



501 Jefferson Ave. History

Legal Description: Lots 15-17, Block 3, Acme Place, Louisville, Colorado

Year of Construction: Unknown; relocated and remodeled in 1948

Summary: This house was relocated from the Columbine Mine camp in 1948. Its original construction date is unknown. It was the home of the family of William and Ruth Leslie from 1948 until 1974.

Development of the Acme Place Addition

In 1893, John Connell, who had helped to establish the Acme Mine at what is now the corner of Roosevelt and Hutchinson, platted the subdivision of Acme Place. It covered what are now the 500 blocks of Lincoln, Grant, Jefferson, and La Farge Avenues. The Acme Place subdivision was only the fourth addition to Original Louisville and was likely developed due to its proximity to the Acme Mine that was started in 1888. The 1909 Drumm's Wall Map of Louisville shows that the 500 blocks of Lincoln and Grant were well populated with houses by 1909, but the 500 blocks of Jefferson and La Farge, which were located quite close to the Acme Mine and parts of which were within the Mine's fenced enclosure, had few houses at that time. Boulder County Property records indicate that the land that Connell used to establish Acme Place had been acquired directly from the Acme Coal Mining Company.

In 1911, Rocky Mountain Fuel Company acquired the mine and was the owner/operator of the Acme Mine until it closed in 1928. Rocky Mountain Fuel Company for many years continued to own the property, including the lots that make up 501 Jefferson.

Leslie Family Ownership of Property, 1946-1974; Discussion of Date of Construction

In 1946, Rocky Mountain Fuel Company sold these lots, plus two adjoining lots, to William J. and Ruth Leslie. (The next year, the Leslies sold the adjoining lots, which became 515 Jefferson. The house at 515 Jefferson was also identified on its Assessor Card as having been relocated, and other information indicates that it also came from a mine camp.)

The Assessor Card for 501 Jefferson, dated 1948, does not contain a date of construction, but states that the house was relocated from the Columbine Mine in 1948. This date is repeated on the Boulder County website, which is generally thought to have adopted the information from the Assessor Cards, at least for Louisville properties. However, on the County website it is instead given as the date of construction. Boulder County has sometimes been found to be in error with respect to the date of construction of Louisville buildings, so it is important to look to other evidence of the construction year.

It appears that the date of construction of the house at the Columbine Mine camp is not known. The Assessor Card states that the house was relocated and remodeled in 1948, not constructed in that year. Specifically, the field for the “Date of Construction” is empty and there is a handwritten notation on the card under the field for “Major Alterations or Additions.” This notation states the date of 1948 and says “Old House moved in + Remodeled.” Underneath that, an additional handwritten notation states: “House moved from Columbine mine a remodel job.”

For these reasons, the date of 1948 is not accurate as a date of construction, but is accurate as a date of relocation and remodel. The original date of construction is not known, but according to a USGS map of mines in the area (USGS i-2735 produced in 2000, viewable here: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/imap/i-2735/>), the Columbine Mine was in operation from 1920 to 1946. It was located in Serene, Weld County, Colorado. Some Louisville residents worked as miners there.

The following two undated photos from the collection of the Louisville Historical Museum show the mine camp at the Columbine Mine.



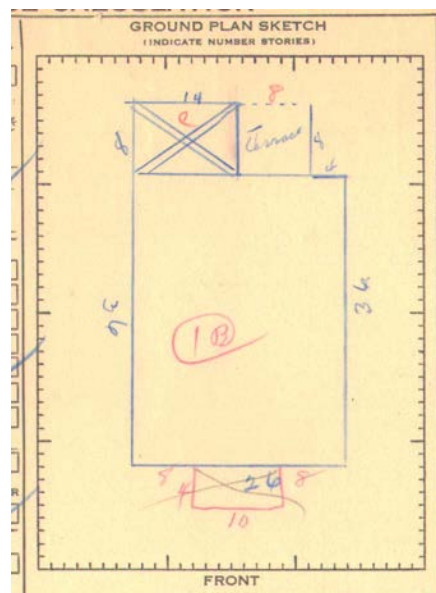


The history of relocated buildings in Louisville was summarized in the following article in *The Louisville Historian*: <https://www.louisvilleco.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=1114> . Often, houses were moved from a mine camp into towns such as Louisville, Lafayette, and Superior on the occasion of that particular mine closing. In this case, it appears that that was what was happening here, as the Columbine Mine closed in 1946 and the house was relocated in 1948.

William J. “Bill” Leslie (1897-1973) was born in Louisville. As a young man, he worked as a coal miner at Louisville’s Matchless Mine that was located near today’s Louisville Recreation Center. After his father died when Bill was about 14, he helped support his mother while she operated a Louisville hotel. He married Ruth Wellerd (1905-1971) in Golden in 1926. She was born in Ohio and came to Colorado as a young child. Their children were four sons: Donald, William, John, and Gilbert.

After many years of working as a coal miner and retiring from that in 1941, Bill Leslie worked for the town of Louisville as a marshal or deputy marshal, and later as a “patrolman,” from 1947 until 1964. In the 1940s, the town’s lack of funding placed a particular burden on the marshal, who essentially was on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. According to an article in the *Louisville Times* on April 22, 1948, the town board “favored putting three men . . . on eight-hour shifts, but have no money and don’t know how it can be done.” A few weeks later, the board voted to have Bill Leslie continue as marshal with the help of one deputy marshal. As reported in the *Louisville Times*, some of the law enforcement issues Bill Leslie handled over the years concerned speeders, drunk driving cases, traffic accidents, illegal gambling, teenager pranks, and unruly conduct at the town’s taverns, especially at night. By 1959, there was more funding for law enforcement, and Bill Leslie’s job as a patrolman was for the 3 PM to 11 PM shift.

The following 1948 photo of the house and a ground layout sketch are from the Boulder County Assessor card:



In 1974, the year after Bill Leslie's death, the executor for his estate sold 501 Jefferson.

Later Owners, 1974-present

In 1974, Allan and Rachel Farber purchased 501 Jefferson. In 1975, they sold the house to Greg and Nancy Coleman. One or both of them owned the house until 1997. They were followed as owners by Jill Midgley, Charles Schmidt, and Jill Midgley again. In 2006, Carolyn Ford Gaye and Christopher Joseph Behm purchased 501 Jefferson, and they are still the current owners of record.

Sources

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, and obituary records.