



# ELK FALLS

## Through the Years

## PREFACE

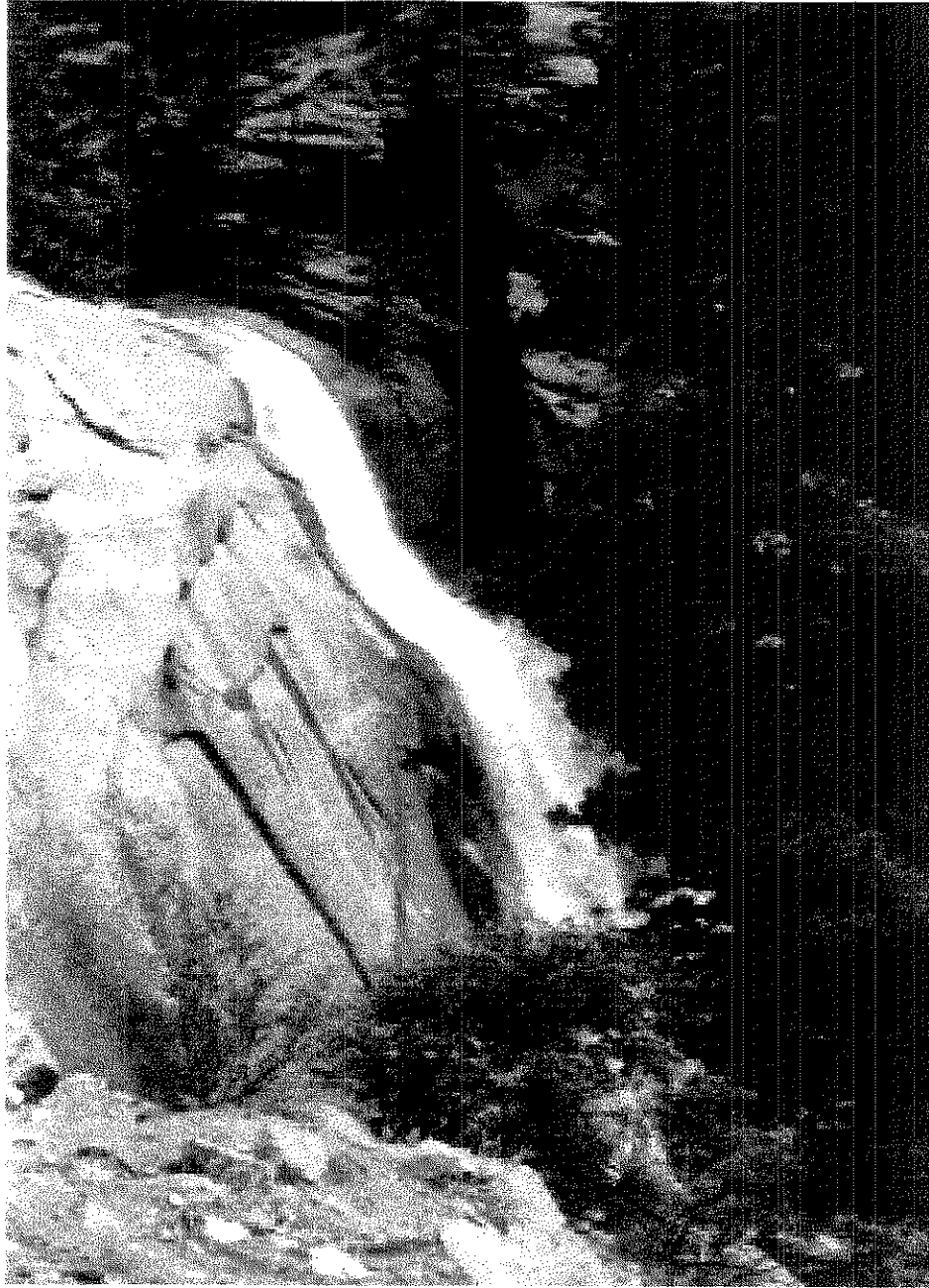
My objective in recording my memories in Elk Falls is to show how it developed over the years. Many hours were spent in research and interviews. I have tried to cover all the highlights of my experiences.

Fortunately, my photography hobby has helped me collect a lot of pictures. I have selected a few from my collection that I felt would be of interest.

My special thanks to the many who supplied me with information, especially my wife, Irene, for recalling many events and dates; Doris Osterwald for editing and information; Wesley and Betty Long for their family information; the Park County Clerk and Records office; and to my daughter, Judy Koucherik, for her computer and layout work.

**-COVER PICTURE-**  
Elk Falls seen in July

All photographs taken by the writer.



Side View of Elk Falls

# **ELK FALLS THROUGH THE YEARS**

*Written by Jaime F. Houze*

My first visit to the Elk Falls area was in the summer of 1935. The automotive electrical company that I worked for had rented the picnic grounds alongside Elk Creek for their annual employees' picnic. Everyone was greatly impressed with this beautiful and scenic park and all had a wonderful time. Little did I know at that time that my future home would be in Elk Falls Park, later known as Elk Falls Ranch.

An early, undated map showed that a portion of the Elk Falls area and part of the Hidden Valley Ranch (now known as Woodside) was owned by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. Nowhere can information be found linking this company with any interest in this area. This was the start of my historical research that has been fun and quite rewarding. Time has been spent interviewing some of the old-timers in the surrounding area and I will relate some of their stories, in addition to our families' lives and adventures in Elk Falls Ranch.

