

Oral History Number: 211-007
Interviewee: Bessie Marie Hannon
Interviewer: Gladys Peterson
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Gladys Peterson: —Hannon. The date is June 27, 1988, and we are sitting in Bessie's dining room near Darby, Montana. Bessie, it's a pleasure to meet you, and I've been told that since you are a native of this area—I assume you are a native of this area—that you have a lot to say about the history of this area. So I'm just going to start at the beginning, and we'll make this as brief as possible.

Were your parents' pioneers in this area? Or did their parents come first or what?

Bessie Hannon: They came, and my father came in the fall of 1891 and my mother brought five children and came in the spring of 1892.

GP: Okay, let's start with your father first. Where did he come from?

BH: Well, they came directly from Oklahoma, but they were originally from Illinois and Kansas. My mother was born in Clayton, Illinois, and my father in Kansas, in...I can't remember the name of the place—

GP: That's all right.

BH: They were married in Fort Scott, Kansas.

GP: I see, now you said your father—

BH: [unintelligible] County.

GP: Your father came in before your mother, and she brought the children. Now, were they his children, or was she—

BH: Yes.

GP: Oh, so she waited—

BH: People had no money then and back there, and the men, many of them did this. They would come out West and earn money, and send back for their families. So many of the older people, families, came that way.

GP: So he came in about 1891, you said. Did he come directly to this area?

BH: To Grantsdale.

GP: Grantsdale. Well, that's this area, all right, isn't it? Why Grantsdale?

BH: Well, that was the end of the railroad at that time. And he came there to get work. I don't think he knew anyone there—he may have. But he worked there then and sent money for her to come with the children on the train. [unintelligible]

GP: Did he have any idea what was going on at Grantsdale?

BH: No, except they knew there was work and there was a living—they could live. Way back there they were, it was hard to raise gardens or anything—raise anything—because of the heat and lack of water.

GP: So he had heard that probably that this was a good area to farm.

BH: Yes.

GP: And so what did he do? Did he buy land or homestead or what?

BH: He bought a preemption in 1895, up on Chaffin Creek, about a mile from the West Fork Highway now. Up Chaffin Creek. He developed, what later became, the Twin Springs Dairy Ranch. They had a ranch. They lived in Grantsdale, three years and—

GP: And he worked. First of all, I suppose he had to save up money to buy what he bought.

BH: Yes, I don't know just about this preemption. Someone else would pick up a claim and not prove up on it and then someone would go buy that, and that's what they did and proved up on that.

GP: Oh, that is what a preemption is then. I see. So he was able, fortunate to get a piece of land that was useful.

BH: I think they paid 35 dollars. [laughs] I believe that what it was.

GP: Do you have any idea how big it was?

BH: It was 120 acres, I believe. He had to buy some more later—30 acres more. But I do not know for sure that, but I think in all, they had 160 acres on the home place.

GP: And then your mother later came out with the five children?

BH: In the spring of '92.

GP Spring of '92. Let's see, you weren't born yet, were you?

BH: No, no.

GP: How many children did she have all together?

BH: She had ten that lived. One of my brothers, a little boy was drowned in the RVI ditch down there at Grantsdale—it went through the yard. Then a just few weeks later, she had another little girl, so she had then five children when she came. Then they went up to the ranch, and then there was four more of us born there [unintelligible] on Chaffin Creek.

GP: Well, that's quite a story; she must have been a strong woman.

BH: Pioneer, that's for sure.

GP: A real pioneer. So do you have some childhood memories of growing up there at Chaffin Creek?

BH: Oh my, yes. [laughs] A large family of us, there was nine of us. My older sister was married and had two children before my youngest sister was born. We all grew up there on the ranch on Chaffin Creek. It was farming area. We had a lovely home, as soon they were able to make it. This is a picture of my home, there, after many years later.

GP: Yeah, we'll take a look at it, yeah.

Was it fruit farming, mostly?

