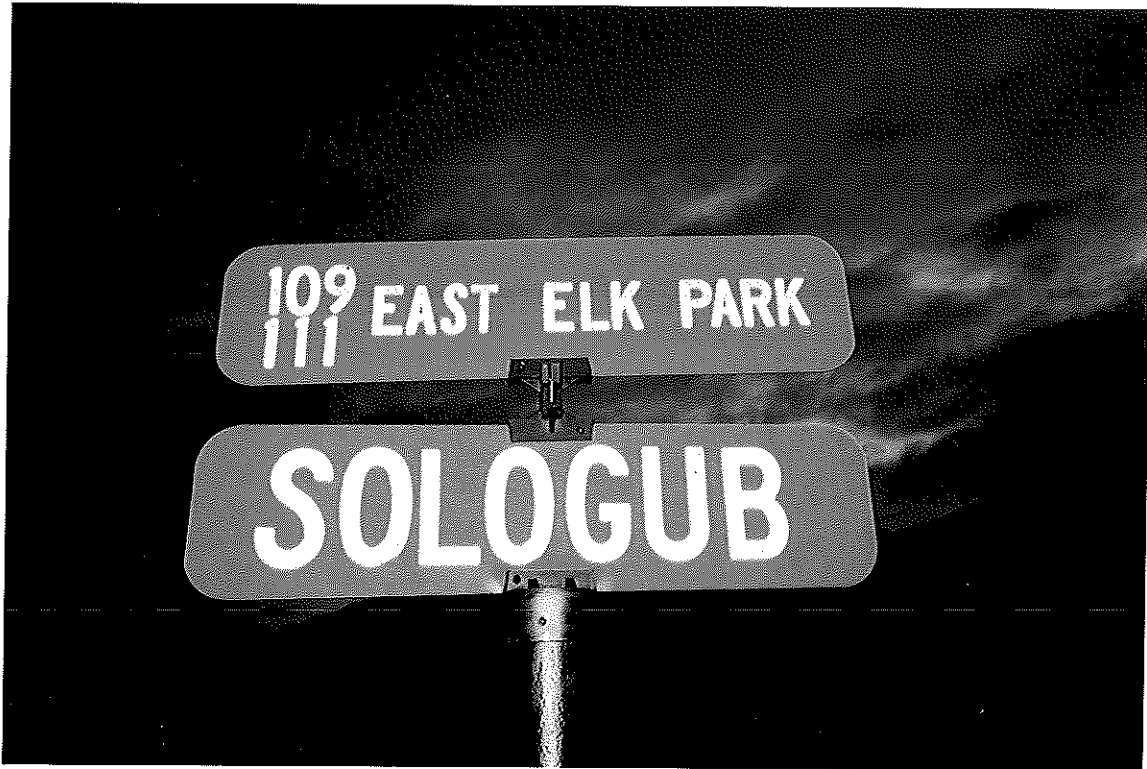


Butte History Oral Exam 2006



An Interview of
Joe Sologub
by:
Mikal Zemljak
16 October 2006

Joe Sologub

109 E. Elk Park Road

North End

Questions

1. How old were you when you moved to Butte?
2. Where were you born?
3. Did you ever work in the mines?
4. What did your parents do for a living?
5. How do you feel about the Butte miner's strike in 1959?
6. How old were you when you first saw Butte?
7. Did you go to regular school? College?
8. At what age did you marry?
9. To whom? Any children?
10. What was your childhood like?
11. How old are you?
12. What did you do after the mines?
13. What do you do now?
14. What kind of work did you do as an iron worker?

Outline

I interviewed Joe Sologub of Elk Park. I have known Joe for 18 years. He is part of the Elk Park Volunteer Fire Dept. and Terri & Joe drive the school bus for all the children just north of Butte.

I decided to interview Joe because I know he knows a lot about Butte's History, also Elk Park History. When one talks to Joe, you can tell that he is an intelligent man that knows what he is talking about. He knows things that I have never heard of before.

Joe is a great neighbor and family friend.

Transcription

This is an interview of Joe Sologub conducted by Mikal Zemljak at the north end of Elk Park on 16 October 2006.

Mikal: Hi Joe my name is Mikal Zemljak, and I was wondering if I could interview you for my Butte History Oral Exam?

Joe: Yes, Mikal I would be glad to talk with you today.

Mikal: Alright, How old were you when you first moved to Butte?

Joe: I was born in Butte, in St. James hospital March 13, 1942. I lived in Elk Park my entire life time except when I attended College or training for my job, is the only times I have not lived in Elk Park, Butte area.

Mikal: Where were you born in this building over here, right?

Joe: No, I was actually born in Butte, but this is the house that I was raised in. My grandmother homesteaded in Elk Park in 1903, and the homestead is up the field from where we live at the present time. The house that I grew up in was built by some people called Lamburg, which my folks had bought from them in the 1920's. And we also owned the homestead. The house that I live in now, where I presently live, my wife and I have remodeled. It was a 2 room log cabin, so this structure that we are sitting in now doing this interview in at this time was a 2 room log cabin. And this is where my grandmother raised 11 children, in this 2 room log cabin.

