

JOYCE A DAVIES. Born 1926.

SUMMARY of OH 1415V A-B

This interview was recorded on February 10, 2006, for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program. Kenneth Davies also takes part in the interview. The interviewer is Anne Dyni. The interview also is available in video format, filmed by Liz McCutcheon.

ABSTRACT: Joyce Davies, who has been instrumental in the area of historic preservation in Boulder, talks about Historic Boulder, describing the history of the organization, her involvement in it, how it is funded and operated, and plans for the future. She also touches on her involvement in other organizations, such as PLAN Boulder and the Boulder Planning Board.

NOTE: Interviewer's questions and comments appear in parentheses. Added material appears in brackets.

[A].

00:00 (The date is February 10, 2006. My name is Anne Dyni, and I'm interviewing Joyce and Ken Davies of 4475 Laguna Place in Boulder for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History in Boulder.)

(I'm curious; you've been such a part of Boulder in the last many years, where did you two come from before you came here?)

[K.D.] I was born and brought up in Wales. I left Wales in 1952 and went to Ottawa, Canada, then from there, I went to Providence where I taught at Brown University. Met Joyce. In 1958, we moved to Boulder where I had a job at the National Bureau of Standards. We've been in Boulder on and off since then.

(Are you from Rhode Island, Joyce?)

[J.D.] Yes, I was born and brought up in Rhode Island, and so this was my first trip out west. So it was quite an experience to come from the ocean state to the mountain state. It's been a very happy mix of interests _____ since we've been here.

(When did you start becoming involved in the community? Right away?)

[J.D.] Yes. Actually, it was Janet Roberts who introduced me to the League of Women Voters. I was very active in that for the first few years that we were in Boulder. I was actually the president at one point. And then, from there I went to Plan Boulder and became the chair person of Plan Boulder for a couple of years, and then on to the

Planning Board of the city, and eventually onto the first Green Belt—it was called the Green Belt Program and not the Open Space Program in the early days. So my interest in the community has really been over a period of time and sustaining over a period of time.

(Where you right at the beginning of Plan Boulder?)

[J.D.] Not the first year. But I think I became active in the second year, right after the organization formed and was talking about the Blue Line as a concept to contain growth in Boulder. At that time I was president of League of Women Voters, and the league had a position which allowed us to support the open space program and the tax increase for that. So that was how I became active in Plan Boulder.

(You seem to be on the cutting edge of organizations as they're formed. I find that interesting. Do you like that because it's more of a challenge? Do you have ideas when you go into these things?)

[J.D.] That's possible. I hadn't ever put that into that kind of context, but I think it was because they were doing things I was very interested in doing. And, of course, Ken was always very supportive of me and the things that I was doing back in those days, and he also became involved in Plan Boulder, particularly, and of course over the years has been very active in Historic Boulder also.

(Had you been involved in planning processes back in Rhode Island?)

[J.D.] No! I was a home economics teacher! Quite different than the role I've been playing since I got to Boulder.

(Did you see Boulder as a place that needed some direction? Is this one thing that drove you?)

[J.D.] I think I probably was a follower in that particular instance, until it got to the point of preservation of buildings. I always loved old buildings, having been brought up in Rhode Island, and having access to all the buildings in Massachusetts and Maine and the surrounding area. I've always loved old things, whether it's artifacts or whether it's buildings. I didn't know what open space was until I got to Boulder. In that case, others were ahead of me, on that.

04:54 (What was the atmosphere in Boulder at that time, as far as preservation was concerned?)

[J.D.] Not much interest in it. We had, as one of my friends puts it, a hard sell at first to convince the planning department and city council that we were losing something by not having a preservation ordinance. That was the real beginnings of the historic preservation movement. Other cities back east were ahead of us, of course—Boston; Atlanta, Georgia; and Charleston, South Carolina; and so on. But Denver was about two years ahead of us,

and I understand that the city of Longmont here in Boulder County had the first preservation ordinance. I didn't know that until just the other day. That we are actually the third one in Colorado to have a preservation ordinance.

[J.D.] But we found that by educating people, we were able to convince them that we were losing heritage. Central School was going to be demolished, Highland School was to be demolished, the railroad depot was to be demolished. We did lose any number of other buildings. But those were the three that those of us who started in Historic Boulder were very interested in preserving. We lost Central School, which was the oldest school in Colorado.

I want to give tribute to two people who were really at the beginnings of the preservation movement. They were Bob and Prissy Bowron. They actually were saving buildings along Spruce Street and Pine Street; some of the big, lovely homes that were just being neglected. They were buying them up and preserving them. They really were the heart and soul of Historic Boulder at the beginning.

[K.D.] Including the "Mork and Mindy" house.

[laughter]

[J.D.] Yes, that was one of their preservation projects.

(Is that the Bob Bowron that is a developer?)

[J.D.] Yes.

[K.D.] Well, the father was also Bob, wasn't her?

