

Oral History Interview with ALVA F. LYONS, Oct. 26, 1989, Durango, Colorado,  
by Rae Haynes, for the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College



Center of  
Southwest Studies

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The date is October 26, 1989. This is the third in a series of tapes with Alva F. Lyons as narrator, the interviewer is Rae Haynes, and the topic of today's interview is some of the old homes along 3rd Avenue east in Durango where Mr. Lyons delivered newspapers when he was a boy.

[Editor's note: bracketed texts are comments made later by Martha Lyons McDaniel, daughter of Alva Lyons, when she edited the transcription in 1991. Center of Southwest Studies Professional Archival Intern Renee Morgan entered these notes in the transcription on February 6, 2008.]

**HAYNES:** About when was that, Mr. Lyons?

**LYONS:** Between 1910 and '12.

**HAYNES:** And you would have been how old then?

**LYONS:** Well I would have been 13 or 14, something like that, 12 to 13.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we are sitting here on the northeast corner of 6th Street and 3rd Avenue East, and tell me what it is you are holding in your hand.

**LYONS:** Well this is a list of all of the houses that were available at the time I delivered papers here.

**HAYNES:** Is this an actual list that you had at the time or something you've created since then?

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**LYONS:** Oh, I created it a few years ago when the people wanted to make this in the heritage of the old timers you know.

**HAYNES:** I see.

**LYONS:** What do you call it?

**HAYNES:** National Register.

**LYONS:** National registered section of the town.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh, uh huh, now this house that we are standing in front of isn't on your list, why do you suppose that is?

**LYONS:** Well I don't know but there was two families in here, two apartments. One of them was the manager of the Durango Mercantile Company here, and I don't know who the other one was. The next house is the old Dickman house.

**HAYNES:** Now that's 622?

**LYONS:** 622, I think I have Dickman on the list there.

**HAYNES:** It says McConnell.

**LYONS:** Well that's right, McConnell he lived in it first, he was a, Smelter Bank and he went bankrupt, then there's been a series of owners since then, and a, Dallas Hampton lived there, they divided it up into two apartments, the Dickmans did and they lived upstairs and the mayor of Durango, the woman that was the mayor of Durango, what's her name?

**HAYNES:** The present mayor?

**LYONS:** No, up at the College.

**HAYNES:** Oh, Dinah, is it? [Dinah Lewitt]

**LYONS:** Professor.

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**HAYNES:** Yes, I know who you mean, drama professor up at the college, Dinah [Leavitt] is her first name, I can't remember her last name right now, and they live there.

**LYONS:** They live there now.

**HAYNES:** Oh, they do.

**LYONS:** Yeah, they live there now, that's where they live. The next house was built by a...

**HAYNES:** Let's pull over there so we can take a better look at it, and when you say the next house, that's the one next door to 622. Let's get up there so we can see what the number is. This is a brick house...

**LYONS:** That was built by an oil man here in town, that is he was in partners with the Phillip 66, he ran a Buick agency and he's now retired and lives down in Mesa, Arizona, and his name is...slipped.

**HAYNES:** Was this house standing when you were delivering papers, it looks newer than some of them.

**LYONS:** This one wasn't.

**HAYNES:** I see.

**LYONS:** This was built later here, but the big house on the corner was owned by Baueridge[?]

**HAYNES:** All right, let's pull up so we can see that, now we are skipping one here.

**LYONS:** Yeah, well there's a little one in here, and I don't remember what the number of that one is.

**HAYNES:** All right, the one we haven't talked about is 646--we'll come back to that--go ahead and tell me about this big house on the corner, 670.

**LYONS:** Well that was owned by Baueridge [?], W. F., that's 670 and he had a machine shop and blast furnace deal right down the street across the railroad track.

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**HAYNES:** And that looks to be about a three story house.

**LYONS:** That is a three story house, that's probably the...

**HAYNES:** Red brick.

**LYONS:** Big house, yeah.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** And now it's all cut up into apartments and the Fields lived there afterwards, he was a sheep man, and I don't know who all the tenants are since then.

**HAYNES:** And you did deliver papers at this?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** At this one?

**LYONS:** Yes.

**HAYNES:** Okay, let's back up to 646, this little one next door, that too looks like it might have been built a little later.

**LYONS:** I don't have 646 on here.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we don't know anything about 646, let's move on down the street then. Okay, we will be crossing 7th Street, and I'll stop right here on the corner and this first little house is 706.

**LYONS:** Let's see if I've got that on here. Should be on this side on the east side.

**HAYNES:** This looks like 706 there, J. H. Woods

**LYONS:** Well that's probably right.

**HAYNES:** What do you know about this house?

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**LYONS:** Well I don't know who lives there right now, but Morris Stein moved into here and they run a clothing store in Durango after one of the fires that we had that burned down the building across the street from the Burns bank, what do they call it?

**HAYNES:** The mercantile, or is this a fire?

**LYONS:** The fire.

**HAYNES:** Or is this a fire that was longer ago?

**LYONS:** It's a long time ago, yeah.

**HAYNES:** I don't know what that would be.

**LYONS:** And the next one there was Mrs. Bird, a seamstress, who lived there and then her daughter-in-law who remodeled the house to what it is now.

**HAYNES:** It looks to be gray stucco, and it looks like it has three stories too.

**LYONS:** Yeah, now Keith Harrison's son-in-law and daughter live there, Keith Harrison was a, lived out at Hesperus you know, worked for the [Fort Lewis] College out there.

**HAYNES:** Okay, the number on this looks like it's 722.

**LYONS:** Well that ought to be right; can you see it on here, what does that...?

**HAYNES:** G. A. Schmidt.

**LYONS:** Yeah, there was a Schmidt that lived in there at one time, the next house, next to it was where the McCloskey's lived, a lawyer, he had a boy and two girls.

**HAYNES:** Now you are speaking of this stone house, if so we are skipping one.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we've skipped 726 and we are now at 734.