Mikal: How old were you when you got married?

Joe: How old I was? I believe that I was 25, when I got married.

Mikal: And to Terri Sologub?

Joe: Yes, Terri Kolokotrones. Her maiden name was Kolokotrones. So she improved her name from Kolokotrones to Sologub it's shorter. Her maiden name was spelled K O L O K O T R O N E S it was Greek. And her grandfather was the mayor of Three Forks.

Mikal: Um k, how many children did you guys have?

Joe: We have 3 children. A son named Joe, and we have our oldest daughter Colleen, and our youngest daughter Sithea. Our youngest daughter is 31 and so Joe is going to be 40.

Mikal: Alright, um what did you do for your childhood?

Joe: My childhood was like I said. I was raised on the ranch, and we had a large dairy at the time. We would ship milk to the different creameries in Butte. The milk processing plants in Butte. We always milked at least 50 to 85 cows; the most we milked was 85. As my childhood, I was raised here and there were always chores to do. In the summer time, we put up all our own hay. In the fall we had to get into winter work. When I was really little we had to get into ice, because we did not have electricity until 1947, and I was born in 1942. So I was 5 years old, I could not get any of the ice. But we didn't have refrigerators like today, we had ice boxes. We used to cut the ice at the ice pond over here, and we used to store it in a building, I just use it for storage now. It was built up off the ground air would circulate around it and they would store blocks of ice in there. They were imbedded in saw dust, and they weighed up to 300 pounds. And everyday they had to bring a block of ice down to the ice

box on the back porch to keep the items cold. It had a drain tub that would get rid of all the melted ice. But every year they had to fill the ice house to have ice year around. In summer the saw dust kept the ice from melting at any normal rate. So we had ice year around.

Mikal: Oh wow, how old were you when you first seen Butte?

Joe: Well, like I said. When I first saw Butte I was born there. When my mother would go to Butte I would go with her, so I would say 4 or 5 years old in Butte. And you asked me earlier, what did we do in our childhood? You know we had horses, dogs, and all the things. We did not play any base ball, or participate in any sports because of all the chores we had to do. But we enjoyed our livelihood every much.

Mikal: You went to regular school, k-12?

Joe: Yes I did not go to kindergarten I went to the Holly Savers at 1st grade at 5 years old. But my sister was in the 8th grade, and my mother wanted me to go to school while my sister was still in grade school. The first day of school was rather exciting; I had never been around a lot of children before. I went with my sister, which she didn't think was too exciting because she was in the 8th grade, I coming to the first grade. And I would not leave her. I was supposed to go the 1st grade room, but I didn't. I went with my sister to the 8th grade room. Well there was a nun there, and said that's fine ill come get him later. So here comes the nun and I was not leaving. I did not want to leave my sister. I was screaming, "I won't leave my sister", and the desk was on slide rails. So I was holding on the desk, so she took me and the desk down the hall. My sister was totally embarrassed. Finally I got there, and she went back get my sister, and here I was coloring and doing everything else, so my first day was pretty traumatic. I really don't remember, but my sister does

and had to put up with her little brother. Compared to the kids in town.

Mikal: College?

Joe: I went to college; I went to the University of Montana. I went for 1 year. I was going to study forestry, well before that I went to Butte Central and graduated, and went to elementary at the Holly Saver. I got into the U, when I was in high school, we were running the dairy, and there was just my dad and I. We ran the school bus and all these cows. There was just too much work to be done, so I took the easy course in high school; so when I got the U, I thought forestry would be something I would really like to do. But you had to take all these courses that I had no idea how to do. I failed most of the classes, so I dropped out of forestry, and got into general education for the remainder of the semester. At that time the systems where on the semester system, since that time they have changed. So, then I went and stayed out of school for a while and went to Northern Montana. I got a degree in secondary education, industrial arts, and biology. I graduated in 1968, so I was a slow go-er through college. I stayed out a while and decided that that was the better thing to do, so that's what I did.

Mikal: Did you work in the mines at all?

Joe: I did, for those years that I was not attending college. In the early 60's, I worked at the mines as an iron worker. And I worked on construction to gather up money to go back to college. I also trucked, and all kinds of things. My folks also sold our biggest part of the ranch in 1960. So we did not have much of a ranch, just 40 acres around our building. I did work for other rancher, construction, mines, and in the pits.

Mikal: How do you feel about the Butte miners strike in 1959?

Joe: What did I think of the... you know I was not too involved, but I did know it was a lot of economic problems for the community, but I was not closely associated because we were working on the ranch. It really did not have a really big personal affect on me at that time.

Mikal: What kind of work did you do as an iron worker?