After the first gold strikes were made in 1859 and 1860 in South Park and at Oro City along California Gulch (near present day Leadville), the rush was on to build roads to the mining camps. No roads existed then, only a few Indian trails used by the early pioneers. Many of the gold seekers used Ute Pass and Wilkerson Pass to reach their destinations. Since there wasn't any government participation in road building, it was necessary for individuals or groups of investors to construct roads. Most of these became toll roads.

As more and more prospectors came seeking their fortunes, roads in the high country became a priority. The toll roads that were constructed were often steep, narrow, very dangerous and difficult to maintain. Much of the work was with pick and shovel and with teams of horses pulling drag plows. The Denver, Bradford and Blue River Toll Road followed old Indian Trails.

In 1867 John Parmalee constructed the Turkey Creek Road. In places it was built high above the stream, narrow and very dangerous. It had to be approached from Morrison. This was a start to reach the boom towns in South Park. Along with the gold seekers came outlaws, cattle rustlers, foreigners, labors, businessmen, farmers and ranchers.

Railroads helped to develop the west. The narrow gauge Denver, South



Table Falls located a short distance from Elk Falls

Park and Pacific Railroad was chartered in 1873 and rails were laid to Morrison in 1874. This brought coal, lumber and terra cotta (building stone) to Denver. All railroad construction stopped until 1877 when tracks reached South Platte Canyon. By 1878 tracks were extended to Buffalo Creek, Pine, Bailey and Webster on the east side of Kenosha Pass. Then the line continued over Kenosha Pass into the towns of Jefferson, Como, and Fairplay.

It was a busy railroad hauling passengers and freight. Branch lines were built in South Park. One line was constructed over Boreas Pass to Breckenridge. Eventually the railroad made it to Leadville, which in 1879 was the second largest city in Colorado. This brought an end to the stagecoach and freight wagon lines. In 1937 the railroad was abandoned because of the increasing number of automobiles, buses, trucks and better roads.

The railroad existed for 63 years from the time it was chartered until it was abandoned. During this time it carried not only passengers, but it kept busy hauling lumber, ore, ice, cattle, mining equipment and different kinds of freight. Many special excursions were made for tourists and fishermen. It was a very scenic line with plenty of good fishing.

Prior to the building of U.S. Highway 285, it was necessary to take old Colorado 8 from Denver to reach the Elk Falls area and it usually took two hours. It was a dangerous dirt road with many curves and narrow bridges. The road went through Morrison, Turkey Creek, Tiny Town, the Aspen Park area, Conifer and Shaffers Crossing. In a few places, portions of this old highway are still visible and used. At Shaffers Crossing where old Highway 8 crossed Elk Creek, an old concrete bridge still exists. This bridge located between the main fishing lake and the small fishing ponds is currently in use. Not far from this bridge, as one approached the Elk Creek road, there was a sign erected by the Highway Department., which read, "ELK CREEK VALLEY RENDEZVOUS OF EARLY STAGE COACH ROBBERS AND THIEVES." This sign remained for many years and then mysteriously disappeared.

Shaffers Crossing was established and named by the Shaffer family. The family farmed, raised cattle and had a lumber mill. It was a stage stop, and also had a store, school, church, garage, blacksmith shop and a place where travelers could spend the night. Rudy and Mae Long, two early pioneers along the U.S. Highway 285 corridor, were married in 1920 at this village church. Before the highway was improved through Shaffers Crossing, a small log building was located on the south side of the road, which apparently was used in the early days by people waiting for the stagecoach going to Denver.

Rudy Long and his brother Harland, opened the Long Brothers Garage in 1917 with just one stall. It was located two and one-half miles east of Shaffers Crossing on old Colorado 8. At that time it was a dirt road which ran from

Richmond Hill straight down the valley to Shaffers Crossing. Later on in 1928 the Longs built a new 6-stall garage up on the relocated Colorado 8. Finally in 1937 the rough and dusty old dirt road was paved. Then in 1957 when the old Colorado Highway 8 was rebuilt and became U.S. Highway 285, the Long Brothers Garage had to be rebuilt and relocated to its present location. Their garage had to be moved three times because of highway changes.

In 1921 the Longs homesteaded land now known as Kings Valley. This land was sold in 1960 for \$1.00 an acre. The Longs also owned the old Clifton House property. The house was a stage stop in the gold rush days. It is still standing, but not visible from the highway. It is located directly behind the old firehouse on the south side of the road.

The Longs were valuable members of the community. Along with a number of businessmen they helped establish the Elk Creek Volunteer Fire Department. Rudy and Mae Long operated a free ambulance service for many years using a converted station wagon. Because of objections from another ambulance company, they had to charge \$1.00 a mile. In the 70s the State of Colorado set up strict ambulance regulations, so they had to abandon their service. The Elk Creek Volunteer Fire Department purchased an ambulance and continued the service.

Murray Hall, another early pioneer in the Elk Creek area, had an interesting experience while digging holes for fence posts. About a quarter mile north of Shaffers Crossing stood an old cabin alongside Elk Creek used by the Colorado Womens College. As he was digging a posthole near this cabin, he struck a metal object. After digging it out he found it to be an unusual pick. Murray Hall took the pick to a museum for identification. There he learned that it was a Spanish pick used by the early Spaniards who traveled through this area seeking the "Seven Cities of Gold." The museum wanted to buy it, but he decided to keep it. When the Colorado Women's College was sold to Denver University, their cabin was demolished in 1995.

