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Summer 2000
Juliet Gregory: In our ramblings in my two years in the city hall, the accomplishments have not been enumerated, so let's list some of them. First my term was from May 1947 until May 1949. In the police department, they were given various FBI courses. The Canadian National Police gave two evenings to show all phases of their vast training. Other professional sources gave identification and other courses. I sent one man to the National Traffic School in Illinois for three months, and when he returned he gave his training to the Missoula Department, thus upgrading his fellow officers in that subject. The first two motorcycles and the traffic lights were purchased and installed. The first electric traffic signs were placed in the business area. Left-hand turn signs were placed there also, and the first one-way streets were designated, as well as the alleys in the business section. I asked (unintelligible) of the University [of Montana] Law School to consider and place a course of training for police and plan a course of training for police judges. He did it, and the sheriff’s department as well as the police departments of western Montana were invited to join in. About 20 men attended. I also required that the men on duty read a volume of criminology instead of the *Police Gazette* or *Jim Jam Jems*, which was always found on the desk. They didn’t like to do it, but they found they learned a lot, which they didn’t want to admit. I later on found that they were glad to have had this opportunity of a volume which they would never have picked up voluntarily.

We had arc lights on every other corner, so I got the Montana Power Company to give us a light on every corner at no additional expense. Thus, we doubled the arc lights in Missoula for a better safety measure throughout the city. The fire department obtained a fire engine, which also had a lantern hose equipment. That was bought and put into service in my term.

It was found that the outgoing engineer had entirely robbed the office of all city equipment. A year later an incoming engineer brought with him a transit upon which was a number of the 1930 or prior inventory. He said he had bought it from the outgoing engineer. This office equipment was ancient anyway, so it had to be equipped with the most modern tools that we could afford.

Then in the Park Department—I was first to request and obtain a recreational director for the parks. He was hired, and this program of recreation director still is used in all our parks. We persuaded the association of recreation and park directors to come to Missoula for their western state convention. We benefited by their programs and their ideas at no cost to us, and thus we trained the people on the parks at that convention.
Now as to the band. The city band, of course, comes under the Park and Recreation. It played, usually, in concerts in the bandstand on Pine Street on the courthouse block. We started to have youth problems at that time, so I asked them to play once or twice weekly—after the weekly concert—dance music for our young people or for anyone who cared to dance. We prepared the street for dancers. The band refused saying they could not play dance music. I said, “Any group of union musicians that can’t play two-four, three-four, four-four music aren’t musicians, so play it or quit.” They played after a week’s fuss. The public was behind me. Two citizens offered each 500 dollars to use for this—if the band didn’t come through. Huge crowds danced for two years there on Pine Street. They had a sum of between 2,000 dollars and 2,500 dollars yearly included in the city budget for their use. That was there before I came in.

Sewers were another problem. Many years before my time the WPA started a sewer district on the Northside of 420 lots, which had never been completed nor assessment spread and in general it was marked abandoned. Now the WPA is the Works Progress Administration. It was a make-work job in World War Two time. Some 20 or so of the members of that district had met and decided to ask me to try to complete it. I found that 27 families were connected and using it, paying nothing. The only thing to do after further investigation was to complete it and spread the assessment to all lots. That was a task. The contractor who got the job was difficult. I knew I had a bear by the tail. I’m glad to report that I conquered him. It was tough going in so many ways. The Northsiders were much happier.

I campaigned for a city-owned garbage system, for a city-owned garbage system. If properly handled, I knew there was money in it. I couldn’t get this city ownership over, but I did get zoning for the city for better collection at a savings to the collectors and with cooperation of the private owner-collectors for a better clean-up throughout the city, and since then the same system is being used. It’s zoned for the collectors.

Now as to the cemetery. We had a chance to purchase ten acres north and adjoining the Missoula City Cemetery very cheap, and that was done. I also purchased for taxes a five-acre tract and school addition as a site for a city shop building for 250 dollars. In those days, that was the price. It has since been sold but never used by the city. Two hundred and fifty dollars was the delinquency price for tax delinquency. I obtained for 500 dollars...excuse me. Stop here. I obtained for 500 dollars ...It was five dollars, so we’ll add that on the next tape. Making five or ten minute weekly reports back to their club meeting. This was the most important thing of lasting effect for the good of our community. It interested intelligent people to desire to become members of city boards and commissions and taught civics and civic interest to a hungry lot of citizens who wanted to be of help and to understand local government. The town has never quite been the same. It was enlivened to this day by this accomplishment and invitation from a public officer and servant to attend these public meetings by the taxpayer.

