Gladys Peterson: This is an interview with Mr. Kenneth Hayes on July 14, 1987. Our main topic will be early days in Montana and Missoula centering around the Depression and the CCCs [Civilian Conservation Corps]. Your first name is Kenneth? Ken, is that what they call you? According to my husband who met you in Wilts Barbershop, you originally were an easterner, is that correct?

Kenneth Hayes: Wibaux, Montana.

GP: Oh, that's not as far east as I thought. I thought he meant eastern United States, but that's east of Missoula anyhow. You were born in Wibaux?

KH: Yes, ma'am.

GP: I always like to find out if I can if your family had been there a long time.

KH: Well, my mother was from Pennsylvania. She was Pennsylvania Dutch and my dad, I can't remember much about that. He was from Wisconsin, but then I know he lived in several places before he migrated to Wibaux.

GP: Did he want to farm or ranch?

KH: He was a farmer, yeah.

GP: When would that have been, early 1900's?

KH: Yes. It had to be because I was born in 1916. I was born on one of the places that he had rented. I don't think he ever owned a farm. He leased or rented them most of the time except the place we lived in in Wibaux. We did have a place right in Wibaux.

GP: Were he and your mother married when they moved here?

KH: Yes.

GP: So they were just kind of looking around for a place to settle and farm.

KH: Yes. We couldn't have found a worse place.
GP: It was pretty bad?

KH: Oh!

GP: What do you remember about those days?

KH: Oh, I remember when I was really a young kid that was during the Depression. Why it had to be in '31. '32. It was quite a drought, no rain and with those Russian thistles, I don't know if you know what I'm talking about or not, they grow real good and that's all we had to cut for hay for the winter for the cows and horses.

GP: That was quite a drought. I remember it. I was pretty young at the time, but I remember seeing it in the paper.

KH: The Dust Bowl and all that, but it seemed like we always had plenty to eat. You know even though we didn't have all that gingerbread like they've got nowadays, but we did have all the meat we could eat and potatoes and rice—a lot of that.

GP: Were you a big family?

KH: Twelve of us.

GP: In other words, your mother gave birth to 12 children?

KH: One of them died when he was two weeks old and then lost one when he was 13 and one was 19. All five of them are buried in Wibaux.

GP: Well, that was a lot of mouths to feed.

KH: I can remember when we were going to school that Thursday was her day to bake and she was really a good cook, I'll tell you. I guess most mothers are. (laughs) Seemed like she'd bake on Thursday and all the kids in high school, not all of them, but these kids that we palled around with, they knew what day that Grandma Hayes was going to have fresh cinnamon rolls and she'd have those great big sheets of cinnamon rolls and they'd come. I had a friend that I chased around with and my younger brother, he had two friend and those kids would come down there and we'd wipe out that whole pan of cinnamon rolls almost. I seemed like there were always 13 or 14 loaves of bread that she baked and that was supposed to last us a week, you know.

I remember Dad taking the wheat in and getting it ground for flout or trading it for stuff. I don't remember what arrangements he had.

GP: Did any of those brothers and sisters stay in the Wibaux area?
KH: No.

GP: None of them did?

KH: No, none of them did. Most of them came west and I came west when I joined the CCCs.

GP: Now, let's see. That would probably have been mid-'30s?

KH: Seems like '35 that I joined the CCCs. [Nineteen] thirty-nine is when we were married.

GP: How old were you when you went into the CCCs?

KH: Well, I was supposed to have been 16, but I think I was only 15 or something like that.

GP: Were there other boys doing that from the Wibaux area?

KH: Oh, yes, quite a few of them. My oldest brother—seems to me like he either got a job with the Forest Service through the CCCs or I don't remember, but I know he worked for the Forest Service at that time; he was a foreman. Then there was Wes and Walt and that was all of us in the CCCs. There was four of us.

GP: Four brothers in the CCCs. I want to get to the CCCs in a minute, but what about the girls? What happened to them?

KH: Well, Opal and Letha, my oldest sisters, they got summer jobs in Yellowstone Park in those—

GP: The concessions?