Aspen Park and Conifer in the 1930s were just wide spots on old Highway 8. A small store and gasoline station existed where the parking lot for the Conifer Safeway Shopping Center is now located. It was called Field's Trading Post. It opened in 1933 selling groceries and animal feed. It closed in 1975 as the Conifer area developed. A small cafe called "The Alpine" was also located near the Fields Trading Post and they served home-cooked meals and it was always a good place to stop.

A check of records in the Park County Clerk and Records office at Fairplay, revealed that land grants were made to individuals by Presidents Benjamin Harrison and Calvin Coolidge. These land grants located in Township 6 South, Range 72 West of the 6<sup>th</sup> principal meridian, puts it in the Elk Falls area.

John C. Jensen, founder of the McCoy-Jensen Nursery on the Morrison Road, acquired the Elk Falls property from Lula Corbin on April 29, 1922. At first he had 320 acres, but gradually increase his acreage by homesteading additional land and purchasing some small ranches. He ended up with a total of 2,200 acres.

In the early days the best way to reach Elk Falls was to take the train from Denver to Pine, then Mr. Jensen would meet his guests and take them by buggy up Elk Creek to his home. The Jensen home was at the east end of the present lodgehall. They had four children and one, Alice (Sally) Jensen, married Elmer C. Berg.

In the 1930s the Elk Falls area was known as Elk Falls Park. The main gate was located where the entrance to the fishing lake is now. Mr. and Mrs. Berg were kept busy during the summer months with company picnics and other recreational activities. The Park consisted of a lodgehall and a restaurant, which was only open in the summer; a caretaker's cabin located directly across the road from the lodgehall; an old icehouse in back of the lodgehall, against the hillside (now Jensen Road); two barns, and two picnic grounds. Only six cabins existed on the hillside just above the lodgehall. Four were rentals and two privately owned. The Berg's home was just inside the iron gate on the road leading to the picnic grounds.

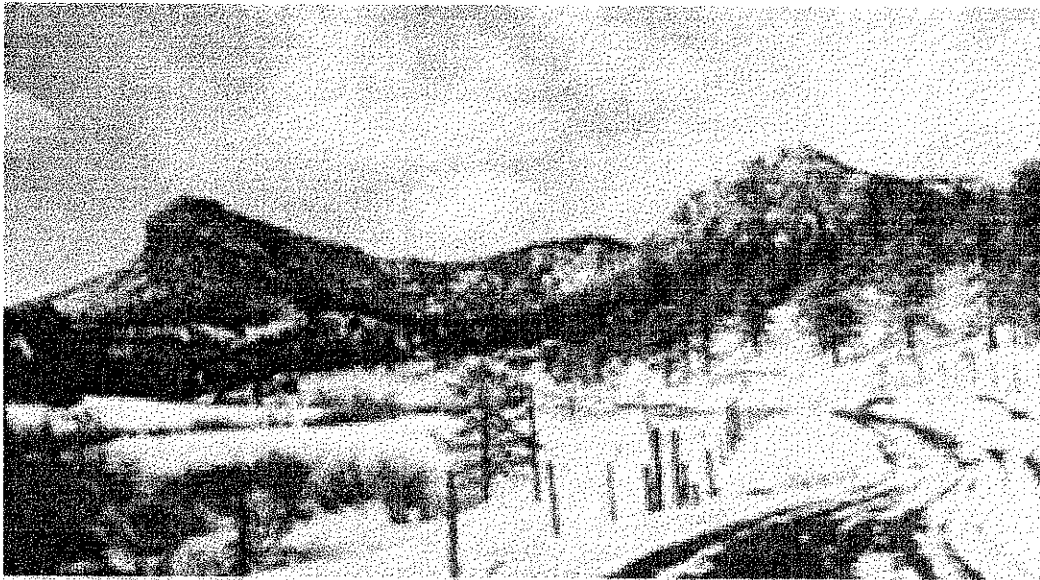
Ice was cut at Crystal Lake in Pine during the winter and brought up to this icehouse for storage. Then it was packed in sawdust. Electricity only went to the Berg's home, the caretaker's home, and to the lodgehall and restaurant. Jack and Hazel Stillwell were the caretakers at that time and helped with the Park activities. The Bergs and Stillwells had the only telephones.

The rental cabins were used in 1935 by the Denver Athletic Club as a summer camp for sons of the members. When a young boy fell off of Cathedral Rocks near Box Canyon and was killed, the camp was discontinued.

Mr. Berg was president of the Roundup Riders and would invite the members to spend some time riding around the Elk Falls area. He owned the Howry-Berg car dealership on North Speer Boulevard in Denver, but did manage to spend a lot of time in and around his property. During World War II he owned the Howry-Berg Steel and Iron Works located at 1366 West Oxford in Englewood, Colorado.

In 1950 the Elk Falls area became a private club open only to members. The lodgehall had slot machines and gambling. The restaurant would only be open on weekends. Then one cold night in 1956 the west end of the lodgehall was destroyed by fire. The Elk Creek Fire Department had to pump water from





Lions Head and Cathedral Rock in 1942

the fishing lake, but did manage to contain the fire to the west end of the building.

The west end of the building was never rebuilt. Instead, an outdoor swimming pool was built in its place. The pool only lasted a few years as it was too costly to maintain. Every year it would need repairs, and the cost of insurance along with propane to heat the water became too expensive. The pool could only be used for six weeks in the summer. A spring under the pool caused so much damage that it was decided to discontinue using it. So it was filled in with dirt.