[End of Side A]
JG: Land for the city. I obtained for five dollars a yearly lease for many acres of land in the upper Rattlesnake above the gates on the northeast side from the U.S. Forest Service. It was an old burn. It was an old burn that had saplings of ten to 15 inches high...feet high, excuse me. I thought it would, in the future, make an excellent park site for many of our townspeople who couldn’t afford to go far afield for vacations. My successor deemed it an unnecessary extravagance and let the lease expire, and the Montana Power obtained it from the U.S. Forest Service. With the rate of growth of reforestation, it’s a beautiful place now. If one has no imagination or foresight, such things happen unnecessarily to a town. It’s in the area presently being discussed as a valuable area for recreational purpose, which the city could still have been the owner. Interesting the public and the taxpayer in his city government was probably the most lasting and successful thing I did.

I invited all types of organizations in the city to send one or two of their representatives to come to the 10:00 a.m. Monday council meeting for a six-week period. They were to take five or ten minutes to report back to their organization. I stated six weeks as the minimum time for the ordinance to go through, and they need at least that time to see the progress on a civil or legal act. This raised great interest in city government and appealed to all. Many intelligent people were interested in being on boards and commission members. They offered their services, and it was well appreciated. People were really hungry to know how the city government worked. It has enlivened city and county interest in government to this day. For a public servant to realize that the taxpaying public was her boss was a new thing and to invite them to come in and be a part and question was new. We all realized that few knew government, so we all learned together. These things were accomplished in two years by a novice. Not such a bad record, is it?

I only had two councilmen on the council. One a safety and public commissioner, which included the police and fire departments, and the other in charge of the engineer’s office—parks, streets, and alleys. The first year I found it inadvisable to turn the police and fire department over to that councilman, so I headed them myself and named the chiefs for each department. So I had my hands full with the management of both those departments—the treasurer, the clerk, legal records, and great general supervision of the whole city business.

One of the councilmen couldn’t read, and the other wouldn’t and didn’t like women. To protect myself and them, as well as the city, I had to have everything that came in and went out duplicated so all had copies, and no one could say he didn’t know what was going on. It cost a little more, but it was necessary. As to the salaries and duties of the city officers at that time, which was ’47 to ’49, the mayor received 300 dollars a month. No car, no fringe benefits. I drove my own car and paid all my expenses, unless I took a rare trip, then on mileage and actual expenses. The two councilmen each received 285 dollars a month with no cars and no expense accounts. The treasurer had a deputy. The city clerk had the same deputy. The city attorney had the same deputy for certain work, and the attorney used his own private office.

Juliet Gregory Interview, OH 049-048, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
He had no office in the city hall. The mayor’s secretary was that same deputy that was used by treasurer, the city clerk, and the attorney. We had a health department shared with county and the city hall—a doctor, a nurse, a stenographer—and shared nurses with the county. I think there were two nurses at that time. There was a health board of five members, and it was also city-county.

We annexed property as far south as Kent from Evans Avenue, I believe. It was the Sentinel Additions 1 and 2 east of Higgins. The street project was to get Higgins Avenue, then brick paving, north of Broadway from the Depot to Brooks Street and Broadway from Van Buren to Russell paved. I was able to get all of the designs, specifications, and bids put together with the State Highway Department’s cooperation. I had signed everything for the city, and it was already to go. I went out of office in the morning at 10:30 a.m. The groundbreaking ribbon was cut at the north end of the Higgins Avenue bridge at 2:00 p.m. by my successor, the new mayor, who took all of the credit and had absolutely nothing to do with it but use of the scissors. I wasn’t even invited to attend. That’s politics.

I was awarded...rewarded, pardon me...I was rewarded by knowing that the public had received what they had wanted for so long, the enjoyment of a smooth new city to use for many...smooth new streets to use for many years.

[End of Interview]