[J.D.] Yes.

07:31 (Where along the line, then, did you get on the Planning Board in Boulder?)

[J.D.] Oh, that was in 1973.

(Was that when they adopted the preservation ordinance?)

[J.D.] Yes. Actually, I believe it did happen after that. It was in 1974 when the ordinance was passed, I believe, so I must have been on the board at that time.

(Did you have a hard sell with the board?)

[J.D.] No, I think that the people on the board at that time were very, very interested. And actually, so was the city council once they found out what was really happening in Boulder. It's calling attention to something that makes the real satisfaction of getting the

job done. We had a unanimous vote on the Council when they passed the first preservation ordinance. And that's pretty neat to think back on.

(Something like that, did that require—well, I think in terms of politics, was it something that the council felt that people wanted?)

[J.D.] Yes, I'll call your attention to this flyer—

[Shows flyer which outlined the first public meeting about the ordinance]

[J.D.] —which outlined the first meeting at the old library—not the Carnegie Library, but the older section of the of our current library [main branch] in which there was an auditorium, and we packed the auditorium that night—it was amazing how many people were there to hear the panel discussion about why we needed to preserve buildings in a legal fashion. That happened in December of 1971. By March of [19]72, we had our incorporation papers all signed and we were ready to do business and go out and convince the community that the first project was going to be to saving Highland School, we lost Central School, and then saving the depot.”

[J.D.] Well, one we lost, so there's no way of saving it, but Highland School actually was purchased by Historic Boulder with the backing of its members. We had a consortium of banks that wanted to participate in this, and they said they would lend us \$140,000 if we would get seven people to back our borrowing of this money. They each signed a paper saying they would be responsible for \$20,000 if we went belly up. Fortunately we did not. We paid \$70,000 for Highland School, by the way, which seems absolutely fabulous today to think that you could buy a piece of property in Boulder for that price. And then put the other \$70,000 into renovating it.

(Did you have to come up with your renovation plans before the bank?)

[J.D.] We were on the way. Yes, we had a wonderful proposal that was done professionally by one of our members that was—

(Who was that?)

—that was Warren Rovetch.

(Can you tell me a little bit about the condition or the state of Highland School when you decided to take it on?)

[K.D.] Well, yes, we first went there to clean the place out. It had been trashed out by transients who had lived there. It had been pretty well abandoned by the school board. The whole of the Davies family went down, and _____. It was a very cold winter day, probably in December, and we cleaned a lot of the trash out. That was the beginning of our involvement, physically.

(Do you have anything to add to that?)

[J.D.] No, we had Highland School for about four years, in which we were trying to operate it as a community resource for non-profit organizations. We found that our organization was not set up to handle rentals and that sort of thing, and we began to feel that perhaps we had saved the building, and that was our mission. So it was sold after that period of time, we paid off our debts, and we had, oh, \$100,000 or so left over because we had improved the building somewhat during that time.

13:25 [J.D.] We went into the railroad depot, which was one of the other buildings that had been threatened at the beginning of our organization. We had arranged for the Boulder Jaycees to accept from the city the gift of the building if they would move it. They wanted the railroad depot which was located at the entrance to 14th Street, just off Canyon Boulevard. They wanted to open 14th Street so they could have circulation around the Pearl Street Mall. That was one of the other big things that was going on at that time.

[J.D.] I might mention that one of the wonderful things for us as preservationists that helped save the downtown was the height amendment. You remember, they put a restriction on the height of the buildings in the downtown area, and they could not go any higher than 55 feet? That was the height of most of the buildings that were already there. So we don't have any high rises downtown. That particular ordinance was not passed because of preservation. It was just one of those serendipitous occasions that helped preserve the buildings downtown. No point in tearing one down if you can't build a bigger one. So it worked very, very well for preserving the downtown.

[J.D.] Eventually, the downtown became a National Register for Historic Places district. We had tried to get it on the local districting after the ordinance had passed, but our business people were not quite ready for that. But they did accept the National Register restrictions which were placed on them, and were not very hefty, shall we say. But, eventually we got them to realize that having a local district that would help them make decisions about the future of the downtown was a good thing. It is now one of the historic districts in Boulder.

(You mentioned that being on the National Register doesn't have a lot of heft to it, but the local registry does. Is that what they were afraid of?)

[J.D.] Yes. Exactly.

(How would that impact—?)

[J.D.] If you wish to make changes to the exterior of your building, you have to go through the process with the Landmarks Preservation Board. Eventually it does go through the planning process of the Planning Board and the city council has to agree to it. Mainly we like to have the owners involved and their willingness to accept these

restrictions that they know will be placed on the buildings. And they really did come through for us. They felt that this was going to be a good thing for the Pearl Street Mall.

(Was Historic Boulder asked in on the plans for the original design of that Mall?)