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**LYONS:** I don't know who was in 726, a fellow by the... well Morris Stein, they lived in there too.

**HAYNES:** Okay, so Morris Stein lived in two different houses right here.

**LYONS:** Yeah, and who I was thinking Levy, a salesman, lived in this house 726 right there.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** That was later on. I didn't deliver papers to him so, but he was in there later on.

**HAYNES:** And 734 is McCloskey, you just said.

**LYONS:** Yeah, that's this one here.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** And Brinker lives there now by himself, because he's the last survivor.

**HAYNES:** Now so far there's only one or two of these houses that wasn't standing at the time you were delivering these papers, right?

**LYONS:** Well a lot of them were standing but probably didn't have anybody with papers...the next house is the Tiffany house. He was a druggist, right here. It's been sold quite a number of times, no this one's the Bowman house here.

**HAYNES:** 752?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay.

**LYONS:** He was a Civil War veteran, he run a novelty store right down the street here on 8th Street and Main Avenue, next to where the Penney building was.

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**HAYNES:** What was his name?

**LYONS:** Bowman, then the next house was the Tiffany house, he was a druggist.

**HAYNES:** The big one on the corner?

**LYONS:** Yeah, right here.

**HAYNES:** Well we are skipping one again.

**LYONS:** We are?

**HAYNES:** Yes, and 760 I believe it says.

**LYONS:** Who was in there?

**HAYNES:** Let's see, your list says Bowman.

**LYONS:** Well that's the Bowman house.

**HAYNES:** Okay, so the one you thought was the Bowman house over here next door, that was wrong.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** All right, and then the big one on the corner you called the Tiffany house.

**LYONS:** Yeah, that was the Tiffany house.

**HAYNES:** Now was that standing when you were a kid?

**LYONS:** Oh yes.

**HAYNES:** You don't know when it was built or who it was built by?

**LYONS:** No, no, but he was also a druggist, he had a drug store and right across the street he was a, the bank over...the a, he was the president of the bank that went broke during the depression.

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**HAYNES:** And the name was Tiffany of this...

**LYONS:** Yes.

**HAYNES:** Of this banker?

**LYONS:** Of all the, yes, let's just stay here for a minute. That, Tony Boyle, across the street there a real estate man and had cattle, lived in that house on the corner.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we are looking across Eighth Street then at the house on the northeast corner of Third Avenue and Eighth Street.

**LYONS:** And there's two little houses that were behind this house.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** And one of them was, a school teacher lived in there, mother of the girls that married, oh boy it just slipped my mind, I don't know why it does that. They were, I'm thinking of Darmour when it ought to be.

**HAYNES:** Well maybe it will come to you later.

**LYONS:** Come to me, yeah.

**HAYNES:** I see there is one building back in there, is that one of the little houses you are referring to...?

**LYONS:** Well yeah, you see.

**HAYNES:** I can hardly see it.

**LYONS:** One of 'em was in a garage now.

**HAYNES:** Oh, they converted one of them into a garage?

**LYONS:** Yeah, that was two people there, two little houses in one, then there's a little bit of a house right next to it, then the Boyle house.



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**HAYNES:** The Boyle house being the main house?

**LYONS:** The main house on the corner, yeah.

**HAYNES:** Let's cross the street and take a look on the number on that one that we've been talking about.

**LYONS:** Just go on by this, I don't know whether you can, I don't think you can park, it's the only place you can park.

**HAYNES:** It's got a red curb, but we are going to park here for a little minute anyway. The number here is 810 and this is the one you said had the two little houses...

**LYONS:** Behind it.

**HAYNES:** And what do you have here on your list, what number?

**LYONS:** Well that's the Boyle house, Tony Boyle, or, he was a cattle man and a, he had, run cattle up on the Vallecito. The next little house to it a...

**HAYNES:** 592.

**LYONS:** A widow woman by the name of Sterns lived in there with her daughters, and the next house is where Thomas Rockwood, a real estate man, lived. He had three daughters and one of them married the, huh, two of them never did marry, they went to school, one of them was in the same class that I was in. They were both nurses.

**HAYNES:** That's the brown one, I can't see the number on that, but we will get it in a minute. Now all three of these little houses, I think I said 592, it's really 892, but that one and then the two north of it are really quite small.

**LYONS:** Yeah, they are not very big.

**HAYNES:** Were they standing at the time you were delivering papers?

**LYONS:** Yeah they were all standing, all of these were standing.

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**HAYNES:** Well let's get up and see the number on the second one and the third one.

**LYONS:** I don't know if you can see it at all.

**HAYNES:** Second one is 828, third one is 838.

**LYONS:** And what's this little one here?

**HAYNES:** That's 838.

**LYONS:** Well it's next to the Rockwood; I can't read it myself. These are all copies.

**HAYNES:** You don't have 838 on your list, you've got 828 Thomas Rockwood and T. B. Hale.

**LYONS:** That's for this one here see.

**HAYNES:** Okay, now after we get past these three little ones there's another pretty good size one.

**LYONS:** Well this brick house belonged to Henderson, he was a surveyor and an engineer and he built the dam at Electra Lake.

**HAYNES:** Now this is the one, this is 848 and now it's Unitarian House

**LYONS:** Well it was a mortuary for a long time and been a lot of different people in there at various times. The next house is a new house built by Viles, but it was the a, belonged to a sheep man there to start with.

**HAYNES:** Now when you say new, how new?

**LYONS:** Well it isn't only about 20 years old I don't think.

**HAYNES:** It looks quite new.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Durango Early Learning Center it says now.

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**LYONS:** Yeah, they've got a little school in there for kids.

**HAYNES:** Let me pull up a little so I can see the number on this one.

**LYONS:** I think I've got the name there on the corner house here next to the Henderson house right on here if I could read it.