I had a very interesting interview with Wesley and Betty Long. Wesley attended the old Shaffers Crossing school from 1935-37. At the end of the school year, the students and teachers would hold their annual picnic at the Elk Falls picnic grounds. Two picnic areas existed at that time. The main one was at the present site and the second one near the canyon entrance leading to the falls.

Betty Long used to help her folks run the Field's Trading Post in the late 30s and 40s. She and Wesley Long were married in 1946. Also in 1946 she took nurses training at the old St. Lukes Hospital in Denver. Then in 1966 she returned to St. Lukes Hospital and worked full time for 27 years before retiring.

One night in 1958, tragedy struck the old elementary school at Shaffers Crossing. An over-heated furnace set the building on fire and it burned to the ground. The Elk Creek Volunteer Fire Department was unable to save it. In the fall of 1989 a new modern elementary school opened near the site of the original school.

Before World War II I was a Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop No. 103. On several occasions I received permission from Mr. Berg to bring my Scout troop on overnight hikes in the canyon just below Elk Falls. Everyone enjoyed the hiking, camping and cooking outdoors. The boys received training in protecting the environment and had the opportunity to pass some of their scouting requirements. A small cave located in the canyon wall a short distance from the falls provided adequate protection from occasional hailstorms.

After World War II, I made a visit to this canyon cave and found that someone had apparently destroyed this landmark with an explosive charge looking for buried gold. A story appeared in one of the Denver newspapers about the early stagecoach robbers robbing the stagecoaches at Shaffers Crossing. The article mentioned that some gold may have been hidden in the mountains near the Elk Creek area.

Many stories have been told about the early stagecoach holdups. Murray Hall told me that a favorite place for the outlaws to hide out was in Box Canyon

Sept. 18, 1949

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

EVERYBODY'S  
Section

Colorado Hills Hide Gold Paid for With Blood

## Bandits' \$63,000 Hunted Above Conifer

By BOB LEE

Rocky Mountain News Writer

**H**OPEFULLY, treasure hunters are still seeking a \$63,000 cache hidden above Conifer by an ambitious soldier of fortune who invaded Colorado in 1864 with a group of Texans intent on racking Denver.

Elmer and Sally Berg, who operate the Elk Falls Resort Ranch near Shafter's Crossing, report that during the tourist season just closed the usual number of searchers went tramping out after the cash and gold dust buried in the vicinity by the notorious Jim Reynolds and his brother, John. Mrs. Berg, whose father, John Jenson, owned the ranch at the turn of the century, has never sought the prize cache herself, but she is just as convinced as anyone that the money is somewhere on the picturesque ranch.

The nefarious Reynolds brothers had been working in placer mines in Park County in 1861. They displayed their trackability a bit later when they moved to Texas and joined the Confederate Army after Colorado went on record favoring the Union.



Somewhere in the saucer-like area shown in the dotted line lies the Reynolds' illicit treasure—\$63,000 in cash and gold dust.

just below Cathedral Rocks. In this canyon there were many springs and plenty of grass for their horses. One bandit was stationed on a high ridge overlooking Shawnee to watch for a stagecoach on the way to Denver. As soon as he saw one he built a signal fire and sent a smoke signal to the bandits in Box Canyon. Then these outlaws would get on their horses and ride to Shaffers Crossing where they would hold up the stagecoach.

Later in the fall of 1935, I was back in Elk Falls with a good friend of mine who had a cabin built on land that is now on the northwest corner of Circle Drive and Lower Aspen Lane. No roads existed at the time, just two rough ruts led to his property. My friend's name was Alfred E. Hardey and he worked at a Denver bank. No electricity or water was available, and heating was with wood and coal. Cooking was done on an old four-burner cast iron stove, using wood and coal. Kerosene lamps and candles provided light. It was primitive living, but we enjoyed it.

Al Hardey and I were both single at the time and would come up on weekends to his cabin and make improvements inside and out. To reach his cabin it was necessary to take an unimproved road back of the present lodgehall (now called Jensen Road). Then drive up a steep hill to a road leading past two cabins, one a rental, called the "Honeymoon Cabin" and the other log cabin owned by Carl Beck. Doris Osterwald (his daughter) now owns it. The road ended at the Hardey cabin just above Osterwald's place.

Several years later the road was rerouted to eliminate some of the steep sections. The new approach was made north along Alice Avenue which is now called Juniper Road. The road continued through the meadow and turned west at the draw located just beyond the present Lower Aspen Lane. A new lane was made off of this draw to the Hardey cabin. All roads at that time consisted of two ruts and were not maintained.

With my fiancée, Irene Parker, we climbed Lions Head Peak (9,445 ft.) in the summer of 1941. We climbed above the falls first and then crossed over to the summit. After spending some time at the summit, we decided to come down on an old lumber trail. This trail was on the west side of Lions Head and had been used in the early days to bring timber down for railroad ties. Soon we found that we had made a mistake. When we reached the valley we couldn't find my car. After wandering around trying to find the road where my car was parked it started to get dark. We were not prepared for this. Fortunately there was a bright moon and no clouds which finally helped us locate the road and my car. It so happened that after all our searching we were not very far from my car. That night we really were tired, but glad it wasn't cold.