[J.D.] I don't remember that we as an organization were terribly involved, but Historic but many of our members were. The architects that the city hired were people who were out there working for historic preservation, so there were a number of the architects who were totally behind us, and they, as I say, were hired by the city to keep them all as an historic area.

17:42 (You mentioned that you had asked the Jaycees to move the depot. Where did they move it?)

[J.D.] Well, at the time it was a very appropriate place to move it. We had a rodeo grounds [on Pearl Street] between 28th and 30th Street. There was an open field and the railroad tracks came in there. And so it was just a great place to put it. Well, the rodeo lasted perhaps another 7 or 8 years, then the next thing that happened was they were out of business. They sold the land for developing and all of the current buildings around it have been put in since then. Although moving a building can be one way of saving buildings, it doesn't always last into the future. And Historic Boulder has been involved with a couple of other moves, which have been successful. And actually, I suppose we have been successful [with the depot] because nobody is going to tear down the railroad station today. It is a resource that is important.

[K.D.] If I remember right, when they moved the depot building, didn't they saw it in half?

[J.D.] Yes, they did. It was _____ in two pieces.

(But it's threatened again.)

[J.D.] Yes. But I think that with the pressure that is being mounted by the people who are interested in the building and interested in transportation, realize that it can be a part of what they are calling the Transit Village. It will have to be moved again, which is too bad because it weakens a building every time that happens. But if it is done properly, it will serve people in the future and hopefully for transportation reasons. Perhaps as a ticket office or something of that nature. We hope it will have a really fine place to put _____ and go on.

20:04 (Well tell me about Historic Boulder after you had this initial meeting that was so well attended. Where did you go from there?)

[J.D.] The first thing we had to do was to get the ordinance passed.... And then we went on to find that Chautauqua was under attack. And if you've been here in Boulder for a

long period of time, you remember that there was great talk about tearing down the buildings up there and putting in a convention center. There were many ideas floated that would do this. Chautauqua at that time had a very private board of directors who had been involved with the organization for a long time. They said to us, this is Historic Boulder, "We would like younger people to take over. How can you help us to save it as it is?"

[J.D.] So Historic Boulder's first grant was one that we applied for to the cultural side of the grant-giving programs. We invited the lady who was editor of the newspapers of the New York Chautauqua to come out and be our keynote speaker for a weekend of 'How can we save this area as a historic district?' At that time, Laurence Paddock, editor of *The Daily Camera*, was involved in getting the Chautauqua auditorium on the National Register of Historic Places. So with his push from that angle and Historic Boulder's calling attention to the fact that here are all the Chautauqua buildings under threat—and it actually was by some of the city employees. [laughs] We don't like to admit it, but it happens. And the new board was voted in and they took over and said forget this nonsense of making Chautauqua anything but what it is—an historic place for people to come and enjoy. So all of those buildings are now protected with the city ordinance as an historic district.

[K.D.] And it's one of the few Chautauquas left. There once were many of them all around the country. The one in New York at Chautauqua Lake and the one in Boulder, and maybe one or two others. Not many.

[J.D.] After we had a short time in the depot as our office space, we bought a little house at 1733 Canyon Boulevard, which was promptly called the little gray house.

[PHOTO #1: Woodward-Baird house]

The little gray house had been built in the 1870s and was land marked as the Woodward-Baird House. It was a workman's cottage. We thought it appropriate to have some of the buildings that just ordinary Boulderites lived in, as well as the mansions which we knew would be saved up on Mapleton Hill and University Hill and so on. We felt they were worthy of being preserved, but who was going to save the little buildings? So Historic Boulder was foremost in getting this. We had that for our office for, oh, I would say maybe fifteen to seventeen years.

(And what was the condition of that building when you got it?)

[K.D.] It was much the same, actually. We had a cleaning job just cleaning the trash out. So it was rather similar. As part of our saving that building, in order to protect the surroundings, we—together with the Anuta's—bought the house next door to preserve it from being torn down and an apartment building constructed.

(So those two buildings are still standing—)

[K.D.] Those two buildings are still standing.

(So, what did you pay for that little home?)

[J.D.] We paid \$27,000 and we sold it in 1996, I believe it was, for \$175,000. [laughs] So you can see that inflation was taking place. We had a mortgage on it, and we were thrilled when we got that \$27,000 paid off. We still had the bank account from the sale of Highland School, but we didn't want to put it into this building, because we felt that we ought to be paying for it out of the money that our memberships paid for and our fund-raising activities. So actually the money eventually did disappear when we were involved with the Boulder Theater.

[J.D.] That was a real challenge in the early 1980s to save that building, because again here we are today looking at one of downtown Boulder's premier buildings. And to think that it was under threat of being torn down! Although Historic Boulder did not buy Boulder Theater, we did have what they call "Friends of Historic Boulder," who purchased the building and held it while there was an actual—I lost my train of thought here! Sorry.—Oh, yes, they were called the Boulder Theater Associates. The city of Boulder was going to have a bond issue to purchase it as a performing arts center. Unfortunately, the bond issue did not pass. But eventually we did find people who wanted to buy the building. And of course, while Historic Boulder had an interest in it, while it wasn't an ownership interest, it was land marked so it could not be torn down.