**HAYNES:** I do not see a number on that house but it's on the south east corner of 9th Street and 3rd Avenue, and then as we cross 9th Street we come to the Episcopal Church. Are you ready for me to go across.

**LYONS:** Yes, I'm all ready.

**HAYNES:** Now we are parked in front of the street from the Episcopal Church, and on one of the other tapes, I think you said that you climbed the roof of the church when you were kids.

**LYONS:** Yeah, that's where Harold and I did all our maneuvering all over the roof and up on the steeple here.

**HAYNES:** You went up the steeple too?

**LYONS:** Well right in through here, yes.

**HAYNES:** That's not a very tall steeple, kind of a double...

**LYONS:** It's got an entrance in it there, up there, would have had a bell in there at one time, never did.

**HAYNES:** Oh, it never did have a bell.

**LYONS:** No.

**HAYNES:** And do you go up there with him more than the one time?

**LYONS:** Oh, we went up there, yes many times, we use to play kick-the-can in front of this church, and then at 9:15 we better beat it for home because they'd put us in jail.

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**HAYNES:** Right, that's when the curfew bell rang.

**LYONS:** Right.

**HAYNES:** Quarter of nine, wasn't it?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** The curfew bell rang, wasn't it, and if you weren't home by 9:15 you were in trouble.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** How many times would you say you climbed up on that church, you said lots of times?

**LYONS:** Oh, lots of times, I couldn't hardly tell you the number of times, and I still don't know how the older kids got a buggy up on top of that ridge.

**HAYNES:** Oh, they did?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** They put a buggy up on top?

**LYONS:** Put a buggy up on top of that ridge.

**HAYNES:** Up on top of the church?

**LYONS:** Yeah, they had a hard time getting it down from there.

**HAYNES:** I'll bet they did, I'll bet they did, we're going to pull up here just a little bit, there's two little houses just north of the church, and I'm going to park here and see if we can see the numbers on them.

**LYONS:** This one was the manse to the church here, this little one here.

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**HAYNES:** It was what?

**LYONS:** Where the preacher lived in the church.

**HAYNES:** Oh, I see, that's 928.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** The parsonage.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** So to speak, uh huh, you see the name you have written down is Femm

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** And that next little one, I have to pull up a little bit in order to see it, 934, and the list says Galloway.

**LYONS:** Yeah, there are Galloways, there were two, two gals who lived there, one of them worked at Gradens and the, I guess both of them did. One of them married a carpenter and they lived in my house on 4th Avenue, 833.

**HAYNES:** It looks like they've almost joined those two houses together.

**LYONS:** Well they are awful close you know.

**HAYNES:** They are really not joined, though.

**LYONS:** They have 25 foot lots; it didn't give em much space. This next house, Merle Cornelius bought and fixed it up and I don't know who lives in there now.

**HAYNES:** That's 942.

**LYONS:** And I don't know that, lives here.

**HAYNES:** Now all of these appear to be fairly old, did you deliver papers to all these papers?

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**LYONS:** Yeah, all of these houses along here.

**HAYNES:** Next one's 952, what does your list...?

**LYONS:** There was an engineer for the railroad, White lived there for awhile and then Milford Shields lived there afterwards.

**HAYNES:** And you've also got the name Thompson written down.

**LYONS:** Yeah, Thompson was [?] there before all of those people.

**HAYNES:** So maybe Thompson was the one that built the place?

**LYONS:** Well I couldn't tell you that, you'd have to go to the county records.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh, well did you deliver papers at the time that the Thompsons lived there?

**LYONS:** Yeah, yes.

**HAYNES:** Okay.

**LYONS:** And the next house, of course, is...

**HAYNES:** 960.

**LYONS:** Was an attorney who lived over on 4th Avenue, moved into this house and fixed it up here.

**HAYNES:** But that was more recent.

**LYONS:** And, yeah, and there's Dudney, he lived in there, he run a supply, office supply office.

**HAYNES:** What's the name again?

**LYONS:** Dudney.

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**HAYNES:** Dudney?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** And this one looks like it probably was built about the 30's or was this standing when you were a paper boy?

**LYONS:** Well, who lived there first was Parsons, the druggist. He lived in there first.

**HAYNES:** And when would that have been?

**LYONS:** Well, that would have been from 1900 on, I'd think.

**HAYNES:** So the house is really older than it looks.

**LYONS:** Yes.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh, all right now we're going...

**LYONS:** Next one was where the Heathers lived, the last one, right here.

**HAYNES:** 976. [Third Avenue]

**LYONS:** And Johnny Shahan lived, finally bought it from them.

**HAYNES:** Now you say the Heathers, that's your wife's people?

**LYONS:** Yes.

**HAYNES:** Which of your wife's relatives actually lived here?

**LYONS:** Well that was Charley Heather and Mattie.

**HAYNES:** And they were your wife's...

**LYONS:** Mother and father.

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**HAYNES:** So did she live here as a youngster?

**LYONS:** Yes, she lived in several places, but when they finally moved to Durango why they moved into this house. [Charles and Mattie Heather did not live in Durango until the girls, Frances and Mercedes, were ready for high school, approximately 1917. They first lived in a house at the end of the 3rd Avenue, before it becomes Florida Road, which was next door to Mattie Heather's aunt... The house at 976 was purchased several years later.]

**HAYNES:** I see.

**LYONS:** They did live with an aunt up in probably the 1200 block up here. [Mattie Heather's aunt, Minerva Rhodes Belmear.]

**HAYNES:** On 3rd Avenue.

**LYONS:** On 3rd Avenue, we don't go quite go that far, pretty close to 1500 block

**HAYNES:** So about how old do you think she would have been when they lived here?

**LYONS:** Well, I don't know how old she was when I married her. [Mercedes Heather Lyons was 22 when married.]

**HAYNES:** Well, I mean, she was here when you were courting her.

**LYONS:** Yes, yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay, she was living right here in this house.

**LYONS:** Living in this house.

**HAYNES:** Well you weren't living too far away from there yourself.

**LYONS:** No, no, that's and right across the street Pearsons owned that house there, they were cattle people, he run a butcher shop in Silverton and then the Pittman bought the house, he was, owned the Ford Agency, and his daughter finally moved into there later on. The little house behind there was owned by a, well their name was Swanson



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here, she married Swanson from Silverton.