KH: Yes and the youngest one, Cora, she worked for a doctor in Billings for a long time housekeeping.

GP: So did any of these brothers remain at home during the Depression? Were they still children?

KH: Oh yes, yes. They helped out quite a bit. We had kind of a dairy in town and we milked cows.

GP: That's the old-fashioned way.

KH: Yes. (laughs) We never had a big barn or anything except for the wintertime, and we'd just ride out in the rain or right in the yard. I don't know if you went through that kind of an
GP: No, I grew up in the city.

KH: Oh, did you? It was pretty hectic at time, but I know I'm not regretting any of it as far as that goes, you know.

GP: Well, your father needed all the help he could get.

KH: You bet he did.

GP: How much land did he have?

KH: That he farmed, only about 200 acres actually, but we probably had 500 for pasture and stuff like that. Cattle at that time, I don't know if you remember (Hoover was president) and as I remember it, there were a lot of bread lines in these bigger cities, you know. People were starving to death and yet the government would come out and only give you $27.00 for a great big five-year-old steer, you know, and take him down the coulee someplace and shoot him and burn him because that was their way of helping the farmers. They were getting paid. I wouldn't say this was a surplus because if they'd a way of transporting this meat to these bigger cities [they] probably would have eaten pretty good. Some of those people that were in those bread lines.

GP: So they shot them rather than do what?

KH: Well, they would probably have had to trail them or something because they didn't have—

GP: They didn't have the feed for them?

KH: Well, it was just kind of to help the farmer out because he didn't have any money. That was what it was.

GP: So who was doing the shooting?

KH: Well, they had a government guy come in. I remember, you know. He'd come out and then we'd burn them. They'd throw oil on them. Hogs were the same way. It was kind of lopsided, it seemed to me like they had trains at that time. It probably would have cost them more to ship them down there (the government) then the way they did it, you know.

GP: I vaguely remember something; wasn't Henry Wallace involved in that? I remember was there a lot of turmoil about that at the time, but I was really too young to understand what was going on.
KH: That might be my problem, too, but I could see all this happening.

GP: Yes, and so how did that affect your father?

KH: Well, he just raised more cattle, as far that goes, but that gave us something to buy staples with, like sugar and things like that. They just didn't have money. I remember times when we had only 50 cents for peanuts for Christmas. It was that bad. But still we ate, we ate good because we had all the fresh milk and butter and things like that.

GP: Did your mother sew?

KH: Yes, she did.

GP: The girls sewed for themselves, I suppose?

KH: Well, I can't remember so much that they did that.

GP: What about flour sacks? I remember they used to have the flour in 100 pound sacks with prints on them. Did they use them?

KH: They used those for dishtowels. I think so.

GP: Well, when you went into the CCCs was that out of high school or did you graduate from high school?

KH: No, I went as far as sophomore, though the second year. I guess it was after the CCCs that I spent so much time here in Missoula, you know, that has to be in '37 or something like that.

GP: What made you decide to go into the CCCs?

KH: Well, there was just no employment anyplace, you know, and that's when Roosevelt became president.

GP: Were the local government people (there must have been some Federal people operating there in Wibaux or someplace in that area) were they encouraging the young boys to go into the CCCs?

KH: No, not really. I think most of it was all, you know, you could see that money that you were going to get. As I remember, boy, you were going to have $30 a month all to yourself, you know.

GP: Were a lot of the farm boys interested in doing that?
KH: Yes, there were a lot of them joined the CCCs.

GP: Did a lot of them quit high school to join?

KH: Well, I just wouldn't know about that.

GP: What about your brothers?

KH: They all graduated through high school.

GP: Did you say they were older than you?

KH: Two of them were older and then the youngest one that was in the CCCs, why, he was younger. He lives here in Missoula.

GP: Oh, he does. Well, first of all, were you separated from your brothers when you were in the CCCs?