(What was the issue with the people that they would not pass that bond issue?)

[J.D.] There were a number of factors involved. I think some people felt it was not large enough as a performing arts center for Boulder. And there others, of course, that didn't want their taxes increased, because it would have incurred higher taxes. It just was probably not the right time. People were not as interested in the culture back then as they are today, I think—cultural activities.

[K.D.] I might point out that Joyce and I were some of the Associates that helped save the building.

(Who were some of the others?)

Hope Firkins; Larry Hancock who was a contractor. Hope was a real estate agent in Boulder. Rich Judd, and attorney. Art Everett, who was an architect, and Leonard Johnson who was a CPA. We tried to find people who could work well together in doing the saving of the building, because it took several years of holding it in order to eventually find a buyer who would care for the building. Today it is very well taken care of and very well used.

[K.D.] And we saved the façade.

[J.D.] Yes, and they can't tear that building down now. Historic Boulder does have what we call an easement program, _____ which I'd like to talk about.

(Okay; let's show them your grand opening pamphlet here on the Boulder Theater. And that gives a rendering of a beautiful art deco building.)

[Shows "Grand Opening" pamphlet for the Boulder Theater]

[J.D.] And you notice that the other art deco building downtown which is downtown is the county courthouse. It was built in 1932 after a devastating fire of the Victorian building that had been there. So those are the two art deco buildings.

(You mentioned—)

[J.D.] The easement program? Could I talk about that a little bit?

(You bet.)

[J.D.] I think it's one of the things that we're very proud about. People are able to give to Historic Boulder an interest in the facade of their building. In other words, when they accept this easement, they are no longer going to be in control of what can happen to the facade. So they have given up a right to it. And consequently, the city, county and even the state gets involved here in doing some tax incentives for these people. Historic Boulder then goes each year and looks at the facades to see that there are not any detrimental changes or anything—they should come to us if they are going to make any changes, which occasionally has happened. The Boulderado Hotel is one which has given us an easement, and the Boulder Theater, of course, and the Earl building and several buildings downtown have entered this program, and it has worked out very well for us, and for them too.

(When was that program enacted? I'm not familiar with that.)

[J.D.] Oh, I guess we got that started in the early 1980s. Yes, I would say it went back as far as that. We haven't been as active in accepting new easements in recent times as just caring for the ones that we do have. But it's still a program that we would be happy to have people join us.

(People might be hesitant to put that control in the hands of someone else. What kinds of tax incentives were they given to do this?)

[J.D.] Now, Anne, your asking me a question that I'm afraid I don't have an easy answer for.

(But there is a financial gain?)

[J.D.] There is a financial gain to them. Yes. Definitely. We were really lucky to have some of the attorneys in town who helped us over the years with these programs. Neil King being one who was very involved in Historic Boulder's Programs. He was a school board attorney for a number of years. He's helped us so much.

33:14 (You had spoken of buildings being moved. Was this building, that we have a picture of here; was that building moved also?)

[PHOTO #2: ROAR BUILDING ("Renovate Our Architectural Resources")]

No. That is what we call our ROAR building. Now ROAR is "Renovate Our Architectural Resources." We bought this building on 2104 Bluff Street and held classes in renovation. It was so successful that they had to have two classes running at the same time, plus Saturday workshops in which people could come and sand wood and put in new walls, and do all kinds of things like that. It was just a terrific program, and we were able to put some of the money aside after we paid off our mortgage and so on. We sold the building to a local developer, and he was thrilled with having a house he had helped to do some of the work in.

[K.D.] We even had people come all the way from Denver to participate.

[J.D.] Yes, we did. And it was so well attended. Historic Boulder was a recipient of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Awards that year as one of the innovative programs in showing the community how to preserve the buildings.

(Had you gotten this idea from something that you had seen some other community doing?)

[J.D.] Well, one of Historic Boulder's past presidents was Nore Winter. Nore is involved on the national level. I think it was his idea, probably having been to various cities and seeing what other communities have done. The idea came from him. Whether he thought this up himself or whether he had found out from other communities, we were the first who really did a terrific job of saving the building.

(What kinds of people showed up to actually take the class and work on this house?)

Oh, all kinds; but many young people. This was a real introduction to young people who wanted to buy an older house and fix it up. So they were introduced to all the skills, starting with choosing the property, then going on through the steps of renovation and so on. Some were people who were not familiar with OLD buildings, but they knew NEW construction. They were interested in finding out about this. It helped make them aware that there were different techniques that were used on older buildings.

(When was this done?)

[J.D.] This was 1985 or [198]6; something in the eighties.