BH: We had fruit of every kind that we could raise. We had three orchards, any kind of fruit would grow in this upper valley we had. We had strawberries at one time, and we had ten acres of strawberries and marketed those. And we had...Alfalfa, was the main hay crop, because having the dairy [unintelligible]. We had some alfalfa, some Timothy [grass], but mostly alfalfa. Always some green for the chickens.

GP: Did all you children do a lot of the work on the farm?

BH: Oh, yes. We all worked on the farm.

GP: Now, do I remember that you said your father had a creamery later?

BH: No, a dairy.

GP: A dairy.

BH: A dairy.

GP: A dairy. And so, who bought his milk?

BH: Well, we churned butter for many, many years. We separated the cream and churned butter and sold that. We'd usually churn about 120 pounds of butter a week and deliver it to town. Finally, later on, they started selling the cream as it was, because it became too much for me to churn and I was the oldest one at home at that time. So they sold the cream for a while and then milk—the whole milk—picked up the last few years.

GP: So you must have been the sixth child then, right?

BH: No, I am the ninth one.

GP: Oh the ninth. Oh, I see.

BH: Nine of us lived [unintelligible].

GP: I see, yeah, okay. So, where did you go to school then, elementary school?

BH: Baldwin School (?). I don't know whether Agnes¹ would of [unintelligible] or not.

GP: She mentioned that.

BH: In that little cove, just the side of her—

GP: She pointed that out on the highway, where the school was.

BH: The school used to stand in there. Later, about 19...I think maybe '21 or '2, I'm not sure the date, the school, the district consolidated with Darby. But before that...well in 1915, they built a new schoolhouse, up on the hill of West Fork about, oh, a mile, I guess, up above Chaffin Creek up West Fork. They built a new two-room school up there. Then we abandoned the old Baldwin School, and that became a residence.

GP: Did you go to high school in Darby then?

BH: I went to Mount Ellis Academy to school.

GP: Where is that or was that—

¹ Referring to Agnes E. Cooper, who was also interviewed for the Montana Educators Oral History Project (oral history interview OH 211-008).

BH: In Bozeman.

GP: Oh, in Bozeman, Mount Ellis Academy. Your parents must have had a reason for sending you there.

BH: Yes, my mother was Adventist, and that is Adventist school.

GP: I see, is it still there?

BH: Yes. It's quite a large school now.

GP: Now, you graduated from high school there then.

BH: No, I had to quit. I became ill. I was taking a business course, and I became ill and had to leave. I got a heart condition and I was not able to. It is a little higher elevation, and I had to climb so many steps, so I didn't graduate there.

GP: Well you've certainly lived to a very decent age, so you overcame the condition?

BH: Yes, it was leakage of the heart, and the doctors could never find it. After this one old German doctor picked it up, he said that's what it was—I got so weak. He said that's what I had. Well, the doctors all through the years said no, there was no indication of it. But there was indication that I had rheumatic fever, and of course, that often happens. But three years ago, I had open-heart surgery in California, and they found the leaky valve. I'd had it all those years. But they had never been able to find it otherwise. I don't know why.

GP: Well, that's right, Agnes said you had a quadruple bypass?

BH: Five, five, five

GP: That must have been something.

BH: It was. At this time, I was in the hospital in San Diego, California. Spent 29 days.

GP: Well, did you have a lengthy recuperation from that?

BH: Well, quite. I stayed with my daughter there three months. I went down to see my granddaughter graduate, and I went to the hospital instead. So they taped it for me, so I got to see it, but I missed the exercise.

GP: I see. Well, let's get back to what you did after you left the academy then. You came home—

BH: Well, I came along home; I wasn't able to go back to school then, quite a while. So I stayed at home and I took a home-dressmaking course. I did that and stayed home for quite a while before I went to work anymore. And—

GP: Where did you go to work then?

BH: I went to work in Missoula then later.

GP: And you lived in Missoula?

