, loading our own rock, we have so much grading to do on the bottom to lay the track and at the time we were taking 5 foot of coal up to the mother coal. Okay. You'd leave the mother coal? You'd leave the mother coal for protection. Was that a , for protection, why was a ---? For protection and another thing it wouldn't sell on the market. Okay. Because it was a grayer coal and it was a long burning coal. Now you timbered up to that and it helped support the roof in otherwords. That helped

support the roof. I see. Now they've gone to bolting the roof which is a new thing since I've been in the mines. I've never had any experience in that at all. Okay. What did you timber with? Well we used crossbars and legs from trees, you know, what they called crossbars of timber which is about 8 to 10 inches in circumference and your legs would be about the same size, what they call the legs and you'd take and get your crossbar ready and two men would lift it up then one man would get in the center and hold it up there while the other man put the legs in it. Props, in otherwords. Props. They called them props. To prop the roof up so it a---. To prop the roof up. Okay. Then they had what they called in rooms the single prop for the cappiece on it. Were they moveable or did they --- did they leave 'em, once you put them there stayed? Once you put them there they stayed. Sometimes when they come back on pillars why they tried to save some of them but very seldom they'd, most of the places they'd drill holes in it and blow 'em out. So they'd let the roof fall? So they'd let the roof cave in. I see. Okay. How long did you shovel coal? Did you load coal with a shovel? Well I loaded and was all the way through the Centennial Mine and clear up until they got the loading machines in the Highway Mine which was in the '40s. Okay. Did you ever run one of the loading machines? Yes. Tell me how they worked. Well there was this big piece of machinery with a big wishbone arms on it and has two cylinders on the outside which the wishbone arms would hook on to and they'd have a big main pan which went over the top of your loading machine, they'd have to anchor that loading machine down with four posts, iron posts, then they'd start in with that and shovel the first coal off onto this main pan and after you got in 15 feet then you'd add a pan and they had what they called a flat pan which clamped on the end of your pans and stuck under the cut and you'd start the loading machine up before you shot your coal down. You automatically shot your coal down on the flat pan which would shake it out to the car. In otherwards this pan would go up under where it was cut? Just up under , it would go up ---. It would cut the coal first? First, then you would put this extra pan on the pan that you put on last. The pans run 13 foot long. Okay, and then you would shoot that down and most of your coal would be on that pan then? Well, the center of your coal would be on that pan. Okay. Then you just shoveled what was on the side. That's what I was going to say, you shoveled from there onto the pan. How did they move the coal from the front of the pan to the back of the pan? It would shake. It's a shaker type? It's a shaker type of a machine and it would just keep jumping, that's why you had to have the four big posts on the outside to anchor that machine down. To steady it. Steady it, um um. And where did the coal go then when it ----? When it come to the end of the pan it dropped off into the carts. In otherwords they pushed the cart right up to the end of the machine. They pushed 15 cars behind the machine. When you got down to the last car you had an automatic signal, when you got down to the next to the last car you turned this auotmatic signal on which was a light from your rotarhead to the parting and when you turned that light on they knew you were loaded. Okay. So they'd come in and pull that trip out and push a new trip in. Now this pan line would extend that whole 15 cars and load the first ----? No, just load the first car. Okay. Your track would go behind the pan, beyond the pan line, your track would be going south and your pan line would be going east. I see, I see, alright. Your cars would go underneath the end of it. Yeah, okay. But you had a little short pan that you added on the front of the car. Okay. How many ton of coal does a car hold? Well about a ton and a half. About a ton and a half of coal, okay. What was the name of these machines? What did they call them? Just a loading machine? Just an automatic loader. Just an automatic loader. Coal loader. Then they come up with a joy machine afterwards. What was the difference between a joy and an automatic? A joy, one man run that and they had buggies to pick this coal up. Now that's when the buggies came in. That's where your buggies come in, see. They had a buggy that would come in and a Bob Vallery and I worked on the joy. He was my