(Are you still doing this program?)

[J.D.] No, but we've been talking about it a lot. [laughs] It was so successful, we should have continued doing it. It is a little harder to find property that we can afford to purchase.

(You had mentioned briefly the Boulderado as having one of your easements. When they expanded, could you tell me about that?)

[J.D.] Yes. When they were going to put in their convention center, which is on the corner of Pine and Broadway, there were two very nice homes on the property. They didn't want to tear them down, and we didn't want them to tear them down, so they offered both of them to Historic Boulder. We said that we really didn't think we could handle two houses, but we would take one of them and we would move it to another property. In partnership with Jim Leach of Wonderland Hills, we actually moved the building to the west end of Arapahoe. Many of us were out that night watching the building move down the street.

[PHOTO # 3: MOVING THE HOUSE DOWN THE STREET]

[J.D.] We had a little parade [*laughs*], hot coffee for everybody. The big trees had to be lifted, some of the big branches that lean over the streets on the way, and the the electric light wiring had to be propped up. There was a lot to see. We had a great party that night.

(It must have cost a bit to have that house moved.)

[J.D.] Well, yes. I'm not familiar with the finances of it, but because we were in partnership with Jim Leach, he handled all the reconstruction of the building, getting it onto the foundation and doing the inside. It turned out to be an extremely successful project. The same builder who moved the railroad station came back to Boulder and moved this building for us.

(I see. Do you have a before and after picture?)

[J.D.] And I mentioned the second building on the property. That went to the Naropa Institute [now Naropa University]. It is now down on their property on Walnut Street, and they use it as, I believe an office and small classroom situation. Both of those buildings were saved by moving.

[PHOTOS # 4 & 5: BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS OF HOUSE THAT WAS MOVED TO NAROPA PROPERTY]

(In this picture here, the top picture is when the house was sitting on the corner?)

[J.D.] Yes.

(Well, that is a success. _____)

[K.D.] I think you ought to say a few words, Joyce, about your involvement, first as president and then director as well—)

[J.D.] Oh, I suppose I could say—I actually was elected the first president [of Historic Boulder] at the March 1972 meeting. I served for one year as the president. June Holmes was our second president. She was very active in Boulder activities. And so on. We have had a succession of presidents since. Ken and I, with our family, went to Australia for a year, from 1975-76. When we came back, the organization had decided they needed an executive director. So they hired me as their first executive director. So all of these activities that I've mentioned so far took place while I was either very involved as a volunteer or being paid a small pittance. *[laughs]*

41:44 (When you were executive director, were you in the little gray house?)

Yes. That's when we purchased it. Yes.

(When did you move from there?)

Well, they sold the little gray house in 1994 and bought the Arnett-Fullen House at 646 Pearl Street. That is where they have had, until last summer [2005], their office and that was a very involved situation of getting the building properly landmarked and the lot next door back together with the house property. Now it's all one property, all of the land at 6th and Pearl Street. It can't be subdivided again.

(You have pictures of the Arnett-Fullen House on your wall. I wonder if you could _____ a minute?)

[K.D.] Yeah.

[PHOTO #6: DRAWING AND PHOTO of Arnett-Fullen House]

(How long were you in that house before you—)

[J.D.] From 1994 till last summer, so eleven years.

[K.D.] Might be of interest to point out how we received the property next—the land—)

[J.D.] Oh, when the purchase was made of the building, we couldn't afford the whole thing. So the organization went into partnership with a gentleman in Boulder who

wanted to buy the vacant lot to the west of the building. Unfortunately, he had plans of a nice big house going in there and that would be the end of the yard. People were so unhappy that Phyllis and Roger Olson said they would buy the land from this gentleman, who shall remain nameless. They would hold it until Historic Boulder was able to afford to buy it from them. They actually mortgaged their house in order to do this. So that was quite a sacrifice on their part. It certainly has made a big difference. And the city has worked to erase the lot lines between the two properties. So they are now one property and cannot be subdivided again. That's one of the restrictions placed in the deed, so that in the future it will always be a whole property. That was a wonderful experiment for Historic Boulder to be in such a marvelous piece of property.

[J.D.] Betty Chronic was the president at that time—of Historic Boulder—when we bought the house. She and her husband were very instrumental in getting the fence restored. There were a lot of activities going on. But sometimes a house of that type needs a lot of care to keep it looking the way it should. And we found that so many of our resources were going into this that we actually needed to say—as unhappy as it made many of us—that we need to sell the property and move onto some other activities. And so last summer, we really bit the bullet and did it. It was a difficult decision to make.

(I'm sure it was contentious.)

[J.D.] Yes, but not as bad as I thought it was going to be. I think people bought into the idea that sometimes your needs for doing other things are greater than keeping the building itself. And so it was done.

(I'm curious, you said that you were the first executive director. What was your job description?)

[J.D.] Oh, golly! [laughs] Ken can probably answer that better than I can!