**HAYNES:** O.kay, we are at 1004, it's the house you are talking about which we've just crossed 10th Street.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Let's see on your list you have the name, it looks like Person.

**LYONS:** Yeah Pearson.

**HAYNES:** Pearson.

**LYONS:** It might have been Person but Pearson I put it down. You know when you are spelling these names you never know just actually what you...

**HAYNES:** Right, and is this one that you did business with when you were a kid?

**LYONS:** Oh yes, I delivered papers there.

**HAYNES:** And who was living there at that time?

**LYONS:** Pearson.

**HAYNES:** Pearson when you were a youngster?

**LYONS:** Yeah, the next house there is...

**HAYNES:** 1020.

**LYONS:** I don't know who's there, but an engineer on the railroad finally bought it and...

**HAYNES:** Now your list says Kaufman, is this list the people that you actually delivered papers to?

**LYONS:** Yeah, that's the list I delivered papers to.

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**HAYNES:** So the list is who was there in 1910

**LYONS:** Yeah, yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay, so the Kaufmans were in 1020 back when you were a kid. What do you know about this house?

**LYONS:** Well the next house there was the one the engineer bought, I don't remember who lived there to start with.

**HAYNES:** Now this one's the one the engineer bought, 1020?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay, and then next door to it is a smaller little place.

**LYONS:** That's a little brick isn't it.

**HAYNES:** No, that's got siding, this is number 1034, you don't seem to have that on your list, but next door to it is a brick, 1040.

**LYONS:** Yeah, yeah.

**HAYNES:** And your list says Clark.

**LYONS:** One of the county, yeah, he owned the seed store down on a, that Kroegers finally bought out. It was down on 9th Street here on the railroad, right here and then the judge bought it, one of the county judges, a lawyer, the next house of course, I don't know who that, who is it that...

**HAYNES:** Let's move up here so I can see the number, try to get out of the street a little bit, 1046, your list says Clay, I. A. Clay.

**LYONS:** What name?

**HAYNES:** It looks like Clay: C L A Y.

**LYONS:** Well that's who I delivered the paper too, I don't know whether this is

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where Clay, that was, he was the superintendent of the Western Colorado Power Company here. I think he lived there and then he finally moved over to north Durango. Then the Baptist Church is the next one.

**HAYNES:** Yeah, let's get back out here in the street and go past the Baptist Church. You didn't climb this roof.

**LYONS:** No, we never climbed this roof.

**HAYNES:** You left the Baptists alone.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we are crossing 11th Street and on the far corner is a brick house, two story, number 1108.

**LYONS:** That's Wetter, wasn't it?

**HAYNES:** Doesn't seem to be on your list, shall we pass that one and go on?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Now the one next to it looks to be considerably older.

**LYONS:** Yeah, it was.

**HAYNES:** I can't see that number just yet.

**LYONS:** This was a grocery store owner down on 6th Street across from the General Palmer House.

**HAYNES:** Now you are talking about the one on the corner or this one?

**LYONS:** The one on the corner.

**HAYNES:** The one on the corner, that was 1108 and the one we are sitting in front of now does not seem to have a number showing, well it's the second one from the corner

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and it has an arched window in front, can you tell us anything about that one?

**LYONS:** There's no name on it.

**HAYNES:** Well, I can't tell what number it is so that makes it kind of hard.

**LYONS:** Well it would only be two numbers from the other one so...

**HAYNES:** Well your list seems to start there with 1132 and that's this next house, this wooden, little two story wooden house and the list says Johnson.

**LYONS:** Johnson, I don't remember who that Johnson was, it was afterwards bought by a switchman who worked on the railroad here in the yards. The next house is the Wigglesworth house.

**HAYNES:** That's a brick.

**LYONS:** Yeah, he was, he was the city manager for a long time right here.

**HAYNES:** Now Wigglesworth, there was a Wigglesworth that did some surveying or something for Otto Mears.

**LYONS:** That was his father.

**HAYNES:** Oh, I see.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we are at 1150, the Wigglesworth house.

**LYONS:** Yeah, is that on there, do I have that?

**HAYNES:** You have A. L. Fisher.

**LYONS:** Well there's always, these houses are all been changed.

**HAYNES:** What you are saying is Fisher was a customer when you were a kid?

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**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Then the Wigglesworth son lived here later?

**LYONS:** And I don't remember who lived in this next house here.

**HAYNES:** We're going to have to wait here for traffic.

**LYONS:** But the next house beyond this, the little one is Smith's house and I you will remember when we talked about Smith, Duane Smith, talked about him because his father had a ranch up here on the hill and he was also a photographer.

**HAYNES:** But not a relative of Duane Smith?

**LYONS:** No.

**HAYNES:** Okay, let's go up and let's...

**LYONS:** The boy there, we talked all about everything, he lived there but he just died here just lately.

**HAYNES:** Now that's 1158 you are speaking of, this little gray one right here.

**LYONS:** I think that's it, I don't know what this other one is.

**HAYNES:** And next to it is 1160 and you have Louis Smith written down for 1160

**LYONS:** Well Louis Smith lived there.

**HAYNES:** Okay, not 1158 but 1160, and you didn't have 11...

**LYONS:** I don't know who lived here.

**HAYNES:** And you don't have 1158 on your list at all?

**LYONS:** No, I think there was a lot of these houses were built in later, the church was here, Christian Church.

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**HAYNES:** The Christian Church is 1166 on the corner of 12th Street and you didn't get on the roof of that one either.