BH: In a confectionary store. I lived there for a while before I was married. I was assistant dietitian in the hospital for a year. Then I worked at a confectionary store for a while, and then I was married after that.

GP: I see. And you married Agnes Cooper's brother, right? And both of you were from this area, and so then you came back to this area.

BH: We grew up a mile apart. [laughs] Well, he was a forest ranger at the West Fork Ranger Station when we were married.

GP: And so, you lived there?

BH: We lived there three years and then he went back to school in Bozeman. He had gone to school—college there—but didn't finish. He was taking electrical engineering, and engineers were not being placed. It was during the Depression. So he quit, and he came home and we farmed for three and half years. Then he went back to the Forest Service. He spent first up until, he was 56, he worked for the Forest Service in timber management. But 15 months off, he would go up to Alaska with the Army Engineers during the Second World War. Then he came back and went into timber management. But he hurt his back and couldn't stay with that, and he went back to school and got his degree in education in Missoula.

GP: How old was he when starting teaching?

BH: Fifty-seven. [pauses] Fifty-six.

GP: Well, that's quite a story, isn't it? And did you say he taught four years?

BH: Taught four years, but he had a hearing problem and he thought...The girls, the little girls, he couldn't hear their voices. He thought he was not doing justice to them.

GP: Where was he teaching?

BH: Well, he taught in White Sulfur Springs a year and here in Darby, three. Then he was appointed to the county's superintendent's office for four years.

GP: Oh yes, Agnes told me about that. Then he gave that up too?

BH: Yes, well, he retired at 65.

GP: I see. Well then, you stayed home, and you raised your family. You had a daughter. Did you have any other children?

BH: A daughter and a son. My daughter lives right down there. She's a nurse.

GP: I see. What about, who's in San Diego, your son?

BH: My daughter was there.

GP: Oh, I see, she moved back.

BH: I would go down to visit her. I had two heart attacks down there. Then two years ago this fall, they moved back here and I gave them a piece of property, and they put a trailer house in and built on it. My son is in Tucson.

GP: That's a quite a story. Let me back up, and I'm going to make this as brief as possible. What do you remember about the Depression? How did the Depression affect your life?

BH: Well, I guess, the same as everybody. We just did not have anything. You did well to eat—families did. We always were where we could have food to eat. But a lot of the people in the eastern part of the state and all around came into Darby, because they couldn't raise a garden or anything.

GP: They moved out this way.

BH: Out this way, yes. We had a garden in Bozeman when we lived there. We lived there three and half years, and we had a garden always. We came to the ranch, we always had a garden. But you didn't see any money; you didn't know what money was. I sold eggs for 6 cents a dozen, dishpans of them to a...A truck came by our door with groceries. We didn't have a car, we didn't have gasoline and money to buy it. So this truck would go by the door, up the road, with groceries. I used to take dishpans of eggs out and sell them—trade them for 6 cents a dozen for groceries.

GP: Were you able to sell other farm products though?

BH: Well, just barely. Mostly just traded them in—the men traded them for work on the farm a great deal. On that farm, it was a large farm, and it didn't produce too well and they had cattle, had cows. The milk got down to 13 cents, butter fat. I had one milk chip (?) for 13 cents. This is just how the way it was, we ate, but that was all. You know, you just existed pretty much. You had to manage well to do that. But we were much better off than a lot of people, because we were where we could.

GP: Are there any other things about the Depression that you'd like to mention?

BH: Well the awful...a lot of people, who didn't have even food, didn't have anything. My husband worked for the express in Bozeman, and I used to go down in the evening, when it was about time for him to come home—walk back with him—and we'd watch the freight trains come through. They were just miserably covered with people traveling, trying to find work—men. The railroad company kept at least one clean car—clean straw in a boxcar—for these people to ride free, and they would not put them off. If it was bad weather and they got off in towns, they took them into the jails to keep them warm and feed them. We had someone at our door asking for food, I think, every day at least one or two in Bozeman. They would come, and we never turned anyone away. One night I was down there and a break from the big freight train came in and the fellows got off and they were just coming thick to go to another car, I guess. The brake-man came up and hollered at them. He said, "This car or out!" He said, "No "bos" [hobos?]. There's clean straw and no "bos" ride in a dirty car on my train." I thought that was really something.