[K.D.] Twice the number of hours for half the salary.

(You had an all-volunteer staff?)

[J.D.] All volunteer; yes. In those days, we really did. We've come through some different phases in the organization's growth. Sometimes we've had a lot of paid staff and sometimes we'd go back to just someone working in the office to be there to answer the telephone. Right at the moment, we don't have an executive director. But hopefully that situation will change and we'll have one again.

[K.D.] You ought to mention this program where the ladies were able to get some pay for working.

[J.D.] Oh, the Senior Inc. program, which is a state opportunity for older women to acquire skills in office training and so on. So Historic Boulder signed up with that

program, and had a lot of very fine older women who came into the office, learned to use the computers, able to answer the telephone and helped in all kinds of ways. Right at the moment we don't have that program. You have to have an executive director to oversee it.

(Where is your office now?)

[J.D.] It's out on the east end of Walnut Street in a modern office building complex. I'm going to go back as the co-president of Historic Boulder come February 26, along with Phyllis Olson, the lady that I mentioned that had bought the lot next door to Historic Boulder. We're going to be co-presidents. One of our great desires is to get an office back downtown where we can be part of the historic scene.

(What projects are you going to have on your plate when you resume presidency?)

[J.D.] The first thing we have to do is to hire a very good executive director— someone who is experienced, knows the preservation field and gets us back on track with doing things in a more professional manner. When you have all volunteers you are a little bit dicey from time to time because people have different ideas. Whereas if you have a well-trained executive director, they keep you on track. And over the years we have had a couple of very fine ones. And we need to get back to that point.

49:43 (What properties is Historic Boulder involved in at this point?)

[J.D.] One of the activities that the Preservation Committee has been very involved with in the past year is working with the city open space program on the older buildings which are on their properties. Although I'm not as familiar with this program as I will be in 3 or 4 weeks time, I do know that that's one of the activities. They have been very much involved in the agricultural scene in saving some of the buildings besides open space, but helping private people preserve their buildings. Also, the mining heritage has been on the plate of Historic Boulder's interests.

(Can you elaborate on that?)

[J.D.] The Cardinal Mill is one which they had have grants to oversee its protection, getting it back to a safe and sound condition. They have helped various communities in the mountains, like Gold Hill with saving the little schoolhouse, and churches in some of the other communities.

[J.D.] They have been very supportive of organizations which have formed. And that's one of the good things about historic preservation is that lot of our surrounding towns and cities have formed their own historic organizations. They've passed ordinances in Louisville, Lafayette, Longmont, Nederland. And Gold Hill is a historic district all on its own. A lot of this has come about through support from Historic Boulder. I don't want to say we did it all, because we didn't, people had to be interested in [it] on their own, but we were able to help them as much as possible.

(In grant writing, for one, right?)

[J.D.] Right.

(Do you have professional grant writers?)

[J.D.] Not anyone that we pay! [laughs] Sometimes I guess maybe they get a little bit from the grant itself after it's acquired, and I believe Historic Boulder gets a small portion for administrative purposes. Most of the architects and people who do this, a great part of it is their offering to the community.

(Is this a very small pool of people who do these things?)

[J.D.] I'm always surprised at how many people are involved. The Preservation Committee for example, in Historic Boulder is probably at least anywhere from 12 to 15 people who are active. Many of them are professionals, and they're the ones who oversee these projects, grant writing and so on.

53:17 (Were you also behind the designating of Historic Districts within the town of Boulder?)

[J.D.] Once the ordinance was written, it included both the landmarked buildings and the historic districts. And although we have supported many of the districts—the Mapleton Hill area is almost entirely within an historic district. We have little ones, such as the one over on 14th Street—14th, 15th Street, Mariposa area just south of Baseline Road. And there are many other districts altogether. I think there are 1300 properties in Boulder now which are included either as a landmarked building or within a district. That's pretty good.

(You mentioned Mapleton. You have a picture here of the Mapleton School bell tower. What can you tell about that?)

[J.D.] Oh, that's the Whittier School.

(Oh, that's the Whittier School!)

PHOTO #7: Replacing the Whittier School bell tower

[J.D.] Yes, but we also worked with the parents and the teachers of Mapleton Hill school as well. But the first one we did was Whittier. It was going to be 100 years old. Their bell tower was totally gone. A new one was reconstructed to the shape of what was there. And we had lots of fun there. That was with the neighbors and the parents, particularly. Then the Mapleton School bell tower needed to be replaced, too. But that was parents with our help and support, but mainly I would say that was a parent-

teacher—. Also, another bell tower that was replaced with Historic Boulder's help was the one on Mount St. Gertrude Academy, which is now the retirement home called The Academy. And _____ took place, that bell tower had to be put up again.

55:44 (Well, you talked about not wanting to use the money that you used from Highland School sale. What kinds of fundraisers have you had over the years?)