**LYONS:** No, it wasn't built at the time that...

**HAYNES:** It wasn't built at the time.

**LYONS:** No, this was a vacant lot then.

**HAYNES:** Can you give a guess when this was built?

**LYONS:** Well I don't really know when it was built, but it was some time after, in the '20s or possibly or the early '30s, cause we had...

**HAYNES:** We are crossing 12th Street and we are going to be at the Mason Elementary School and what was here before Mason Elementary School?

**LYONS:** This was the Central School here before they built the one on 2nd Avenue. They had from one to twelve grades in here.

**HAYNES:** And this is where you went also.

**LYONS:** This is where I went to school for 12 years or 13 or so.

**HAYNES:** And actually graduated from high school out of the Central School.

**LYONS:** Right out of this building, yeah.

**HAYNES:** And never got to attend the new high school?

**LYONS:** No.

**HAYNES:** On Second [Avenue]?

**LYONS:** No, my wife did, she graduated from the new high school.

**HAYNES:** Okay, is there some...

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**LYONS:** We built here behind this school here, it had a fire and it had another section on to it, so it was two sections and the third floor, all the kids had desks in there. We had a regular, every morning why they had, we went into that room, into the big room instead of the little room around the different places except down in the lower grades, and the first and second grades were down in the basement.

**HAYNES:** And that building burned.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** About when was that?

**LYONS:** I couldn't tell you that either.

**HAYNES:** When you were a young man, though?

**LYONS:** Well, it was burnt, had a fire and they added a section to it on the north end and I don't know when that was built either.

**HAYNES:** Is there something else we need to talk about on this side of the street or shall we...

**LYONS:** We'll just go to the corner and turn and come down the other side.

**HAYNES:** Then we'll start on the...

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** West side of the street, okay.

**LYONS:** You know so many of these merchants and other owners bowed around here, you know we've had all of these houses over here all that way [?]

**HAYNES:** Now we are making a U-turn at 13th Street and we are going to head back south on 3rd Avenue. We are just pulling up in front of the Hood Mortuary.

**LYONS:** Well this was the Amy house. It was built by the general manager of the smelter. He lived here.

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**HAYNES:** And is he the one that built it for his bride and she wouldn't live here, or is that just a rumor?

**LYONS:** That's probably a rumor, I don't know. She must have lived here some time or other.

**HAYNES:** And...

**LYONS:** It's a rather handsome, fancy house.

**HAYNES:** And this house had been standing for some time before you were a boy?

**LYONS:** Oh yes, it was built way long before I was born.

**HAYNES:** One of the...

**LYONS:** I would say probably in the late '80s, 1880s.

**HAYNES:** My impression has always been that it was one of the first ones up here on this street.

**LYONS:** The next house was Thomas Rockwood, the real estate man built that, and then when he moved down further on 3rd Avenue, why he turned it over to his son-in-law, they lived.

**HAYNES:** This is...

**LYONS:** That was, I don't know who I have in here.

**HAYNES:** The number is 1237, let's see if I can find it on your list. This was a good looking two-story, two and a half story, it looks like brick house.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Perkins real estate, is what your list has

**LYONS:** Yeah, Perkins, yeah that's right, Perkins lived there, and Rulands lived there



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too when he was a, they did a lot of things, they built a, they had a garage in back, they turned it into apartments. The next brick house was owned by Smoothy West, who was the senator, state senator, right here, he owned this property, there was two houses here, but he finally built this house here in the front.

**HAYNES:** You can hardly see through the hedge, I can't see the number at all.

**LYONS:** No, you can't see the number.

**HAYNES:** It looks to be made of stone.

**LYONS:** It is, it's a stone house.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** And he lived for a long time in the, on the house on the alley before he built this house here.

**HAYNES:** Then going across the street here.

**LYONS:** I remember this, because I had a fight out here and Perkins came out and stopped us.

**HAYNES:** When you were a youngster?

**LYONS:** When I was a kid over here.

**HAYNES:** Do you remember who you were fighting with?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** And what it was about?

**LYONS:** He was the son of an engineer on the railroad.

**HAYNES:** What was the scrap about?

**LYONS:** Oh, I don't know, just orneriness I guess.

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**HAYNES:** Just orneriness. We are crossing 12th Street now, and we're going to pull up here in front of the Presbyterian Church. Did you get into any mischief over here?

**LYONS:** Yes, I been over, I climbed all over this church here as a kid.

**HAYNES:** I can see the...

**LYONS:** Belfry there.

**HAYNES:** I can see the cornerstone says 1890.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** So it was here a little bit before you were.

**LYONS:** Yeah, I was a small kid here then. The next one was built later on and that was where the preacher lived in there.

**HAYNES:** This is a two story brick, I can't read the number from here. It looks like 1150, we'll go on past there unless you can tell us stories about that particular house.

**LYONS:** Well Andrews, owned the New York Bakery, lived there.

**HAYNES:** In the parsonage?

**LYONS:** Yeah, before the, then after that the preacher lived in there, after he moved out of there.

**HAYNES:** Oh, the bakery lived there before it became a parsonage.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** I see, then next door to that is another two-story brick.

**LYONS:** Oh, it's had a variety of owners also.

**HAYNES:** 1145, J. A. Clark you have on your list.

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**LYONS:** Yeah, he was a real estate man, and he was secretary of the Durango Street Railway Company. He lived here first and then they, Duggan moved in there afterwards. He was, run the, the a, kept track of your real estate, down there, the titles.

**HAYNES:** The titles.

**LYONS:** Title insurance outfit, the next little house was owned by the Sloans here.

**HAYNES:** That's 1131.

**LYONS:** And the Sloan daughter, that is Ayres married one of the girls, well Helen Sloan was the only daughter they had.

**HAYNES:** Helen Sloan who later married Daniels?

**LYONS:** Yeah, yeah.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** So she would have lived in this house when she was a youngster.