GP: That was really something all right.

BH: They could go in there and keep from freezing, and I suppose they would have something to eat.

GP: Was this about mid-'30s?

BH: This was in '30 and '31.

GP: '30 and '31, just almost at the beginning of the Depression.

BH: Just about as deep as it could get. It got worse in places, but in this area that's about as...about the depth.

GP: But people around here, at least in Hamilton and Darby area, were able to exist.

BH: The Bitterroot, the whole Bitterroot. People came from Eastern Montana and the Dakotas and just filled up this valley, because they could raise a garden and there were orchards. We have fruit here and berries. People could eat, and they could go out and kill a deer in season and that helped. Where, back then, they just didn't have anything. I knew whole families that

came—just loaded the children. One family, the man said that he just loaded the family in the wagon and came west. He left that farm, [unintelligible], and later we found out it was one of the richest farms in Eastern Montana after the Depression.

GP: Well, you do what you think is right anyhow, and you can't regret those things.

BH: That's the best thing you can do.

GP: Sure. Do you remember of that people remained in the Bitterroot Valley then?

BH: A great many of them did, yes. A lot of people in Darby came here at that time. Some of them, of course, would go on—the young people, especially. We don't have too much work here for young people anymore and they'd go elsewhere [unintelligible].

GP: Before I forget it, Bessie, what was your maiden name?

BH: Greenup.

GP: Greenup.

BH: Ben and Marry Greenup were my parents.

GP: Just for the record, what was your mother's maiden name?

BH: Laws. She was Mary Laws.

GP: Did any of her relatives come out here?

BH: Her brother—her oldest brother came. He lived at Corvallis and raised his family. He came probably three or four years after the folks came. They were well settled on Chaffin Creek before he came into the Corvallis area.

GP: Did they stay in this area—

BH: Yes, yes, they stayed. Well, they're all gone now except for the second generation.

GP: But his second generation is here—

BH: His family are all gone. But there his family—his son's children—are still living. One boy in Hamilton.

GP: Well, let's see now, how many children did you say you had?

BH: Two.

GP: Two. Then you stayed home and you helped wherever you were living—you helped and raised your family.

BH: Yes. Well, I worked quite a lot. I worked at the school in the lunchroom, and I worked various places. I sold insurance, I did sewing—

GP: Was that unusual for a woman to be selling insurance in those days?

BH: No. Well, I don't think so. It's not now. I don't know [unintelligible].

GP: [talking at the same time] It certainly isn't now.

BH: But I did sell insurance.

GP: Was it a pretty good line to be in?

BH: Well, it was a new insurance for elderly people. I can't think of the name....Bitterroot Benevolent and this was Ravalli... [pause] Protective Society for older people, and it was just a burial insurance. You know what I mean? They're not very large, but it was enough to cover funeral expenses—

GP: Sure. Did you spend a lot of time doing that?

BH: Yes. Yes, I did. I didn't even have a car of the most time. I walked.

GP: Is that right? Did you go up and down the side roads, or call on people you knew?

BH: Well, just in the area where I could walk and through town. I worked in town—

GP: In Darby, you mean?

BH: And up the road as far as I could walk.

GP: I see. But it is supplemented your income some.

BH: Yes, it did.

GP: Did World War Two have any effect on your life?

BH: Well, a great deal. I lost my husband for 14 months to it. He went to Alaska.

GP: To work?

BH: With the Army Engineers.

GP: Oh, he was in the Army Engineers Corps.

BH: He left the last day of '41, and he came back the 23rd of February.

GP: Did he enlist?