The dirt road from Shaffers Crossing north to Elk Falls ranch passes by the Davis Ranch. It is owned by the Davis family who owned the Davis Brothers



Lions Head

Florists, and the Wheat Ridge Dairy. In the meadow near the big barn, they raised long-stem sweetpeas. For many years they raised Black Angus cattle and in the spring it was enjoyable to watch the young calves. Large herds of elk still may be seen in the pastures early in the morning and late in the evening. A large section of the ranch has been sold to the State of Colorado to be used as a park. This will connect with the 1,680 acres of a wilderness area that Mrs. Frances Hornbrook Staunton gave to the State. The State also purchased land from the Elk Falls Development Company which will tie in with all this property and be developed into one large recreational area.

On December 1, 1941, Irene and I were married and spent our honeymoon at Al Hardey's cabin in Elk Falls. Then on December 7th Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and war was declared. I knew that I would be called up so I enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

While waiting in March for my Navy orders to report for duty, Irene and I spent our last few days together at the Hardey cabin. After a couple of days our distillate fuel for heating began to run low. We found a five-gallon distillate can and decided to go down to Shaffers Crossing for fuel. It was a nice sunny day and we felt we could hike the two and a half miles down and back as there was no snow removal. I located enough scrap wood to make a small sled so we wouldn't have to carry a heavy can. We made it to Shaffers Crossing, purchased 5 gallons of distillate, fastened the can on the sled and started back. After pulling the sled a short distance a young fellow driving a pick-up truck stopped and asked if he could give us a lift. We accepted his offer, loaded the distillate and sled in his truck and headed for Elk Falls. He took us as far as the main gate, but he couldn't go any farther because of the snow.

When we took the distillate can out of his truck, we discovered it was leaking from a small hole in the bottom of the can. We loaded the can on the sled and started up the hill to the cabin. It was slow trip pulling the sled up that steep hill. However, we made it and found that we had lost about a quart of distillate. Later on I thought, "why didn't I turn the can upside down. It had a tight cap on the top and we wouldn't have lost any." Anyway we had enough fuel to last for our stay.

The only available telephone at that time was in the caretaker's cabin. Arrangements were made with Jack Stillwell to contact me when he received a call that my orders had arrived. The call came and that was the last I saw of the Elk Falls area for almost four years. Then on Friday the 13th of March 1942, I became a Navy Seaman.

In World War II I served in the U.S. Navy as a signalman and a navigator. My ship was assigned to the South Pacific and the Solomon Island campaign where I saw plenty of action. All of that is another story which I have recorded in



The writer and his wife Irene pulling sled of supplies and distillate to the Hardey cabin  
March 1942



Shoveling drift to reach Hardey cabin  
March 1942

my memoirs.

After the war, in 1946, Mr. Berg hired Andy and Bessie Beye, along with their boys Bill and Dick, to manage the Elk Falls area. At first they had to live in a tiny cabin located in back of the lodgehall. Then they moved to the second floor of the restaurant on the east end of the lodgehall. While they lived there Mr. Berg had the old caretaker's cabin demolished and a new home built for them. The Beyes did a fine job protecting the Elk Falls property.

To maintain the few roads that existed before the Elk Falls area was subdivided, an old time 4-wheel road grader was used. It had to be towed with a truck or a tractor and required two men, one to drive and the other to stand on the rear of the grader to operate the blade. This proved unsatisfactory so Mr. Berg purchased a new Fordson Tractor with a blade mounted on the front. Andy Beye used this for many years keeping the roads open after heavy snows.

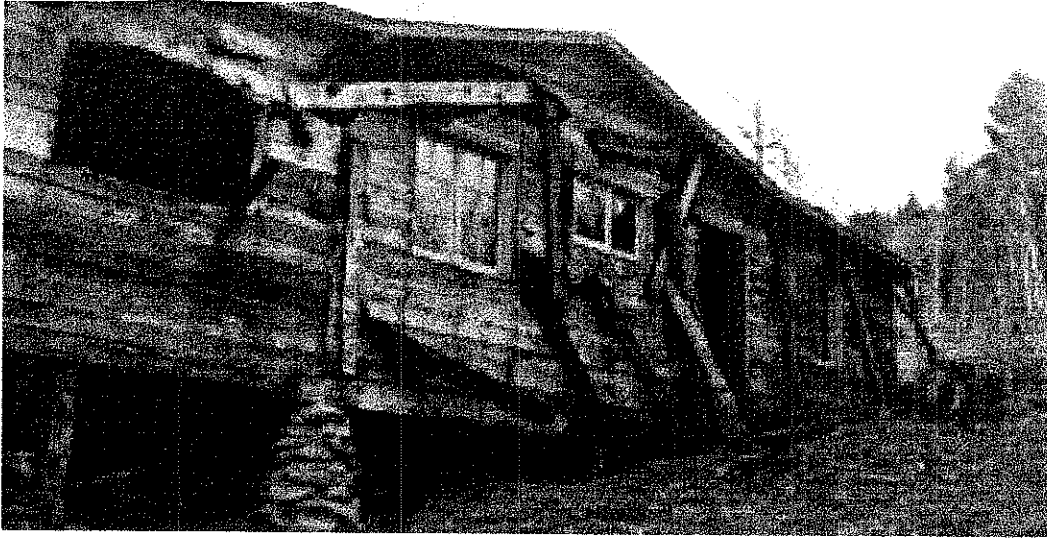
On June 4, 1950, the Denver Tramway Company abandoned their trolley system and put the streetcars up for sale. Mr. Berg bought two of the old streetcars which he set up in the picnic area for protection from sudden storms or cold weather. Those two old streetcars served as shelters for over 30 years. Weather took its toll and they finally deteriorated to the point that it was necessary for them to be demolished and burned.