**LYONS:** Oh yeah, they lived here when she was a youngster.

**HAYNES:** Do you know the folks that live there now?

**LYONS:** Well, Bob Ayres just moved out of there.

**HAYNES:** Well, this one house I'm familiar with. It sold not too long ago and there's a young couple lives in there and they write books and the name is Warren, Scott and Beth Warren.

**LYONS:** Uh huh.

**HAYNES:** And they've just written a book called VICTORIAN BONANZA about victorian architecture.

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**LYONS:** Uh huh, yeah.

**HAYNES:** It's the only house I know anything about on this street.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** Well here we are at 1105.

**LYONS:** I don't know, I don't think this house was built here when...

**HAYNES:** No you don't have it on your list so it must have been more recent

**LYONS:** After the two Methodist churches joined hands why then they built that property there, built that house.

**HAYNES:** Now which one are you speaking of?

**LYONS:** This one next to the church here.

**HAYNES:** Oh, okay, the one that you didn't have on your list?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** And was that also a parsonage?

**LYONS:** Yes.

**HAYNES:** I see, and now we are in front of the Christian church and it used to be the Methodist.

**LYONS:** Yes, it used to be the Methodist church.

**HAYNES:** And a...

**LYONS:** It was the south Methodist church, and the north Methodists were, had a church in north Durango, they joined forces together and made big bigger Methodist deal.

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**HAYNES:** And now they've moved out on Florida Road and the Christian church took it over.

**LYONS:** Yeah, and that across the street there, that big house there was the Jakeway house, he, it's been owned too by a variety of people. But he was the, run a hardware store and the building department, had building supplies of all kinds. Had a warehouse down on the Camino Del Rio part down there.

**HAYNES:** Now this is the house that I heard referred to as the Girard house.

**LYONS:** Yeah, well Girard bought it afterwards and remodeled it into apartments, then Paisley bought it afterwards, the county owned it, it's been, had a variety of owners, now they got a new owner now who's fixing it up again.

**HAYNES:** Well they are sure fixing it up all right.

**LYONS:** Yeah, next to it, a little brick house was next to it here and that's where Hal Cobb lived for many years, right there.

**HAYNES:** It looks like they are using that for a parking lot now.

**LYONS:** Now, yes and next there was owned by Chapman who had the gal that hit me in the back of the head with the eraser, or not me in the head but the teacher and I got thrown out of that class.

**HAYNES:** Oh yeah, you told us about that...

**LYONS:** Well that's where they lived, the Chapmans lived there.

**HAYNES:** You got blamed for that little prank.

**LYONS:** Yeah, I got blamed for that, that's called the Chapman house

**HAYNES:** That's 1027.

**LYONS:** Yeah, I don't know if I got that on there.

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**HAYNES:** Yes, W. C. Chapman you have on your list.

**LYONS:** Yeah, the next house was the Wingate house, they had one daughter and one son there. He was quite an active Mason. He had mining property in Silverton and run the draft board during World War I back here.

**HAYNES:** This one that's stucco, is that right?

**LYONS:** This one that's stucco, yes, right here.

**HAYNES:** It looks some modernization's being, been done there too.

**LYONS:** Yeah, a druggist over here in the new one, has the drug store over there fixed it up. Next house is the Charley Hurd house. He owned the Durango Lumber Company and had a sawmill up on the Piedra or Pine River.

**HAYNES:** This is 1017, that's quite an elegant place, I wouldn't mind living there.

**LYONS:** Yeah, it has apartments all over.

**HAYNES:** So most of these big ones are apartments now?

**LYONS:** Yeah, and the brick house right next to it was Dr. Haggert, owned that and he had two sons, lived in this house.

**HAYNES:** That's 1001, now is this the one that the doctor used the house as a hospital.

**LYONS:** No.

**HAYNES:** No, that's someplace else here.

**LYONS:** That was over on 5th, 4th, 5th Avenue. [Oschner Hospital was located on northwest corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street.]

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

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**HAYNES:** Okay, are we ready to cross the street?

**LYONS:** Yes we are ready to cross the street. Well we can talk about the Sloan house there, right next across the street, owned by Sam Sloan. He was in the Graden Mercantile Company, the secretary, the treasurer or something. He lived in this house here.

**HAYNES:** I'm not seeing the number; this is a two story, cut stone home.

**LYONS:** A lot of these stone houses were built by Ramsey, and we will pass some more houses that he built here.

**HAYNES:** Okay, the house we are parked in front of is on the southwest corner of 10th and 3rd Avenue, and you think this one was built by Ramsey.

**LYONS:** Yeah, it was remodeled by Ramsey I'm sure. The next house was owned by a plumber, Greene, and they lived there for many years.

**HAYNES:** That's an unusual style of architecture for Durango.

**LYONS:** Yes, a doctor that lived in my house for a couple of years finally bought it and remodeled it the way it looks now.

**HAYNES:** That's 951.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** How did it look before, was it more Victorian?

**LYONS:** Just a little bit of a, kind of a shabby house, this is the Goodman house here, Myrle Cornelius lives there now with his wife who was the Goodman girl and this next house here was a...

**HAYNES:** 929, this is M. L. Newman you have written down.

**LYONS:** Yeah, she lived there first, I think she was probably the wife of the Newman that built the Newman building.

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**HAYNES:** Oh, is that right? And then I imagine that a lot of these folks that lived along this street had youngsters that you associated with.

**LYONS:** Yeah, one of the judges lived here.

**HAYNES:** Still talking about 929.

**LYONS:** Yeah, always had a variety of, this next house is a little one that was built here just not too long ago in here.