KH: That’s crazy, you know. I really never did, oh, I can't say "associate with them", but I know where they were and the oldest one and I, we palled around together a lot. But at the time, like, I would be in Deep Creek, Idaho— that's below Darby—and they'd be up at Nine Mile. The second oldest one, Wes, worded for the remount [USFS Remount Depot] and so did Walt. But I knew where they were all the time and one winter the oldest one and I were wintered up at Nine Mile. We were in different companies.

GP: I see. Were you all in Idaho or Montana.

KH: Well, I was the only one who went to Idaho. I don’t remember where Walt spent his summers. I think he put all his time in at NineMile. Wes was older than I am and he did all the irrigating for the remount up there.

GP: You probably met people from all over the country.

KH: Oh my, yes. I'll tell you.

GP: What do you remember about that?

KH: Well, I remember...Probably some of them I shouldn’t even—(laughs)

GP: That’s all right. We have this great story here now, Ken. This is a historic document that you're making.

KH: I really met some nice kids, I'll tell you. There was a fellow there by the name of Parker and
I don't remember his first name, but they all had a little band and each company seemed like they had a few that played instruments and this Parker from Billings, he played saxophone and he was really good, you know. Then there were two tall children. One was Ted Grady. I remember because he kind of stuttered, you know, and those two kids from Kalispell. They were great basketball players and we did have a big gym up at Nine Mile. I don't remember if it burnt down before or after. You ever been up there?

GP: Yes. I was up there when they had some kind of a dedication a few years ago, three or four years ago.

KH: That's at Nine Mile. The CCC camp was beyond that quite a ways. Anyhow, those two kids, they played basketball and they happened to be in 952, that was the number of our company. We always seemed to take the championship. Then there was a little kid by the name of Denny McTetron, and he was a part Indian and I think he was from Medicine Lake.

GP: Canada?

KH: Yeah, someplace up in there. I went in and was a cook for a while and then I went to baking and this friend that I baked with, why, he was from Hardin, Gary Peterson his name was, and we really had a good time and a lot of fun. And there's many of them that I remember, you know.

GP: Well so far all that you've mentioned have been from the Montana area. Were there any at all from the east coast?

KH: Yes. It just happened that the people that were in our company, most of them were from Montana. But there were companies that were from New York and different area, you know.

GP: But you never crossed paths with any of those?

KH: No, we never did really. We always had our own friends that we chummed around with. There were about seven of us that used to come to town together and party around, you know.

GP: Now perhaps I had the wrong idea, but I understand that out of your pay, you were to sent part of that home. Is that correct?

KH: That's right. Yes.

GP: Was that designated amount or was it up to you or how was that?
KH: I think you were about to keep $5.00 a month.

GP: I see.
KH: So you got 30 dollars a month, you got 5 dollars of it. Then if you made any, you know, if you worked yourself up, like I went to 36 dollars a month.

GP: Big deal?

KH: Yes, it was. And some, like the first cook, they’d get 45 dollars. But anything above that 25 dollars, you got to keep. It just didn’t leave you a lot. The folks saved most of mine, and I had to spend it all on a dentist bill, it seemed like, when I got out.

GP: Well, do you feel that the money you and your brothers sent home was helping them at all, though, on the farm?

KH: I’m sure it did. It was rough, I’ll tell you, but I still think we were a lot better off than a lot of people.

GP: Sure. Well, of course, I never thought about the CCCs having to have cooks and bakers and all. I had the impression that they were all working in the woods. How did you happen to not work in the woods and become a cook?

KH: I guess it was the heat and stuff like that. I don’t really remember much, but we had to take our turns on KP and they just looked to me like that would be the closest place to food, you know.

GP: You were a hungry growing boy?

KH: You bet, I’ll tell you!

GP: Did you have a choice?

KH: Well, I guess. They’d give you whatever you wanted to work most of the time if you fit in well. I just liked the work and in the summertime when we were down in Deep Creek, Idaho, why I was cooking a bit in what they call a "spike camp". From the main camp they’d build a camp down someplace. You know what I mean, don’t you?

GP: Kind of a temporary place?