BH: No. No, this was the engineers. They built barracks and gun mounts and everything, but they weren't soldiers. He was too old for that then. He was 42 years old.

GP: I see. But that must have been quite an experience for him?

BH: It was. I don't think he hardly saw a day that it didn't rain there during the time he was out. He was at Seward [Alaska].

GP: Did he make pretty good money doing that?

BH: Yes, very good at that time. It was fabulous.

GP: Did you have to kind of take over?

BH: I had to do everything here. He couldn't even correspond, to give us his address of his APO [Army Post Office]. No telephone, of course, or anything then.

GP: Were you living here on this property?

BH: Yes, we'd just got the house so we could move in it. Our inside doors were then our outside doors, and we had subflooring and subsiding outside. But it was possible living. We were quite comfortable. But didn't have electricity until after the war, it was built.

GP: Well, when he came back, how did that change your life? Did he continue farming, or what did he do?

BH: No, he went back to the Forest Service. He had been working with the Forest Service. He just took absence, leave of absence, to go with the engineers because he was a carpenter and he was needed. He worked steadily every day. He had one half day off in that time—the 14 months. He was shipwrecked going up. They went on the Yukon, and it went on a rock at...I can't think of the name...in Prince Rupert. Prince Rupert. And they were there five days as guests of the Canadian government. Everything was black out, they couldn't see at all, you

know, and they hit this big rock. Then they were put on a little fishing boat, and set afloat, and they almost drowned. Eight-hour trip that took 22.

GP: Well, it must have been a rough life for him to be up there.

BH: It was really a miracle he got back.

GP: Well, we'll move along. Maybe I could just ask you, Bessie, what are some of the most important things that you remember about your life here in Darby?

BH: Doing things you mean?

GP: Yes, things that happened in your life or events in the community. What are some things that stand out in your mind?

BH: I was chairman of a well-child clinic—that I always felt that was one of the most useful things I have ever done, for 22 years. We put every child, but one family that I ever knew of, in this community through the clinic. When they were babies and then again when they were just before starting school, pre-school round up.

GP: That was in Darby?

BH: That was in Darby. We held it at the clubhouse in Darby. The nurse always came up from Hamilton and a doctor once a month.

GP: You were chairman of that—

BH: I was chairman of that for 22 years.

GP: Twenty-two years. Well, that was certainly was a wonderful community service.

BH: It was. Well, I had lots of help, but people were...The people in this community are the most wonderful you could imagine to help. I never have asked anybody to do anything on the committee, and I've had, chaired some pretty big committees. I've never asked anyone to help who didn't gladly help.

GP: What other committees have you been involved with?

BH: Well, the flag...our flag and... service flag and plaque committee—we raised money to buy a plaque with the names of all our boys on and a flag. They now are in the clubhouse down here.

GP: World War Two?

BH: World War Two.

GP: Veterans?

GP: Veterans. That was a pretty big committee; I had ten people on that. Of course, I've always had a lot of committees in the church. I belong to the First Baptist Church. I've had a lot of committees there, a lot of work. I belonged to committees on the PTA, chairman of the program committee and different ones, that sort of thing. Those are what I feel is important, because it's family and community life. Of course, I wasn't a career woman, I didn't teach school or anything like that.

GP: Your role was more traditional, but you certainly were very active in—

BH: Yes, I had an active role. I taught Sunday school 31 years. [laughs] I always felt that was an accomplishment too.

GP: Yes. Well, are there some other things that stand out in your mind that you would like to add? About your life in this community, or about your husband's life and career?

BH: Well, he was very active in all the things...in the Forest Service and in the school and in the county. When he was county superintendent, he was very active in that. He didn't do as much social work as I did,—doing things of that sort—but where his work was concerned, he was very active, very well-liked. He was a Boy Scout leader and a...

[long pause]

GP: Well, all of this is very useful information. Is there anymore you'd like to add about your parents? Their lives here?