**HAYNES:** 925.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** So that doesn't have much of a history yet.

**LYONS:** No, but this house in this side here was--Judge McCloud lived in here with his daughter.

**HAYNES:** That's 909 on the corner?

**LYONS:** Yeah, that's where Judge McCloud lived and they had him living up at the other end of town.

**HAYNES:** What do you mean they had him living up at the other end of town?

**LYONS:** Well in the newspaper story in the paper.

**HAYNES:** Oh, so they were wrong.

**LYONS:** Yeah, he lived here with his daughter. It was owned by a merchant on a, clothing merchant on Main Street there that was in the buildings down where they, across from the Burns Bank before it burned down.

**HAYNES:** Okay, crossing 9th Street as soon as the traffic clears, that next little place across the street, I can't see the number yet, but that looks like a duplex.

**LYONS:** Yeah, it was changed into a duplex by one of the members of the Neo



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Delphian club if I could just think of her name.

**HAYNES:** What club?

**LYONS:** The Neo Delphian.

**HAYNES:** Neo Delphian?

**LYONS:** Yeah, a study club.

**HAYNES:** We sure picked a time of day with a lot of traffic to do this.

**LYONS:** I didn't think there would be any traffic today.

**HAYNES:** 873 and 875 on this little duplex, a, it looks like it might have been built more recently than your boyhood. Yeah, you don't have it on your list, so I guess they weren't among your customers.

**LYONS:** They weren't one of the customers. The house, stone house or its a brick house, I don't know if it is the next one yet or not.

**HAYNES:** Well we're not, let's see, we've got two frame houses first, 871 and 859, it looks like a small frame house, it seems to be.

**LYONS:** There was a jeweler and he lived in that house before he built over on, one on 4th Avenue.

**HAYNES:** Now you are going to have to tell me which house you mean as soon as we get up here a little further. In this bigger one?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** This gray one.

**LYONS:** That gray one there, let's see, no it's this one here.

**HAYNES:** Okay the gray stucco, 857, this was Hahn.

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**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** You also have the name, it looks like Foy, on your list, I can't read that.

**LYONS:** Cullenberger wasn't it, Sullenberger, oh Kalenberger.

**HAYNES:** That's 857, it looks like Fox or Foy and then 837 is Kalenberger.

**LYONS:** Well that's Fry, H. E. Fry, a conductor, lived in there for a while.

**HAYNES:** Okay 857 is Fry.

**LYONS:** After Hahn lived there.

**HAYNES:** Uh huh.

**LYONS:** Yeah, the next house is, of course, where Kalenberger lived in there. He was

**HAYNES:** 837.

**LYONS:** He bottled all the soda pop and everything around town, had a beard.

**HAYNES:** And this larger one is 825.

**LYONS:** This was owned by White, he owned a grocery store, a wholesale grocery on Main Avenue, right here that's Whites.

**HAYNES:** And he was one of your newspaper customers.

**LYONS:** Yes, the next house was built by Harry Jackson, he was the, run the Jackson Hardware Store.

**HAYNES:** Now does this actually front on 3rd Avenue or is the front door over there on ...?

**LYONS:** No it fronts on this a, they had behind it two, well there's a house there now, there was two brick apartments there. Mrs. White tried to burn them down or set

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fire to them a couple of times, burn them down, so they would have to demolish those two houses.

**HAYNES:** I don't see any number on this, maybe it's around the corner, but it's on the

**LYONS:** Sophie, Sophie somebody lives in, a member of my class lived in the house [inaudible]

**HAYNES:** Yeah, the house we are talking about is one the northwest corner of 8th Street. We'll cross 8th Street here and we are coming up on another brick, 773.

**LYONS:** This ought to have been another Herr house here. The brother of Charley Herr lived here.

**HAYNES:** It isn't on your list, but it looks like it's old enough to have been standing.

**LYONS:** Well he probably didn't take a paper but that's where he lived.

**HAYNES:** Okay.

**LYONS:** And the next house is where one of the bankers lived.

**HAYNES:** It looks like 761, I can't tell from here.

**LYONS:** I don't know.

**HAYNES:** Which banker was it?

**LYONS:** McNeil.

**HAYNES:** Do you know anything more about the history of this place or?

**LYONS:** Well he was in with the 1st National Bank and it's been remodeled, Schuyler Parker lived there, a dentist, or there's been a variety of people lived there so that kind of confuses the old timer when he tries to think of things.

**HAYNES:** And it's confusing too that I can't really make out that number, but I think it's 761.

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**LYONS:** Yeah, and the next one was A. P. Camp's house, he was the original banker in Durango, the 1st National Bank, and it's owned now by a professor up at the college who just retired. [talking about Don Bushnell - source Catherine Conrad]

**HAYNES:** It's a nice big one, 747.

**LYONS:** Yes, then next there was a little house on the alley back there owned by the Mrs. Paulford, she was the...

**HAYNES:** Now do you mean this one that's still standing or was there one in between here.

**LYONS:** There was one in back of it.

**HAYNES:** I see.

**LYONS:** She lived back in there, and I don't remember who lived in this front house at that time.

**HAYNES:** Well let's see, it's 721, you don't have them on your list, they must not have bought many papers.

**LYONS:** I think there was a, Joe Clark lived there at one time. The next house, of course, is owned by, who was it owned that house, I got it on...

**HAYNES:** That's 719 and they are not on your list either.

**LYONS:** Well Howard Davis lives there now, and I was trying to think of who lived there before that. There's no number for the house on the corner either, that was a

**HAYNES:** We are skipping this one, this little one in between. Let's see if we can pick out a number on it before we go to the corner house. No, I don't.

**LYONS:** This one here was owned by one of the, he owned a machine shop and was an auto mechanic right across the alley. I can't think of his name either. His wife then run the clothing store down next to Main Avenue. [seems to be talking about Archie Bodo source Catherine Conrad]

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**HAYNES:** Okay, the little one that we don't know anything about is 715.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** And then you are talking about the one on the corner, next door to that one.

