Oral History Number: 120-006e  
Interviewee: Forbes Robbins  
Interviewer: May Vallance  
Date of Interview: February 17, 1978  
Project: Bitterroot Historical Society Oral History Project

May Vallance: —that you remember about the Rye Creek School that is south of Darby.

Forbes Robbins: Well, when I first started to school, it was in a log building, the first grade. In the first and second grade and then they started building the new one and we went into that. I finished there, eighth grade.

MV: Did you have to get the state examinations?

FB: Well I took the examination, part of it, in Darby, but I never did finish all the eighth grade examination. After we moved into the new school, why, I believe I was in fourth or fifth grade and had a man teacher. He would line us up outside and have us march in. On this particular time, I got on the back end of them, and just as I started to walk I give them a shove, and a lot of them fell down. When I stepped inside the door, why, the man teacher grabbed me and put me over his knee and gave me a spanking with his hand. [laughs] So I always remembered that part of it.

MV: I don’t suppose you did any shoving then.

FB: No, that put an end to the shoving.

MV: How many were in your family?

FB: There was three of us boys and one sister.

MV: Who are some of the others that went to school there?

FB: Well, there was Raus (?) girls, and there was the Wards, some of the Wards, and McKinneys. Shook, Paul Shook. I don’t know, that just about takes care of it, I guess. As I remember.

MV: Did the Ward family live up there? I thought they were down—

FB: They lived right at Rye Creek there, in that big house there. When we first came up there, they lived on the west side of the river and then they bought this place on the east side, and they built a new house there and lived there. That’s where they were when they went to the school up there.
MV: Who were some of the other neighbors? When did your folks come and from where did they come?

FB: Well, my dad came from Minnesota. His dad had run a store there in Minnesota, and they moved out here and dad bought this ranch up south of Darby there, and that's where I was born and raised.

MV: About when did they come to the valley?

FB: That must have been in 1800s, somewhere along in there. Because I was born in 1899, and they had the place there at that time.

MV: Can you remember of any other incidences? Did your father just farm or did he log?

FB: He farmed and he'd done some logging. Then he freighted it into the Big Hole. There was some time there, him and Jim Blanche ran a pot train into Gibbonsville there when there when we was mining in there. There was no road in at that time, so they used pack horses to pack in supplies.

MV: Yes, and that was over the old Gibbons Pass.

FB: Yes.

MV: I remember the Kennys went about 1911 or '12, and when they came back over the pass, they said they had to cut down some trees to hold the wagon back, it was so steep.

FB: Yes, that's what we used to do. He'd tie a tree on the back of the wagon to hold it back. When we used a wagon. Oh yes, and the Thornings, they went to school there, too, at Rye Creek.

MV: You remember any of your teachers you had, other than this one man?

FB: Well, there was... Oh gosh, I can't recall their names right now, but they were all women teachers except this one time we had this man teacher and he was getting quite along in years. He had a long, gray beard. I remember that, too.

MV: It wasn't Mr. Wright, though.

FB: No.

MV: No. I guess he didn't teach at the Rye Creek School, but he taught there at Conner. Then he taught up the West Fork, too. Well, I certainly appreciate your cooperation.
FB: If it’ll do you any good, well, ok.

MV: Well, it’s one of those things.

FB: Yes.

MV: This concludes Forbes Robbins’ report on the Rye Creek School.

[End of Interview]