BH: Well, they were very active, community-minded people too. My mother, she was an Adventist, as I said, but she always said every child should go to church and if they wouldn't go to her church, they should have one. So she would organize Sunday schools and keep them going until someone else could take over and run them. She was very active in that sort of thing, and there was never a time where they could not make room for anyone who needed help. One time I can remember, a boy died, and [his] family were having a difficult time financially. The boy died, and they took the whole family out and kept them for a month. Another time, a man was dying of tuberculosis, and he had quite a large family. They took them up and put up the tent for him in the yard, because of the disease, and we kept the children in the house with us. I don't know how long, more than a month—it was probably two months—until the man was there dead. Just this sort of thing, they were always doing things, community things, things for people in the community, [unintelligible]—

GP: One thing I didn't ask you, is you must remember World War One. Was the flu predominant in your family or around you?

BH: Just my brother and I had it. We were the only ones in our family.

GP: Your mother and father didn't get it or the rest of—

BH: My father died in 1914.

GP: Oh, I see, that's right.

BH: The flu was 1918. My brother and I were very sick, but the rest of the family did not have it. None of them had it, except people all around us had it. We had so many deaths, so many families lost someone. Our church was a morgue at one time. We had seven bodies in there, because it was hard to get to Hamilton and people couldn't afford it either. So they laid out there in the church. But there were so many families that stricken with grief, one death at least.

GP: What about your own children, now? They went to school here in the Darby area?

BH: Yes. They graduated, Anne graduated in 1950 from high school and Gary in 1957. They're seven years apart. Anne went to, she took her nurses training in Great Falls, but she went to college—she took the degree course—she went to college in Bozeman and then went to Great Falls for her training and then back to Bozeman. She graduated in Great Falls. A number of years later, she got sick a short while before she should of graduated. She didn't go back again for 19 years and four kids later. [laughs]. But she went back and her husband went to school in Great Falls and graduated from the College of Great Falls. My son graduated in Dillon. He went to Bozeman for a year and half, then he went to Dillon.

GP: What is your son doing?

BH: He is working for charter air-services, Sierra Vista (?) in Tucson. They charter planes...Fires, they always have planes on the fires, flying fighters and retardant and supplies and everything on the fires and all over the United States. It's a charter service and everything else.

GP: Well, you must be very happy that your daughter is living back in Montana.

BH: Oh I am. I'm so glad she came home.

GP: Does she do any nursing at all?

BH: Yes, she works for the home healthcare in Hamilton. She isn't in the hospital anymore; she didn't like that. But she is a visiting nurse, you know, where she goes all over the valley and she—

[Break in audio]

GP: How would you compare life in this valley today with what it was when you were younger? Has it changed much?

BH: [laughs] Oh my, when I was girl?

GP: Yes.

BH: I should say. When we went anywhere we went in a horse and buggy until I was 12. There were few cars around but not very many. In 1910, my oldest brother had spotted fever, and there was one car in the valley and they were in Hamilton and they came up. He had to go to Corvallis to a doctor who knew how to take care of it, and this one car came and got him, took him to Corvallis. But the folks were going to take him packed in ice in the wagon. That's all we had, a wagon, you know, or the buggy, and he couldn't sit up. We had to carry him. He couldn't sit up, he had to lie down. But we could go horseback in the buggy, but that's all [unintelligible]. I was 23 years old when we got our first car. But there weren't many cars in the valley—very few as I grew up. There were maybe...I think a man in Darby got about the second one in the valley, and Mr. Vorill (?), and then I don't remember who had the next...Dr. Haver (?), maybe. A doctor, a young doctor came in, and he had a car. But there weren't many. We just went in horse and buggy or walked or rode horseback.

GP: Do you think it's better now than it used to be, living in the valley?

BH: Easier. Easier, but I don't think it's better. I think we had just as much fun as they do now. In fact, I think the young people had a lot more. You didn't hear anyone say, "I'm so bored. I don't know what to do." You do hear that now, when children, they have everything and they get bored.