KH: Yes. And there would only be, oh, maybe 30-40 guys in that. The fellow that helped me in there, his name was Harvey Maynard and he was a specialist in vegetable soup and I thought that I was pretty good at making tomato soup. We just kind of rotated. Sometimes he’d get up real early in the morning to cook breakfast and then the next morning would be my turn. We’d stay and get the crew lunch or dinner.
GP: Was it hard to learn to be a cook? I mean the idea of cooking for 40 men really boggles my mind. (laughs)

KH: When I was a kid on the farm, why, we batched most of the time. My dad and we boys would stay out there and my mother was in town most of the time and so we always had fried potatoes or whatever we had.

GP: Why was your mother in town?

KH: She took care of the dairy. We had a little dairy.

GP: I see. She managed the dairy with all those children, too.

KH: Milking, you know, she kind of... We peddled milk.

GP: She must have been an amazing person.

KH: I'll tell you, she was. Some of the things she had to go through. If you were a farm girl and understood this, why it'd be easier to but—

GP: Well, I can learn.

KH: Well, anyway, they didn't have these great big swathers and huge farm equipment they've go now, you know. They did all this with horses. As soon as Glenn was old enough, why, he took off and went to work away from the farm. He was the oldest boy. Then it left Mom. A lot of times, why, we just had to have all the help we could get and she'd go out on that mower—two horses pulled this mower—and she'd hold one kid in her arms and put two in a washtub, great big washtub, on the tongue. He fixed a place for those two kids and that's the way she took care of them and mowed hay then, all day. I tell you, we put up hay by hand.

GP: Was she still having babies during the Depression too?

KH: Oh yes, my goodness. I tell you, it was something else.

GP: I have two questions that come to mind, first of all, living a hard life like that, did she live to be an old woman?

KH: Sixty-eight. I guess that's what the real thing in those days women were made out of. We had a daughter that's just exactly like her almost.

GP: Rugged person?

KH: Well, yes. You just couldn't help it the minute she walked in the door. Her personality just
magnifies, you know and you'd instantly like her because she's just that type. But she lives up in Arlee. Am I getting off the track?

GP: No. This is important and we'll get back on track in a minute. Whatever you think is important enough to tell, we want to hear.

KH: Well, anyhow, Penny lives up in Arlee in a log cabin, she and her husband and their little boy. They have a great big—years ago they called them cisterns, but it's just kind of a big concrete placer where they catch this water that comes out of the mountain then they pipe it on down from there into the kitchen. All she got is cold water and an outside toilet, you know and no bath facilities. They go to the neighbors. But she doesn't complain; that's where she wants to live. She wouldn't come to Missoula and live for anything.

GP: Before we get back to my other question, they live up there by choice? And what does her husband do?

KH: He's a janitor in the school at Arlee. When she got through college, why, she was qualified for a teacher. At that time all those kids were rebelling against the system and so they didn't think that teaching was, they just thought it was terrible. So she didn't follow her—

GP: Profession?

KH: Yes. Now she's gone back and picked it all up and is looking for a teaching job now. She specializes in this special education.

GP: Okay, now you said that your oldest brother went and worked someplace else. Did he go in the CCCs?

KH: Yes, but he worked for ranchers and stuff like that down there. He worked a lot for the banker in Beech, North Dakota.

GP: Was he sending money home?

KH: Oh, not that guy. No, he sure didn’t.

GP: So, was he one of the ones, then, that come back to Western Montana or was he one that you didn't have much contact with during the CCC days?

KH: Well, he was up at Ninemile.

GP: Oh, he was. Okay.

KH: We did come to town together an awful lot. The oldest one is the one that I did [come
with]. My relationship between the other two was okay, but we just didn't see each other as often as my oldest brother.

GP: Well, now, were they working in the woods?

KH: A lot of road building, yes. He was and then like I say, Wes was irrigating most of the time. And Walt worked down there as kind of a flunky, I guess. He kept the wood in for the cooks and stuff.

GP: Did you boys have a sense that what you were doing was really making a contribution to the country? Did you think about that at all?

