

## [Albert Zeigler]

Edith L. Crawford.

Carrizozo, N. [Mexx?].

Words 1617 PIONEER STORY Albert Zeigler

I came to America from [Coblens?] Germany, which is situated on the Rhine river. I sailed in September, 1884. The boat was the [Furnesia?], of the Anchor lines. We were thirteen days crossing the ocean. I landed in New York City and left at once by immigrant train for Albuquerque New Mexico, where my brother Jake Zeigler was clerking in the store of Jaffa Brothers. Soon after my arrival there [?] sent me to San Francisco California where we had some relatives living. They got me a job clerking in a store and I went to night school and learned to speak, read and write English, as I could not speak a word of English when I landed in America. The ways of the people and the country seemed very strange to me. After staying in California a year I came back to Socorro New Mexico, which was then in Lincoln County. I clerked for Price Brothers during the year of 1885 and part of 1886. While I was living in Socorro I visited my brother Jake, who was then living in [Manzano?] New Mexico. He and a man named Herman Goodman ran a small store there, selling dry goods, groceries and liquor. The town of [Manzano?] was a Spanish-American town. My brother, Mr. Goodman and a fellow by the name of [Kountas?] were the only white men living there at the time. This fellow [Kountas?] ran a newspaper which was called the "Gringo and Greaser". He did not like the Spanish-Americans and was always making dirty remarks about them in his paper. One night while he was eating supper some one shot thro'ugh a window and killed him instantly. That ended the "Gringo and Greaser" newspaper. Another incident happened while I was visiting my brother there. A bunch of Spanish American men were in the store drinking and a couple of them got drunk. Jake refused 2 to sell them any more whiskey so the bunch left the store. Later in that evening

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twelve men came back to the store armed with forty-five Winchester rifles, looking for Jake. He had been tipped off and was hiding in the hay loft. When they could not find him they left, but the next day they got out a warrant for him and had him arrested and taken before a Justice of the Peace who was a Spanish American. He fined [JJake?] and made him pay the costs of the court, all just because he would not sell the two drunk men more whiskey. That was the kind of law and justice we had in tho'se days. I left [Socorro?] New Mexico in December 1886, for White Oaks New Mexico. I went by stage coach, which was a buck board drawn by two little Spanish mules. We left Socorro about ten o'clock in the morning and got to [Osanne's?] ranch, which was about half way between Socorro and White Oaks, about six o'clock in the evening. We had our supper there at the ranch and changed the team and started on the last half of the journey. It was a bitter cold night and we arrived at White Oaks about four o'clock in the morning. There were lots of sandy places on the road and at times the mules could only make about two miles an hour. It was a very cold and tiresome trip. My brother Jake and Herman Goodman had moved to White Oaks from [Mansano?], after Jake had the trouble with the Spanish Americans at [Mansano?], and put in a dry goods store in a small log cabin. After I got to White Oaks I went [into?] the business [with?] them and the store was called Goodman, Zeigler & Company. The business was small and in order to increase it my brother Jake often made trips into the surrounding country and peddled dry goods. We had a wagon and a good pair of horses and Jake could take quite a load of goods with him on each trip. The country in tho'se days was not any too safe and he usually took a 3 man with him to do the driving," as they [?] out at night most of the time. He had a man named Ike Smith who was an old timer and knew the country well who went with him. Once when they were returning from a trip into the [Penasco?] country, they were coming down Nogal hill when a masked bandit stepped up to the wagon and drew a gun on them and said, "turn over your money and be quick about it." Jake and Smith were so surprised that they were rather slow in turning over the money and the bandit shot at them. The bullet grazed Ike Smith's forehead. About a year after this hold up Ike Smith died from the effects of this wound. This happened at the foot of Nogal Hill, near Nogal New Mexico, which is twelve miles

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southeast of Carrizozo New Mexico. After that experience my brother did not make vary many more trips selling merchandise.

We freighted all of our merchandise from San Antonio New Mexico by teams and mostly ox teams. It took them a week to make the trip from San Antonio to White Oats. In one of the shipments of merchandise, I ordered ten gallons of very fine wine. When the keg came we were all so anxious to get a good drink, but when we opened the keg you can imagine our great disappointment to find it filled with water. Some one had taken the wine out and filled the keg up with water. There was a man by the name of W.H. Weed, who settled in White Oaks in 1881. He had a general [merchandise?] business and also sold liquor. His store was a log cabin with a lean to shed on the back, with a side door entrance. He kept a barrel of whiskey on tap all the time and when the millers quit work for the day they would go by Weed's place and go in the side door and get a drink of whiskey, or on many drinks as they wished. Old man Weed would charge them with up with one drink no matter how many they had. He tho'ught 4 in this way he would get all the trade of the miners. White Oaks was a booming town in tho'se days, there were about two hundred miners at work in the mines. I remember one evening while I was boarding at the Brothers Hotel, a man by the name of John E. Wilson came in to supper with a fine specimen of gold. He showed it to a man by the name of Sigafus, who was operating the North Home stake mine at that time. Wilson asked him what he tho'ught of this kind of ore. I remember very well that Sigafus told him, "just one ton of this kind of ore and you will never have to work anymore". Mr. Wilson located the South Homestake mine which later proved to be very rich in gold.

The North Homestake mine was located in 1880, by Jack Winters. This mine was also very rich in gold. The Old Abe mine was first located in 1881 by prospectors but none found the rich vein and they let their leases lapse. In the fall of 1890 the rich vein was located by a man named William Watson. The Old Abe mine is about thirteen hundred feet deep and is considered the dryest mine in the world. It has produced around one and one half million dollars in gold.

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The population of White Oaks was about five hundred people when the rich strike was made at the Old Abe mine and it jumped up to fifteen hundred people, with two hundred miners working in the mines. Altho'ugh a hundred miles from the nearest railroad, the social life compared favorably with cities such larger. On March 9th, 1895, came the most drastic of all the Old Abe mine fires, in which eight miners lost their lives. The town people worked day and night to recover the bodies, the faithful women of the town staying on the job all the time, serving hot coffee and sandwiches to the [rescuers, many?] of whom would be brought to the top overcome by gas fumes.

When the El Paso, Northeastern Railroad was built from El Paso Texas to [Tueumcari?] New Mexico, we had great hopes of it building thro'ugh White Oaks, but it left White Oaks about twelve miles to the east, and now it [is?] just a ghost town, but we still have great hopes of the mines opening up again.

Several funny things happened while I was living in White Oaks. Mrs. Zeigler and I were invited to a dinner party at Mrs. John McCourt's, a neighbor of ours. Her little son, Ben, about five years old enjoyed the meat course very much. The little fellow heard us talking about the kind of meat that we had and it happened to be kid. He asked us, "What did they kill the poor little fellow for?"

During the Cleveland administration we had quite a few light grey stove pipe hats in the store. A bunch of Apache Indians came over from the Reservation to buy some dry goods. My brother Jake sold each buck one of [these?] stove pipe hats. With their blankets and moccasins and high hats they were sights to behold. Everyone in the town was out watching these Indians parade the streets.

I have lived in Lincoln County fifty years and have been in the general merchandise business all these years.

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NARRATOR: Albert Zeigler, [Carrizozo?], New Mexico. Aged 78 years.