GP: That's true.

BH: I think that's one of the ugliest words in the dictionary.

GP: I agree. It's too bad that anybody has to be bored, when there's so much they could be doing.

BH: I never knew what it was to be bored. I don't to this day. But when I was younger, oh, I had few friends living in town here, who, once in a while, I'd hear them say they were bored. I used to think, gee, wish I could be bored, I don't know how.

GP: I don't either.

BH: But this was the [unintelligible], and I think that so much now, because I really thought it must be sophisticated to be bored. But I didn't know how to be. Now, I feel sorry for anyone who's bored. I want to hand them something to work with.

GP: Yes.

Just for the record, now, you said you born in May?

BH: May 17.

GP: May 17, 1901. So you can speak to authority on how on this valley has changed and what it was like then and what it's like now. Is there anything else you'd like to add, Bessie?

BH: Well, I don't know. I could add a lot, but I don't know whether it'd be anything... [laughs] I don't whether I—

GP: Just a few comments you'd like to make before—

BH: Maybe something about the Forest Service, my husband's career.

GP: Sure.

BH: He was ranger at West Fork, and at that time, we had the mail twice a week. I guess maybe it goes more than that now, I don't know. But in the wintertime, if the road was closed, they didn't keep it open. The county didn't keep it open.

GP: [speaking at the same time] No telephone?

BH: Yes, we had a telephone. He always had to have a telephone for his work. But the neighbors could not have a telephone in the summer. They could have it in the winter. We had very few close neighbors. The nearest was a half mile and we had another one a mile and half, and that's all the people that were anywhere near West Fork Station at that time. Now, it looks like a city when you go up there in car.

GP: Does it?

BH: Houses everywhere. And these mercury lights, you go at night, there's lights everywhere. But at that time at a eleven [unintelligible], or counter cut-off, there was only one light between here and West Fork, West Fork Station. We rode over the district. He rode horseback all over the district. He had a car, of course, a truck, but he couldn't ride back in the backcountry. Now, they can [unintelligible].

GP: [talking at the same time] What years would this have been?

BH: It was in '27. We were married in '27. Wait... '26, no, '27. We were married on November 26, 1927. But at that time, there were just trails out in the hills. He had to go to snow stake every six weeks. He had to go out there with skis. He could drive a few miles, then he had to go with skis. Now, they drive back. I don't know if they go to snow stake but that was measurement—the measure of the snow. But when we rode over the district, I went with him quite a lot, but we had to go horseback everywhere—all over the district. The ranger's wife cooked for the men. Now, they have a cookhouse and a cook out there, and they have about six houses where we had one. There's such a difference and that sort of thing. It just doesn't seem like the same country.

GP: It's easier now.

BH: Yeah, that part is sure easy.

GP: Anything else you'd like to add?

BH: One time we came down, when the ice [unintelligible]—this is just a little throw-in—was drifted in, and we had to come with a team and a sleigh, because he had to be down for a Forest Service meeting—district meeting—in Hamilton on New Year's Day. So we started down on horses, and we go on the [unintelligible] grade, and it was drifted to here and we couldn't get through with the horses. So he left me with one horse—holding one horse—and he went back to the station to get a shovel to shovel us out. Well, he came and shoveled enough so the horses could just lunge and get out. We came on down and an hour after we...He came back, and he was just white. He said, "I thought that hill would might go in and slide. The snow slides go into the river, and you would have gone." But one hour after we went over, the whole hill went into the river right where I stood. So this was one of the thrills. [unintelligible].

GP: Yes, that is something you're not going to forget.

BH: No.

GP: Where were your children at the time?

BH: We didn't have any children. That was when we were first married.

GP: I see. Well, that is certainly an interesting story, and I wish we had more time, because I know there are more stories like that that you could probably tell. But I'm just going to thank you, Bessie, and get on home.

BH: Well, thank you very much. I hope you won't—

[End of Interview]