[J.D.] Well the first few years we had an arts and crafts fair at the library hall. That went on for about five years. And it was lots of fun. We had all kinds of activities going on there for the day. Eventually, of course, everything sort of comes to an end, so we moved on, we started having the Christmas House Tours we called them first, and now they are the Historic Homes for the Holidays. That's our biggest fund-raiser of the year. It always takes place the first weekend [of] December.

[J.D.] And we have our spring house tour which is called Landmarks of the Future. And the Landmarks of the Future has the homes which have been built, probably since the [19]50s and 60s. They're usually architects' homes—we consider them building which are very worthy of perhaps future organizations.

[J.D.] Now, along with the Historic Homes for the Holidays, we also do a holiday ornament with a historic property each year. We started that in 1997, and there has been one for each year since. The first one was the Arnett-Fullen House. That was on Historic Boulder's 25th Anniversary, I believe, in 1997. Then since then we have chosen an historic building to be on the ornament. That's been a fun project too.

(That continues—)

[J.D.] Today. Yes.

[Display of each ornament they have created since 1997]

[J.D.] (This one on this end is 2005, and that's the Congregational Church.

[K.D.] They're celebrating their one-hundreth

[J.D.] Yes, this next year; they will be celebrating their one-hundreth anniversary.

58:20 (They're beautiful. What other things have you done for fundraising?)

[J.D.] There was a period of time when we sponsored tours, and we took people to Santa Fe and the opera. And we went over to Glenwood Springs and Redstone for a weekend. One weekend we went down to Colorado Springs and to Victor and Leadville. We had these weekend tours.

[J.D.] Do we have any other fundraisers?

(Yard sales, most recently.)

[J.D.] Oh, yes. That's always been a—a thousand dollar maker, we call it.

59:21 [End of Tape A]

[B].

00:00 (We were talking about the various fundraisers for Historic Boulder over the years. I guess we'll continue that.)

[J.D.] Well, yes. You asked about yard sales and I called them thousand dollar yard sales, because that's what we seemed to make each time we had one. It's a good way, if you have a project that's going to cost you a thousand dollars—and it's always lots of fun.

(Can you describe what they were about?)

[J.D.] We just asked our members to bring in things they didn't want any longer. We would sell them, usually as cheaply as possible. Recycle things. I believe preservationists are great recyclers, with buildings especially. But we also think that other things should be recycled at the same time.

[K.D.] The Campbells—

[J.D.] Oh, yes. Martha and Marie Campbell, the twins, who are my age, have been involved with that for a good many years. Also, one of the fund-raisers we had for four or five years was an antique sale in which we invited antique dealers to come to the Crossroads Mall to display and sell their antiques. And that was a serious thing for us to do because we made quite a bit of money during that time.

[J.D.] Actually, you would be surprised to find that Historic Boulder was one of the supporters of the Crossroads Mall coming into Boulder because we felt that it would take more of the pressure off the downtown from redeveloping into the wrong kinds of things. And so Historic Boulder was very instrumental in saying to the City Council yes, we think the Crossroads Mall is a good thing for Boulder.

[J.D.] The other activity which as much of an educational activity as a fund raiser was walking tours which Historic Boulder has been involved with over many years. We started with just organizing walks for groups who wanted to know more about the downtown area, and then it expanded out so that we had walking tours of Mapleton Hill and the Whittier neighborhood and the university and Chautauqua. And we really did a fine job of having pamphlets—We had a grant for having pamphlets printed and the latest thing is a combination with the Boulder Tourist and Convention Center.

[Displays brochure: “Boulder Historic Neighborhoods, a Walking Tour”]

[J.D.] They have taken our information and put it into their graphics and developed a very beautiful map of the downtown area of Boulder and the neighborhoods surrounding it. This is being used as a promotional for what they call Heritage Tourism, which is the newest thing in preservation.

(Hold on just a second. I wonder if you could unfold that and just hold it up. Perhaps we can get a picture of how—)

[Discussion of how to show brochure. Holds up unfolded brochure to show map]

(Now the pictures on that—oh, there’s a picture of Highland School; up there, isn’t it?)

[J.D.] Yes. That’s a historic picture.

(That’s the Highland School?)

[J.D.] No, it isn’t either. I’m sorry. This one, this is Whittier School. I don’t think there is one of Highland School on there. They were both elementary schools, built about the same time.

(I interrupted you, now I don’t know—oh, the Heritage Tourism—)

[J.D.] Oh, yes. It’s surprising to find how much of the tourism money actually is spent in towns because of their preservation of buildings. I believe the latest figure is that 45 percent of tourist money is spent because of the heritage in the various towns they visit. Not skiing, and not some of the other things we think bring people to Colorado, but 45 percent of the tourist dollars are left in the communities because they love the ambiance of the old buildings, and so on. This is being played up now as part of the preservation program.