KH: No, I don't think so, no. I think all we could think about was getting a few bucks in our pocket probably and a person makes a lot of mistakes when he's young like that. (laughs)

GP: Well, that's the time to not have the world's problems on your shoulders, too.

KH: That's probably right, yes.

GP: What about the leadership in the CCCs. Where did they get the bosses?

KH: Well, they came out of the army. I wouldn't say they were surplus officers, but they were officers out of the army that maybe had been...What do they do when they have so many people that they can't use? Now we had a fellow named Captain Davis and he had been a former army officer and a foreman who were both lieutenants.

GP: Would they have been from World War I by chance or were they not that old.

KH: They weren't that old.

GP: They were in the reserves?

KH: Could have been that. That could have been what they were.

GP: You remember a Captain Davis.

KH: Yes. Oh, very distinctly.

GP: Was he by any chance connected with the University ROTC or anything like that?

KH: I don't think so. I don't think he was. I don't know.

GP: You didn't get to know any of the bosses too well.
KH: Well, I got along with all of them real well. I got acquainted with all of them. This Lt. Brown, he had a little girl named Patsy. I remember her. He lived in a cabin not far from the main camp up at Deep Creek. This big bear came into the yard and Patsy was out in the yard and so his wife called right away and got somebody up there and they shot the bear and we ate the bear in the camp.

GP: Oh, you did! Did you cook it?

KH: No. I don’t think I was the one who cooked it. I was different shift.

GP: Well, when you were in the CCCs were you thinking at all about your future, what you'd do when you got out of the CCCs?

KH: Well, probably at that time I was, I don’t know whether I was or not. I probably didn’t enter my mind what I was going to do, you know. It seemed after you were in there awhile, why, all you wanted to do was get out, even though it was a blessing.

GP: Well, when did you get out?

KH: It had to be around '38.

[End of Side A]
GP: Did you go back to Wibaux when you got out?

KH: No, I stayed here in Missoula. I liked the Western part of the state.

GP: By this time you were a few years older.

KH: (laughs) But not any wiser. Under the Wilma Building there used to be a plumbing shop.

GP: Is that right? I knew there was a swimming pool in there, but I didn't know there was a plumbing shop.

KH: And the name of the people who owned it was Pope and Hintz. There were two fellows and so the plumbers went on strike and the two owners had to go back to work. So I worked there for a couple of weeks and drove their truck, you know, errand boy most of the time and so I had several jobs. There was a grocery store called Tubbs-Carey Company and...how long have you been in Missoula?

GP: Since '65.

KH: Oh, well, you wouldn't remember that.

GP: I'm a relative newcomer.

KH: They were down on Woody Street and then they moved up on...right straight across from the Courthouse, [215 W. Broadway] probably in there where the Maytag could have been. I worked for them a long time.

GP: But you see the Depression was not really over then if you say it's around '38, but you were able to get jobs.

KH: Oh yes, it seemed like, but there were times when I went quite a while without working. There was a fellow in the Oxford; he was a cook. His name was McKenzie, and I would go in there and when I wasn't working and I didn't have any money, but he fed me anyway. He kind of kept track of it. I just got to worrying something terrible because I was running up a bill. I'd only eat once a day, as I remember, and when I finally got him paid off I owed him about 23 dollars, something like that.

GP: It seemed like a big amount.

KH: Oh, my goodness, yes. But I do remember I only paid 12 dollars for a room a month.
GP: Where was that? Downtown someplace?

KH: You know where the liquor store on Spruce Street is. There a monument company—

GP: On the north side of the street? Yes.

KH: —and in that big tall brick building is where I stayed. His name is Paul Wilcox and his wife. And they just took me in just like their own kid, you know, almost. He was some county official, like Clerk of the Court or Justice of the Peace as I remember.

GP: The name Wilcox sounds familiar to me.

KH: Really a nice fellow, couple. Older.

GP: Well, then you had a variety of jobs then. I heard your wife say when I first arrived, you were married in ’39?

KH: [Nineteen] thirty-nine.

GP: You were young when you got married, too.