The picnic area was a busy place during the summers of the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Many firms would rent the area for their annual employee picnics. Weddings were also conducted there.

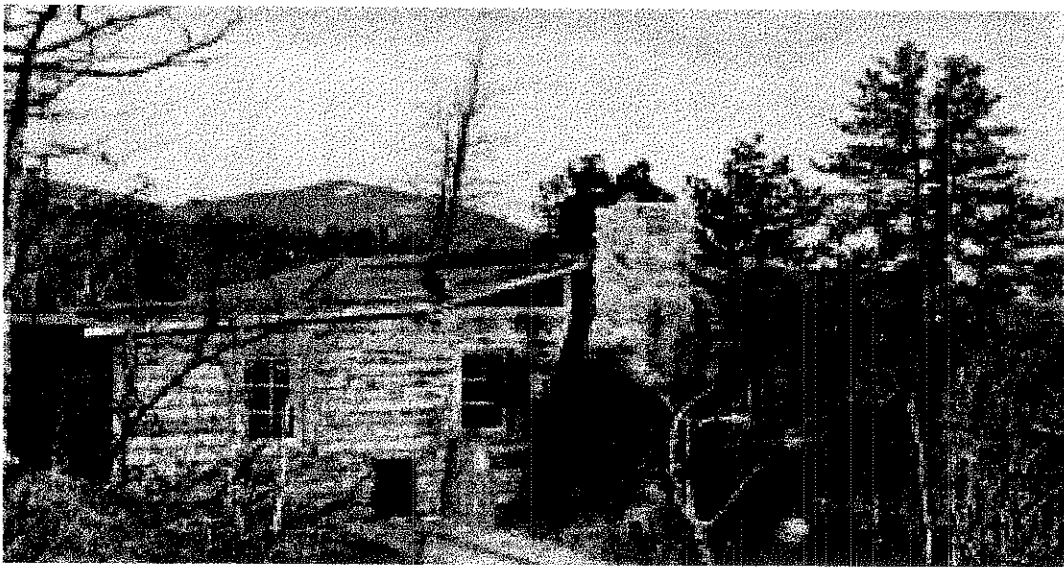
It was quite a task after the war to get reestablished again. I had to get my job back, find a home, and start married life all over again. In 1950 I had the opportunity to buy an unfinished log cabin in Elk Falls Park. Al Hardey told me about this cabin just a short distance above his. His brother-in-law, Frank M. Hall, had started this cabin in 1937 and had to stop because of the war. The company he was working for after the war, was transferring him to South America, so he wanted to sell his cabin quickly. I made him an offer which he accepted, and that is how we got our start as Elk Falls property owners in February of 1950.

The war years had been hard on this cabin while it sat idle. Tarpaper had covered the roof and sides and most of it was blown off by wind. All the windows were in place and none broken. There were no doors so rodents had moved in. The roof sagged and was leaking. Behind the cabin, dirt and rocks had caved into the back wall and were packed solid. The floor had piles of ice where the roof leaked. Irene and I wondered if we had bought a white elephant. However, we went to work and with help from other family members, the place was made livable.





East Side of our cabin when purchased February 1950



West Side of our cabin



December 1960

Our first job at our cabin was to install doors and get it closed in. Next came roof repairs and the installation of new roofing. Then followed the covering of all the knotholes in the floor with tin can lids. To seal the cabin from the weather, we installed roll roofing on all the outside walls. In order to get at the back wall, it was necessary to dig out by hand all the rocks and dirt that had caved in. We had to remove enough so we could get a passage for our wheelbarrow. This was hard work and could only be done a little at a time.

Life in Elk Falls Park was very primitive in the 30s, 40s and 50s. We had no electricity, no telephones, no water, no septic system and no modern conveniences. Coleman lanterns, kerosene lamps and candles were the only source of light. Heat was either by wood, coal, or distillate stoves. Water, ice, coal and distillate had to be brought in on every trip that we made.

Before I put plywood on the interior walls of the cabin, I wired it so as to be ready whenever we did get electricity. I had the opportunity in the late 50s to buy a used light plant. It was a 2-cylinder Onan that produced 4,000 watts. Because of its large size I had to build a special shed for it and called it our powerhouse. It was water-cooled and had to have anti-freeze in the radiator in the winter. It worked fine in the summer, but was hard to start when it was cold. It had to be hand cranked. The exhaust had to be run into a 30-gallon drum buried in the ground. This reduced the noise and prevented sparks from flying out.

In 1960 the Intermountain Rural Electric Association began installing poles and wire. We joined the IREA and were tied into their system and retired our light plant. Shortly thereafter Mountain Bell ran their cables and we were able to get a telephone. All that was available in the 60s was 8-party service. Then as the telephone company expanded we were able to get a 4-party line. As the company grew we were fortunate to get a private line. In spite of all the inconveniences we endured our family always had a lot of fun at our cabin.

Mr. Berg had William G. Keck and Associates of Evergreen survey the Elk Falls area in the summer of 1959. The survey party had to go into the Pike National Forest to find a permanent section marker in order to plat the Elk Falls subdivision. It so happened that a permanent marker was set up only a few feet from our cabin. This marker was used to set up the entire subdivision.