(What does Historic Boulder have in mind to do along these lines?)

[J.D.] Well, they have six programs planned for this summer. They are going to call it “Fridays in the Park.” They will go to various parks both in the city of Boulder and outside of Boulder. One is planned in Lyons. It will be a gathering of people with a speaker to tell about that particular interest of the community. It was started last year; they had three. And now this year, it will increase to six.

[J.D.] We’re not doing the walking tours as much as we used to. We will do it when people call and say, may we arrange a walking tour of such and such an area and we can find volunteers to do that.

(You also have something to do with the cemetery walk.)

[J.D.] Oh, yes. In alternate years, they do a ghost walk—ghost talk program. They next year it will be a "Meet the Spirits." Now Meet the Spirits actually takes place in a cemetery—

(Which cemetery?)

[J.D.] Columbia Cemetery, also known as the Pioneer Cemetery, on 9th Street. People who are either involved with Historic Boulder or friends of theirs come and dress up like a spirit and talk about their life when they lived here in Boulder. It's a varied group of people, from an early sheriff played by our sheriff, also some of the night ladies. We have actresses who want to take that role on. Last year, for the first time they had the spirit of Jane Doe [an unidentified woman who was murdered in Boulder in 1954]. It's a big attraction for people to come and learn the history of Boulder and people who are buried in the cemetery.

[J.D.] And the alternate year is the Ghost Walk-Ghost Talk in which people who claim to have spirits living in their homes open their homes and this is done in conjunction with a group of people who [can't recall the name] They can feel the spirits and they want to then talk with them. This group is a formal group; I'm sorry I can't think of their name. They will come and have one of their members come and talk with people. This is always done in October when people are interested; Halloween time.

09:48 (How have the goals of Historic Boulder changed over the years?)

[J.D.] Well, we were so busy in the beginning educating people to what we were all about that I think—we've sort of gotten away from that in a way—although right at the moment the city ordinance is being redefined, and we're once again involved with trying to keep the ordinances tight and as useful as possible and continuing to landmark. I think our role of educating the general public is greater today than it was in the early days. We were too busy saving the particular buildings. And then—actually I still see the same threads today coming through.

[K.D.] I think the other thing is that there is more interest in the county than in the earlier years. Originally it was entirely in the city.

(One of my questions to you was, "Are you still involved with Historic Boulder?" but I guess we know the answer to that!" [chuckles] You mentioned that the preservation ordinance is being challenged a little bit now. Does that mean that your focus is going to be more toward maintaining that ordinance as it is?)

[J.D.] Yes, we realize that there are certain things that need to be changed to bring it up to date. But we don't want to see any great changes in the numbers of years, for instance. The demolition permits are one of the parts of the ordinance that are under consideration for change. We have an ordinance which says any building over fifty years old is to go

through the process of deciding whether it is a worthy building or not a worthy building before it is demolished. Some of the people in the city would like to see that changed to 75 years. But 50 years is normal for the entire country, so we are hoping that we can keep it at that. We realize that a lot of Boulder's homes are now fifty years old or will be very soon. So people are afraid that we are going to be asking for historic districts in Martin Park and East Park and Fraser Meadows, and so forth because of the age of the building. But that is not on Historic Boulder's agenda to do this. We think that we will take it very slowly and make our decisions based on the worthiness of the area and not on trying to get wholesale districts in place.

[J.D.] These houses were built post-WWII, and they were built for a particular reason. I wouldn't like to see them ALL gone. I hope that we are able to save some to show in the future that little houses were built for the returning veterans and their families. But we're not anticipating any wholesale districts being formed in Boulder because of that.

(Is this a phenomenon in other places besides Boulder?)

[J.D.] Yes it is. It's all over the country. Some cities like Atlanta, Georgia, have just put a moratorium on their areas which are fifty years or older because they didn't like what was going on in the sections themselves—here are little, small, three-bedroom low houses with what we call today McMansions going in next door. They seem to be inappropriate to what was there. So the city has put a moratorium on demolition of any of these buildings so McMansions can't be built. Now how far that will get we don't know because this is a brand new idea. But these areas will definitely be under contention in the next few years.

15:23 (Well, thank you very much. I think we've got a good overview of Historic Boulder. Can you think of anything else that you would like to speak about?)

[J.D.] I think we've talked about a great deal [laughs]! I'm very pleased to have taken part in this survey. One person that should be mentioned is Margaret Hanson who has been a devoted preservationist from day one, back in 1971. She should be given great thanks for her continued interest in preservation. She is an architect who lives in the mountains. She comes down to the city of Boulder to testify for us and to head the preservation committee.

[J.D.] We have another very fine preservationist taking over there, and that will be Dan Corson who works for the Colorado Historical Society and will be our new preservation chairperson. Both of those people have been so sustaining over the years.

(Thank you very much.)

[K.D.] Thank you.

16:39 [End of Tape B. End of interview]