KH: Well, 22. And at the time I got married I was working for Missoula Drug Company in the wholesale department. They had their business under the Elks, but some of it did extend into the second floor.

GP: You said it was a wholesale place, though, so there was no evidence of it on the street?

KH: No, not really.

GP: And this was a steady job you had?

KH: Oh boy, yes. 60 dollars! (laughs) She, Rachel, was working for a fellow by the name of Dr. Murphy. He was on old-time doctor and she made 40 dollars a month.

GP: What was she doing, receptionist work?

KH: Yes. Office work. We lived quite a ways out on 9th Street at the time, 1900 block as I remember.

GP: Did you have a garden and depend on it?

KH: No, we didn't. I guess we didn't know much about planting gardens at that time, you know.
GP: Farm boy that you were, you weren't interested in being a gardener?

KH: Oh, as I remember, there was a big old empty basement in front of this little house and I know this house would easily fit into this front room, but we didn't have no money to fix it up, you know; and it was just a shell, you might say, outside plumbing and all that.

GP: Did you have a car?

KH: No, bicycles.

GP: Bicycles! What about the winter? That was a long way out.

KH: Well, we'd ride the bus to work.

GP: They did have the bus, didn't they?

KH: They did have buses.

GP: You rode the bike to save money?

KH: Well, that's the only way we got around, you know, other than the buses. Sometimes we'd ride our bicycles—

GP: Did you hunt or fish?

KH: Not at that time, no, but we did a little fishing as I remember.

GP: But it wasn't to put meat on the table.

KH: No, I was pretty inexperienced at that time as far as hunting.

GP: What about World War II. Did that affect you at all?

KH: Well, I got called and I went back to Wibaux. I got as far as Seattle to take my physical and everything, but they turned me down. But my brothers, the three of them were in service.

GP: It would be interesting and then I want to get back to you, what did they do when they left the CCCs? In a general way.

KH: I just don't remember. I think Wes, he was from Red Lodge, Montana and he started working for those farmers down there around there and he got to be a heavy equipment operator.
GP: Did he stay in that area?

KH: Red Lodge? Yes, he did and finally he went to Colstrip in the later years and then he moved to Portland. But I don’t remember what Walt did. He was just chasing around the country, as I remember now.

GP: But anyhow none of them went back to Wibaux?

KH: No.

GP: That’s interesting, isn’t it? All of you took off.

KH: My oldest boy and I were thinking seriously of leaving for Wibaux tomorrow, just going back there for kind of a visit, but, boy, it’s so how now we decided to wait.

GP: Sure. Well then, if you didn’t go into one of the armed services, were you remaining then in Missoula?

KH: No, I went out to Seattle and went to work for Boeing Company and they were putting safety treads in the boats, this company was.

GP: Was this before the war broke out?

KH: Yes, it was.

GP: I just wondered if you had any remembrances of Missoula during World War II, but if you weren’t here, you wouldn’t have them.

KH: I do. Yes. We were up Nine Mile after a Christmas tree the day that they bombed Pearl Harbor.

GP: Nineteen forty-one.

KH: Just last Saturday we had a big family get-together for her brother. This was his 60th wedding anniversary, and we were recalling all that.

GP: Those days, well, as long as we have a few minutes here on this tape, do you remember the immediate reaction of you and the people around you when that happened?

KH: No, I don’t. I really don’t. We probably couldn’t believe it, you know. It was something that would never happen.

GP: But you were still in Missoula then, when that happened? Did you move to Seattle because
there were more job opportunities out there?

KH: Right. At the time I left, I was working for Eddy’s Bakery. All the people were going out there for those defense jobs, big money. They has some kind of an air or navy at Sandpoint.

GP: Farragut?

KH: Yeah.

GP: I know that you want to leave this morning and I don’t to keep you too long, but I want to ask you first of all, was your wife a Missoula native.

KH: She was born up the Bitterroot.

GP: Up the Bitterroot?

KH: Florence.

GP: I see and she moved to Missoula to obtain work, I suppose?

KH: Well, her folks moved to Missoula and she went to grade school and everything over on the West Side there.

