

TAPE F-102, SIDES A & B

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH WILLARD K. FALLER

Date: November 25, 1991

Interviewers: Rose Davis and Don Davis

SIDE A

The area covered by the interview included Kennedy Gulch (later Foxton Rd.), Pine and Buffalo Creek.

Willard Faller was born on November 7, 1907. His grandparents lived in Carbon Hill, Ohio. As a teamster, the grandfather hauled coal from the local mine with his four sons. All but Willard's father, Charles Wesley Faller (1868-1968), moved to Kansas. Charles Wesley moved to Denver, Colorado at age eighteen. Charles Wesley became involved as a "deal maker" with one of the Evans family on the High Line Canal. He bought a dairy at 4600 East Tennessee. He sold it and worked at and bought a greenhouse at the same address as the dairy. He remained in that business until Willard was grown up but he also moved to Indian Creek with his wife and two sons where for about two years he ran a ranch owned by the father of jazz musician Paul Whiteman.

In 1925, Willard's father filed papers for a homestead (640 acres) where Willard still lives. With the Depression, the Fallers either lost or sold the greenhouse and moved into the original homestead cabin that measured ten square feet. They fetched water from the creek. Charles Wesley lived there until he was 98-99 years old.

Willard talked about other pioneers such as the Kennedys (Beaver Ranch), the Greens, and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Reynolds (New York actors), whose property became an Open Space Park. He also recalled Tomson, who lived at Longview, a "war buddy" of Teddy Roosevelt who lent the Fallers books from his extensive library.

Willard's mother was from an English immigrant family who settled in Michigan. The Foxtons, also from England, ran a resort and post office at Foxton. This post office served the entire territory.

Willard was schooled in Denver because they had no school in the country. In later years, the county supplied his son and another boy of about 6-8 years old with a private teacher.

Mrs. Faller refused to join Willard when his job took him to California and overseas but returned to the Colorado homestead. She installed a basement, then a water supply, but had no phone or electricity. In time, Willard installed two deep, large water tanks from an underground river. For thirty-five years, Willard worked overseas for the Bechtel Corporation. He never went beyond high school, but Bechtel paid for further education, although never for a college degree. He described his overseas work for Bechtel as like the Navy – "yards and docks."

SIDE B

Side B begins with a discussion of a round trip train that carried passengers from Denver into the mountains. It was called the “fish train” because it would stop to let off people wherever they wished to fish. The engine and cars are now at Knotts Berry Farm in California.

Kennedy Gulch Road was a wagon road from the present Highway 285 up to Conifer Mountain, “just a trail through anybody’s property and still is through a mine.” Mr. Kennedy acquired land from Conifer Mountain to the Platte River and ran cattle there. The Kennedy house was on Beaver Ranch and still empty in 1925. A story is told about Kennedy threatening to kill his neighbor if he didn’t quit grazing his cattle on Kennedy’s land. When he ignored the warning, Kennedy allegedly shot and killed him.

The first postman to have an actual mail route was named Granzella. His successor was a woman who supported her husband who had muscular dystrophy.

Willard installed the electric lines used by the first phone service.

The Hoffrautz family ran a grocery store that delivered goods to his wife’s house, and a Mrs. Fields ran a small store where the Safeway now is (in Conifer?). Willard’s wife got everything from food to cement, from the local Windecker Truck Line as well as other sources such as the school bus.

The Fallers used to drive a Model T Ford in the mountains.

Granite was quarried in their vicinity before 1925. The Faller property was a grazing and logging homestead. They could not cut the big trees until the advent of chain saws and tractors, however. Windecker had a contract with Willard’s dad to build a diesel-powered sawmill on the homestead.