The survey company completed the plat for Elk Falls Block 1 in August of 1959 and was accepted by Mrs. Alice E. Berg. Then it had to go to the county for approval. This took several months, but was finally approved by all the necessary agencies and county commissioners. The document was then filed and recorded on December 22, 1959.

With the survey and paper work out of the way, Mr. Berg was able to have the Nelson Contractors come in and build the roads. This made it easier to get to our cabin. There was a dispute between Jefferson and Park County about the boundary lines in the Elk Falls subdivision. For several years we had to pay property taxes to both counties. The case finally was settled in court. The boundary line was moved 600 feet to the east of our cabin, so now all our property is in Park County.

After having the cabin for nine years we found out that we were not on our own property. After the survey, Mr. Berg came up to our cabin one day to tell us that the survey showed that our cabin was on his property. We only had a section of land 100 feet by 100 feet and I was never able to find any survey stakes. I was afraid this might happen some time. Mr. Berg was very fair and told us that if we would deed our property over to him that he would have Andy Beye mark out a larger section of land that would include our cabin. We agreed and Andy marked out an acre and a third with the cabin included. We paid Mr. Berg for the additional land and he gave us a new deed dated November 6, 1959. He also advised that we had permission to go anywhere we wanted in the Elk Falls area. We enjoyed exploring, hiking and fishing in the area, but never abused the privilege.

As the Elk Falls subdivision Block 1 grew from 6 small cabins to many homes, Block 2 was added and roads constructed. Then finally Block 3 was established with its roads. A small parcel of land (.6 acres) adjoining our cabin property became available in 1960, so we bought it from Alice E. Berg on August 24, 1960. This gave us almost two acres and allowed us more room on our east side for expansion.

During the 1960s we made many improvements to our cabin. Heating was always a difficult problem. At first we had a wood and coal stove in the center of the cabin and a wood cast iron stove for cooking. These two stoves were inadequate to heat the cabin. Then we used a distillate stove which also proved unsatisfactory. Next we tried a propane wall heater with no success. Finally in 1966 we dug out under the cabin and had a propane horizontal furnace installed with heat ducts going into every room. This solved our problem.

On December 24, 1963 Mr. Berg passed away, which left the status of the Elk Falls subdivisions in doubt. In 1965 several homeowners including myself got together and felt that we needed a Homeowners Association to take care of problems that would arise. A meeting was held at the home of Mr. William D. Powell in early September and was well attended by homeowners and landowners. After a discussion of the needs in our area and the benefits of an association a vote was taken and approved by the folks attending.

On September 7, 1965, a Certificate of Incorporation was filed for the Elk Falls Property Owners' Association, Inc. with the following named Board Members: William D. Powell, Robert S. Gast, Jr., David H. Delinger, J. F. Houze, and John F. Obenchain. Annual dues were set at \$10.00.

In 1965 Alice E. Berg gave the Association money to help maintain the roads, as it was impossible for Andy Beye to grade all the subdivision roads with the ranch Fordson tractor. This required heavy road machinery. He did a fine job for many years keeping the roads open after heavy snowfalls. He also pulled many cars back on the road that had slid off or got stuck in bad weather. He and Bessie patrolled daily all the roads in the Elk Falls subdivisions keeping the area safe and secure.

Andy Beye did a lot to improve the Elk Falls area. In the cold winter he used to get on the tractor, which didn't have an enclosed cab, and plow the snow so people could get to work. He never charged for his work. Andy passed away on January 15, 1986 at age 83. He was a hard worker and really has been missed.

A group of Elk Falls homeowners formed the Elk Falls Ranch Development Company to purchase the unsold portions of the ranch. On December 20, 1966, Alice E. Berg sold all this land to the development company with the exception of a few acres surrounding her home. Mrs. Berg died on August 30, 1971, she was 71.

The Elk Falls Development Company advised my wife and me in 1968, that a small parcel of vacant land (.7 acre) adjoined our property on the west side and could not be used by anyone except us. So on June 3, 1968 we purchased this piece of vacant land giving us a total of almost 3 acres.

Three years later, in June of 1971, we had a well drilled on our property. This was the first step before building a permanent home. We needed to be sure that we had an adequate water supply.

After 32 years on the Denver Fire Department I took my retirement. During my final six years, I served at the Fire Department Headquarters in an administrative position. Then on Labor Day of 1972, Irene and I moved from Denver to our cabin. We left our furniture in our Denver home until we were certain that we would be able to live in the mountains. As things turned out, the fall was beautiful, but the winter was one of the most severe in many years.

In our first week at the cabin I received a telephone call from the bookkeeper at the Aspen Park Building & Supply Company in Conifer. She wanted to know if I would be interested in taking over her job as she was retiring. I told her I had just retired. However, she insisted that I come down to

her office and see what was involved. This I did and had an interview with the owner Mr. Michael Merelli. I felt I could handle the job and discussed it with Irene. I lacked a lot of quarters to qualify for Social Security so decided to accept the job.

The winter of 1972-73 was very severe. Irene and I really turned the clock back living in our cabin. Without the modern conveniences we had living in Denver, made us feel like old pioneers. We had so much snow that it was necessary to put chains on our car and truck in order to get to work or to Denver.

I was 57 when I went to work as a bookkeeper and accountant. The job with Mr. Merelli turned out to be a fine one, and when he retired I was able to step into other companies without any delays. I set up books for five businesses and the Elk Creek Fire District.