GP: I see. What was her maiden name?

KH: Raymer.

GP: Raymer. Well, it’s too bad that we don’t have more time this morning. It would be interesting to find out what she remembers about the Depression too.

KH: Oh, yes. I’ll tell you. I know they had a pretty rough time. There were eight children in her family. Seems like the older boys...Can you remember when you first came to Missoula? [Asks Rachel Hayes]

Rachel Hayes: I was only a year old. I was the first baby born in the Thornton Hospital.

GP: I do remember a little bit about that. I’m not sure your voice is going to record. Can you come a little closer for that? (laughs)

RH: I remember the Depression days very well. My brother and I were in high school, Missoula County High School, and my mother was so horribly embarrassed to have to go to the Welfare to get the staples, coffee and flour and such. My dad worked at Pauley’s, the lumber mill.
GP: Did he lose his job during the Depression?

RH: He did WPA work, yes he did. He went back to the mills later and there were eight of us and I know my mother got us each a sheepskin lined jacket. My brother and I thought we'd gotten mink coats that year. She said it almost brought tears to her eyes to have to go and stand in those lines because they had always been very independent and never had taken any type of help from anybody.

GP: Was the welfare office in the county building?

RH: It was on the East Main and I don't think it was the bank building it was the building just where the telephone building would possibly be now.

GP: I suppose that maybe that was a federal office at the time?

RH: I don't know really recall that it was. I think it was just something they were using to get supplies to the people.

GP: Did you ever go with her?

RH: No, I don't recall ever having to go up there.

GP: But it did help, anyhow.

RH: Oh, yes. Being city people I don't know how they would have managed. We always raised a big garden, but there still were always ten mouths to feed. I don't remember what my father earned working on the WPA, but it was probably a very minimum amount. Course, our older brothers always worked at the White Pine as long as I could remember and my oldest brother went into the automobile business and even down to my next oldest sister worked at the White Pine.

GP: Were they working, though, during the Depression?

RH: Oh, yes. They were able to keep their jobs because of their seniority probably because they started as very young employees, probably just out of high school.

GP: Were they married while they were living at home?

RH: Oh, yes, they would have been married in Depression times. I'm sure because they were born in the very early part of the century.

GP: In other words, they weren't able to help your parents out any.
RH: No, possibly not. I'm sure they were just taking care of their own families.

GP: Did you say you were in high school then during the Depression?

RH: Yes, I graduated in '37, so '33 to '37 would have been my high school years.

GP: That was a tough time to get out of high school, wasn't it?

RH: Oh, my. I guess we took any jobs that we got. In fact, I went to work for a Doctor Murphy who was an eye-ear-throat specialist and the reason he let me go to work in his office was because I needed to have surgery on my nose and I wanted it so badly as a young girl, you know, do something about it because I'd broken my nose as a grade school child and my folks had never done anything about it, so you get to high school age and you get a little vain. So he did some surgery and I was going to work my bill off for him and he kept me on, I remember I made 40 dollars a month and that was a lot of money. (laughs)

GP: It was a lot of money in 1937.

RH: It sure was. I worked quite a few years as his receptionist.

GP: Did you work after you got married?

RH: Yes, off and on. I worked during the war time when Ken went to Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, I worked in what they called the Bond Office in Tacoma where all the government bonds that were issued to the employees there in the shipyards.

GP: This was after you had moved to Seattle that you went? Yes, I see.

RH: Our littlest fellow was just a baby and I lived with his folks at that time in Puyallup while he was in the Aleutian Islands.

GP: Your folks moved out there too? Yes, I see. Did they just give up farming completely?

KH: Yeah, you might say. (laughs)

RH: It was a little ten-acre tract or something?

KH: Probably two acres or something. But there was so much free land or land that wasn't being used around where we lived; it was on the outskirts of town and when I was just a kid—this all happened when I was just a kid—I used to go around and pick up these cows. Everybody had a cow that they milked, you know, seemed like a lot of them and at times I had 40 cows that I was herding. I'd pick them up in the morning and take them out to pasture and herd them on these railroad sections that nothing was on and then I'd deliver them at night.
again. Well, I made 80 dollars a month. Two dollars a month I charged them for herding those cows. (laughs)

GP: Now where was this?