brother-in-law. He run the Joy and that Joy had two big arms on it and then it had a conveyor and these two arms would scoop the coal in, put it onto this conveyor, it would automatically load up into the buggies and as it loaded into the buggies, when the front of the buggy got full, the buggy just kept moving out. (Anna) Then in otherwords that Joy machine took care of work that other men were doing before? Well there was still the same amount of work. Same amount of men in there shoveling out of the corners of the ribs where the Joy machine couldn't get. How much coal would this buggy hold then? It would hold about 4 cars. About 4 cars, and then what happened when the buggy was loaded, what would they do with that? They'd run out and they had what they called a ramp just ahead of the track behind the track there and that buggy would run up on that ramp and automatically convey it out into these coal carts. I see, just automatically empty itself. And they had pans that fit from inside of one coal cart to the empty coal cart. When this car was loaded, it automatically dropped that down and the buggy kept just loading it in there and didn't have to stop and that was the same way with your loading machines. Okay. What was the safety precautions in the mine? Oh there was alot of safety precautions, I couldn't even start to name them all. You had to wear your hard-hats, hardtoe shoes, safety goggles, one time they wore screen goggles in the old hand pickin' days and then they come out with the glass goggles and you had to watch - there was one man on the -- the machine man on the Joy crew had to be a qualified papered man, state qualified to check for gas everytime before that machine started up and after they rested for lunch he had to go and check before they started up again. That was mostly safety precautions and then they had safety precautions on their drills because they were all covered, covered electric drills to drill the holes. They used cardox shells instead of powder. Now what was the object of a cardox shell? Push the coal down through, after your coal was under-mined they'd fill that cardox shell with carbon dioxide gas and they'd put a fuse in it, heat fuse and they'd stick this cardox shell which was about 3 foot long and about 1½" in diameter, it had a precussion bar in it that when the gas was ignited it would knock this cap out of the back of the shell and expand the coal down to the ---. Now this was carbon dioxide? Carbon dioxide. There wasn't enough carbon dioxide in there though to bother the men? To bother the men. Once it's ignited why it's dead.

Alright, we've only got a minute or two left here now. I want to know how did the Highway Mine catch fire? Well they figure it was incomplete combustion. One time when it was summertime and Public Service called for a car of coal and there was only one or two men there at the mine, the way I heard it. There was only one or two men there at the mine and they went out and they loaded this car of coal out of what they call a bugdust bin which is machine cuttings from under the coal. Fine coal. In these bins there's a certain amount from the shoot that goes into the railroad cars and the shoot that went into the trucks and they took all this coal out into this railroad car, in fact they took two carloads out, then they just left it there and a train come in and pulled that out then that night at 12 o'clock when I got my call that it was on fire and I looked out of my bedroom window and I could see it and it had a good start then but the Kacalach brothers was coming from Denver when they caught the fire. There was a night watchman there and he just made his rounds, completed his rounds and he went in and he went to bed and he had his clock set for every two hours and he'd check the whole thing again. Well he just went to bed and I guess he fell asleep when these two men was coming home from Denver and seen that fire, they run over there and pounded on the office door and got Frank Maracher out of bed and they called the Louisville Fire Department and the Lafayette Fire Department. How much damage was done to it? Complete. Complete? They never was able to stop the fire in otherwords? Well they did save a couple of the posts and that's about it. Okay,then that was essentially the end of the Highway Mine?

Essentially that was the end of the Highway Mine. The only thing is that five of us men went in throught the air shaft and we doubled up the air shaft for a intake and return. We went down there and salvaged most of the material. You got it out through the air shaft, in otherwords? You had to set up a hoist of somekind out there? They had a hoist set up for that ----. For that emergency? Not only for that emergency, for emergency if anything happened to the main shaft they could take the men out the air shaft. They had a cage in it and everything. Did all the mines have that? Oh yes. Was that a state law? That was a state law. Good. Well I didn't know that. You were able to salvage most of the machinery out of the mine then? We left two loading machines and 50 pit cars and about 700 foot of track. That's all that was left in there and the two big centrifugal pumps. And got everything else out? We got everything else out. What happened to the stuff that they ----?