**LYONS:** That was built by Ramsey.

**HAYNES:** It's not stone though, is it?

**LYONS:** Well it isn't quite stone; it's got a lot of stone work on it.

**HAYNES:** Brick, 703.

**LYONS:** Yeah, and there's been a variety of owners there a long time.

**HAYNES:** Okay, we are crossing 7th Street, we're going to pull up in front of this corner house.

**LYONS:** Ramsey built both of these houses here and the chair, the owner of the laundry lived in this here for a long time.

**HAYNES:** The corner one 677 is the one with the laundry owner.

**LYONS:** Yeah, yeah.

**HAYNES:** And I don't see a number on the one next door to it, but I see the similarity in construction.

**LYONS:** Well that was Hatfield, the former district attorney and so forth, he was the last owner there. His wife owns it now--I don't know--I think she does.

**HAYNES:** What was his name?

**LYONS:** Hatfield.

**HAYNES:** Hatfield, that's 669.

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**LYONS:** Yeah, the next house was owned by Licenfelder, a doctor.

**HAYNES:** 655, that one doesn't really look terribly old, but I suppose it's been...

**LYONS:** Oh it's old, yes.

**HAYNES:** Is it, this one?

**LYONS:** Yeah, it's old and this one here was, they were, he was a salesman for Morey Merc.

**HAYNES:** That's 643.

**LYONS:** Yeah, I think those names are on here.

**HAYNES:** Oh, let's see here, I don't see it. Oh, we are almost back to our starting point.

**LYONS:** Let's see here if I can't see.

**HAYNES:** 633.

**LYONS:** Well these houses were built later.

**HAYNES:** So these weren't among your customers. So there's this one and two more before the corner.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** So these are...

**LYONS:** All of these are newer houses there.

**HAYNES:** Not too historic.

**LYONS:** No.

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**HAYNES:** Well we are back to where we started.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** What about the friends you had here on 3rd Avenue. What kinds of things did you do with your pals?

**LYONS:** Oh, I don't know, what do kids do when they get in trouble all the time?

**HAYNES:** You were in trouble all the time?

**LYONS:** Well when we weren't in trouble, of course, we were better boys.

**HAYNES:** Uh, how did this street look when you were a youngster, I imagine the trees were a whole lot smaller. Did they even have trees here?

**LYONS:** Well, yeah, no the trees were planted when they put that park in, that a

**HAYNES:** The median.

**LYONS:** The median in the center there, across the street over there was the a, oh the a, Ben a, oh Ben, Ben, Ben an attorney and...

**HAYNES:** Okay we are looking over at this house that's now law offices.

**LYONS:** Yeah, no the one next to it.

**HAYNES:** The second house north of 6th Street on the east side of 3rd Avenue.

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** So there are some things you could probably tell us about the houses on down the street here too.

**LYONS:** Oh yes, yeah, that I don't have on here.

**HAYNES:** And we're almost...about the newspaper route, did you deliver papers elsewhere other than just 3rd Avenue.

Oral History Interview with ALVA F. LYONS, Oct. 26, 1989, Durango, Colorado,  
by Rae Haynes, for the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College

**LYONS:** Oh yes, I delivered the *Herald* from 6th Street up to 15th Street on 2nd Avenue and on 3rd Avenue and on 4th Avenue, of course, didn't go that far. It only went to 11th Street.

**HAYNES:** So there were some other paper boys in as well?

**LYONS:** Yes there were a number of paper boys.

**HAYNES:** Do you have any idea how many.

**LYONS:** Oh we had about four in the south side here and we had at least that many in north Durango.

**HAYNES:** And were you delivering these papers on this Pearce Arrow bicycle or did that come later?

**LYONS:** Yeah, I had a bicycle, I delivered papers on a bicycle.

**HAYNES:** But this Pearce Arrow that you bought with your earnings?

**LYONS:** Yeah.

**HAYNES:** That's what you were using most of the time you were on the route, how would a boy have been dressed in those days. What would you have been wearing as you delivered those papers?

**LYONS:** Oh, not the fancy stuff that we have today. It was just a plain old pair of pants and a little jacket or sweater, most of it was sweaters.

**HAYNES:** And would you have worn short pants that ended at the knee?

**LYONS:** No, no.

**HAYNES:** No.

**LYONS:** Long pants.



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HAYNES: Ah, I.

LYONS: Like overalls.

HAYNES: Overalls, and short pants were before your time.

LYONS: I never wore short pants.

HAYNES: Not even when you were a real small boy?

LYONS: No, when delivering the *Denver Post* it was a little bit different because you had to walk, you had too many papers, you didn't have as big a route. The *Denver Post* was a big job.

HAYNES: Did you do that as well?

LYONS: I did that as well, that was a morning delivery.

HAYNES: The *Denver Post* was morning?

LYONS: Uh huh, the *Herald* was in the afternoon.

HAYNES: And yo delivered both of these at the same time?

LYONS: Uh huh.

HAYNES: You had to get up early, didn't you?

LYONS: Yes, daybreak.

HAYNES: And your *Denver Post* route was a shorter one?

LYONS: It was shorter, and it was on the south end of Durango.

HAYNES: Did you ever have trouble with your customers paying you?

LYONS: I don't know whether they ever paid or not, I wasn't concerned with that.

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HAYNES: Oh, you didn't have to do your own collecting.

LYONS: No, I didn't do any collecting, no.

HAYNES: So they got a bill from the newspaper?

LYONS: Yeah.

HAYNES: And they paid the newspaper directly?

LYONS: Yeah.

HAYNES: Then the newspaper paid you, do you remember what you earned doing this?

LYONS: Well I really don't know, it wasn't too much, \$5.00 or \$6.00 a month or something like that.

HAYNES: Uh huh.

[end of interview]

*[Note: This audiotaped interview was transcribed by Catherine Conrad, Administrative Assistant for the Center of Southwest Studies, and was formatted and edited by Center Archivist Todd Ellison on April 4, 1996, and further on February 7, 2008, including conversion to PDF file format for online access on the Center of Southwest Studies website.]*

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