Joe: As an iron worker we would, when I worked for the Anaconda Company, we would change out the decks. Decks are the things that would hall the ore up and down the shafts; we would change the cables on those, also. We would fix railroad cars and fences. It was a really good job, I learned a lot. I got a lot of experience. I got to go down almost all the mine shafts that were open in the 60's. We would do different repairs in different mines, so it was a good experience. I never was a miner that actually mined ore.

Mikal: Alright, What do you do now?

Joe: I am retired. When I got out of college, I got a teaching degree. I was going to teach in Darby, Montana. During the summer I needed a job, so I got a job. I was married when I graduated, Terri, my wife, and I had a son. So, I went to work out in Anaconda Job Corps as a summer employee. And I got to like the job, but my folks were not in the best of health. And I had a chance to get on full time there. I went from working maintaince to teaching. I worked there 11 years, driving back and forth from there to Elk Park everyday. My wife and I took care of my mother until she pasted away. I decided that I wanted a change in my career, so I had an opportunity to go into law enforcement, for the government. I applied for the job, got it, and went to the federal law academy in Georgia. I had to go back 3 months at a time. I first

started out as a field agent, then after that I became a special agent after 5 years. I continued that through my career. I didn't have to move with my job to get promoted up, I was able to advance in and ended up putting in 33 years in the government. The last of the years were in Law Enforcement. That was a very interesting job in that never 2 days were that same. It a very exciting job, it was tuff to get court cases finished. You were always working 10 to 12 cases at the same time; gathering from each a little at a time. But it was really a fun job. We worked all kinds of jobs. I handled a homicide in P-burg. It was in the forest in P-burg, Garnet County was really small in only having a court attorney, judge, and sheriff. This kid that was mentally handy capped, he had been in and out of mental institutions his whole life. The problem was that he had been into the drug scene. He was being held in Warm Springs. There was a group of people believing that he was being held there against his own will. And so they worked to get him released. When he got released the first time, he had tried to commit suicide. He shot himself in his mouth, but never did any really damage. Well he got better, and he got into drugs. He went out with his dad, who was a wood cutter, and he was really mad because they did not have enough money for them no take there own car out. He did not have money for some tobacco. So they were out in the woods and they were loading these post and poles. The dad was going to run to town and he said ill just stay here. So, while he was out in the hills, he came across one of our surveyors (there was 5 of them) they were in long distances from each other. They were reservoirs from the 1988 fires, and they were communicating with radio and mirrors. For some reason he sunk up behind this guy, with a big club, and he clubbed the guy in the side of the head. It shattered the poor guys head. The guy died instantly. We had to investigate, and find out what had happened. The person was lying there all bloody. They called all us in, to gather

up the body and evidence they could. At the time they thought the death was from a heart attack. I did not believe that because of the massive pile of blood. If he would have had a heart attack the heart would not have functioned. We thought that he might have fell and hit his head, causing that pile of blood. We were at the site, looking around for some of evidence, it was getting into the evening. We looked and here is a guy up in the woods. The sheriff happened to know this guy, and yelled at him and he comes down. And he says "what are you doing up here?", and the guy said, "well I just killed a guy". We arrested him on the spot. He told us he clogged him to death and he showed us the club. It was real sad, we couldn't take him to county jail, and we took him to Helena. And we prosecuted him, and he pleaded guilty as reason of insanity. He, today, comes up for review every year since that time. I think I was in 1991. He is in a federal hospital, and they rotate him around, so he does not stay in the same place the whole time. They are always trying to say that he is reformed and ready to get out, but if he ever gets out he would have to stay on trail for the thing that he did. But I don't and hope that he never ever does get out, because he was a real treat to himself and other people. So that was homicide that I got to handle. When I left the forest service, I was the only one to ever prosecute a homicide, other wise they usually were always turned over to the FBI. I did a lot of interesting things; ladies were the ones who usually got it for inbesalment, not men.

Mikal: Huh, do you have any stories about when you were in the mines?

Joe: Do I have any stories about in the mines? Well, the only one I can think of is they used to have flat belts that they made in the mines. They had huge reels; they were flat cables 6 to 8 inches wide. I was lucky for the mining history; we took the last flat cable out of the mines at the

High Ore. I did not like the highs of the mines. We used to have to paint that flat belt at the High Ore. One guy on each side, painting it as it went up. It did not bother me standing above the whole 4,000 ft down. I remember one time I was painting and my hard hat fell; you could hear it going down 4,000 feet.

Mikal: Ya it would be. Did any accidents ever happen when you were working in the mine?

Joe: When I first started working there, the mines came back after the '59 strike. We did not have anyone get injured to bad on the iron workers. But the ore miners used to; they would pull the bodies up as you were going down. But I did not work that long in the mines.

Mikal: Do you have any other stories you would like to tell me?

Joe: Um, I worked construction in the summers, for N & K construction. I worked on the pass up over

END OF TAPE



*Old ice pond at the north
end of Elk Park*



*Old ranch house where
Sologub family was raised.*



Sologub's current residence



*Gallus Frame in Butte,
Montana*



Old milk barn