RH: In Wibaux.

KH: In Wibaux and I was about ten years old.

GP: You were wealthy!

RH: But when his folks moved to Puyallup, they did just have they favorite old team with them and they did have a little acreage.

KH: Oh, yes, yes, in Puyallup. I thought you meant in Wibaux.

GP: What I was wondering was, did they sell their farm in Wibaux and completely clear out of that area? They'd had it? They were getting too old to farm it.

RH: I think mostly because the children had all moved west and they wanted to be near the children. The children kept saying, "Why don't you come out here?"

KH: The oldest boy, he wanted them to come real bad and my sister did too.

GP: Well, we could talk for a long time. I think an important question is what brought you back to Missoula?

RH: Peace of life. (laughs) The life was killing us.

KH: When I was in Seattle I worked for these different floor companies, laying and sanding finished hardwood, and, boy, I'll tell you, the pace, like she said, was just too much for us, you know. We just wanted to be where it was a little quieter.

RH: Actually we moved three times from the state of Washington to Missoula and back out there again. Our children were all born in St. Patrick's Hospital, but in between we'd go out there and come back and our second boy was well, they were all born here.

GP: How many?

RH: Two boys and two girls, quite a span. The three oldest ones are within a radius of probably eight years, but then we had one later in life that's 14 years beyond them.

GP: But you came here before you retired, though, is that correct?
KH: I went into business here for myself. It was a flooring business, installing hardware.

RH: Then you went into business for the Champion mill.

GP: Oh, I see. In Bonner.

KH: No, it was in Frenchtown.

GP: Well, you've had a varied career. It must say something for your endurance. (laughs) You both look like you're doing fine. I might just ask both of you since you're kind enough to do this, do you think that the Depression had a lasting effect on you? Did it change you in any way?

KH: Not for anything that I can think of, but when I tell the kids things that happened in those days, they, "Yeah, Dad, yeah, Grandpa heard that story before," you know. I think at the moment I'm real grateful for what we've got and we never had the fruit and stuff like that and I just can't get enough of that. I think it really strengthened our character and made us stronger probably.

RH: I feel that is an education in itself. I have often said I wouldn't wish that our children had to go through those times, but sometimes I think it would be a very good experience for them because they don't really realize the value of a dollar—many of them. They haven't had to do without anything, and they've had so much given to them. Their fun is provided. They didn't have to make it for themselves like we did. Our entertainment needs were simple. I think we both come from very closely knit families, loving families, and today still have many family get-togethers and enjoy doing things with each other. We haven't been isolated from each other. I don't think the Depression hurt us. At the time we thought it was terrible. I can remember my next oldest brother when I celebrated my eighth grade graduation dress. My folks said no, I couldn't have a graduation dress. They couldn't afford it, and he bought it for me. They were just a young married couple. It was a pink taffeta. My folks bought me the very plainest old-style lace-type "old country" shoes. They were pointed toes and the funny heels and they made me wear them. The dress was mid-calf and those hideous old shoes were showing, and I was so embarrassed about it. They did the best they could. They loved us and raised us well. Material things aren't everything in life. When you think about it nowadays it seems so.

GP: Well, thank you very much and as long as you were kind enough to give us this information, I should get your first name,

RH: Rachel.

GP: Rachel. And what was your maiden name?

Kenneth Hayes and Rachel Hayes Interview, OH 131-054, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
RH: Raymer.

GP: I think that your husband told me once, but I wanted to be sure we had it.

RH: My folks migrated from back east here and settled in the Bitterroot Valley. That's where their earlier years in Montana were spent, around Florence.

GP: Did they come out to raise apples by any chance?

RH: No. (laughs) Dad was working on the railroad at that time. Through the strike period, I think, is how he got separated from the railroad.

GP: Well, thank you very much, both of you.

[End of Interview]