A vacancy occurred on the Board of Directors of the Elk Falls Fire District in 1972, and I was asked if I would be willing to serve. My background and experience on the Denver Fire Department I was told, would be a big help to the board, so I accepted. Four years later I went out for reelection and won. When my term expired in 1980 I told the Fire District Board that I felt 40 years of fire service was enough so I declined to run again.

During my second term on the Elk Creek Fire District Board, I advised the Board members that the Elk Falls area, along with other areas in the western section of our fire district, needed closer and better fire protection. I showed that sufficient funds were available in the bank account that would permit building a new fire station without raising taxes. All the Board members agreed and I was selected to look for suitable property.

In my search for a suitable location, I found two excellent sites on Mt. Evans Blvd. One site we could lease for \$50.00 a year and the other would have to be purchased outright. The District Board voted to accept the leased site as it was only seven tenths of a mile from U.S. Highway 285. It had easy access and could handle a helicopter pad.

To stay within budget and not raise taxes, the Board decided that a metal building would be satisfactory. So plans were drawn up for Fire Station No. 2. The building would be large enough for three or four apparatus, have a radio room, rest rooms and a storage area for fire equipment. I witted the area and found a good supply of water close to the building site. The structure had to be attractive and blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Bids were let and in the late 70s the station went into service.

The Post Office in the 70s dropped the route number system from mailing

addresses and went to the actual house numbers assigned by the county. The utility companies and the Fire Department then wanted road signs installed so in case of emergencies people and homes could be found. So the Elk Falls Property Owners Association ordered signs for all the roads. When the signs arrived, estimates were obtained for installing them, but the cost for poles and mounting was more than the Association could afford.

I discussed the problem with Jack Phillips, a close neighbor, to see what could be done. We both felt that it was important to get these signs up as soon as possible. Jack said he had some used posts that would be suitable and he would be willing to donate them. So I said I would donate my time and labor to install them. Also I would furnish the cement and mounting bolts.

Seventeen signs were delivered to my house and Jack Phillips brought me the poles. I sorted the signs so as to mount the most important ones first. It took most of the summer to get them all installed. I made periodic inspections of the signs to make sure that they were all in place. A number of them did get damaged and needed repairs. Also some vandalism occurred and signs destroyed.

As a community service I took care of the sign maintenance since I knew where they were all located. Some signs had to be relocated to protect them from being damaged. Also from time to time I made additional signs for places where they were needed.

One winter day in the early 80s we had an unusually heavy snowfall. KCNC-TV reported the Denver snow depth and I thought perhaps the weathermen would be interested in our amount. So I called Steve Anderson the weatherman on duty and told him how much snow was in Elk Falls. He then asked me if I would be interested in becoming a Weather Watcher for Channel 4, as they didn't have anyone in this area. I told him I would consider it since I had weather experience in the Navy during World War II.

Steve Anderson sent me an application, which I completed and was accepted. I was given a toll free number and would report every day at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to the Channel 4 weathermen the weather conditions.

At first my weather instruments were not the best. However, little by little I replaced them with the latest and most sophisticated models. I had two electronic weather recorders that registered the high and low temperatures and the time they occurred. Then at midnight they would erase the information and start a new day. For the snow depths I used a certain flat area which gave me an accurate measurement. During the rainy season I obtained a regulation rain gauge. For wind direction and speed, I purchased an electronic wind indicator which showed the current wind direction and speed. It also recorded the highest

wind gusts.

The Channel 4 weather department needed to know high and low temperatures for the day; wind speed and direction; cloud formations; rainfall amounts; snow depths; hail size and depth; and any other information of interest. All this information I recorded on a daily weather chart. These charts helped me to prepare the weather reports for the Elk Falls newsletters.

The Elk Falls area has been the home of all kinds of wildlife for many years. Most often seen are deer and elk. At night raccoons are out looking for food. Beware though, they carry 13 kinds of diseases, so don't encourage them. Porcupines are also night animals. They like the tender bark at the top of trees. This can cause permanent damage to a tree. Their sharp detachable spines can severely injure a pet.

Black and cinnamon bears have moved into the Elk Falls area with the population growth. In July and August they are looking for food to prepare for hibernation. They are a nuisance, very destructive and a danger to humans and pets. Around our property they have destroyed hummingbird feeders, seed feeders and broken into a metal shed. One bear was powerful enough to rip the metal paneling from our shed. After several nightly visits by bears, we learned to remove our bird feeders before dark and keep our trash barrels locked up in a safe place.

During daylight hours, foxes and coyotes can be seen. Some foxes will come close to a person, but be cautious, they are still wild animals. Also we have observed a bobcat. On rare occasions a bighorn sheep strolled onto our property. I was even able to take his picture. More than 20 wild animals have been observed.

Over 62 species of birds have been recorded. One of the most popular of all the birds is the broad tailed hummingbird. They arrive in Elk Falls the first of May and remain until cold weather sets in. The rose-breasted grosbeak is another favorite. There are so many birds that it's difficult to list all of them.

From 1935 to the present time, I have seen The Elk Falls area grow from six early, outdated cabins to way over 100 modern homes. New larger schools have replaced the old small ones. Close-in shopping, banking, medical and dental services, have made for easier living in Elk Falls. Mr. Elmer Berg in 1959 predicted that someday Elk Falls would become a small city, which it almost is now. When U.S. Highway 285 is completed to four lanes, and the Elk Creek road improved, this will make the Elk Falls area a wonderful community in which to live and retire.





**THE END**