

Oral History 244-6

Hazel Marsh Collection

Interviewee: Hazel Marsh

Interviewer: Jim Scott

January 23, 1990

Side one

Jim Scott: This is January 23, 1990. Hazel and I are resuming the recording of the history of Bearmouth. This is tape number six side A and I will let Hazel announce what the topic for this evening is.

Hazel Marsh: Well, I thought this was a good time to correct some of the misconceptions and some of the literature that's been written about Bearmouth. The Bearmouth Hotel or the Lannen house was never the stage station. The Lannens came there in 1865 and operated a ferry. They called it a ferry. It was some means of getting across the river, whatever it was. They lived in that cabin up on the little raise that is to the left of the dredge tailings as you see it now. Then in 1879, they built the big house across the river to the south as a dwelling. It was a colonial type and a very extravagant looking home at that time. But when the Northern Pacific Railroad was put through the Lannens moved some of their farm or ranch corrals and barns and one thing and another back up on the hill to make room for the railroad. Later, when the activity increased because of the development of Garnet mines, there were people coming in and going out on the railroad and there was no place for them to stay. So, the Lannens enlarged their dwelling and after that it was known as the Bearmouth Hotel. Now, you can ask your questions.

JS: Okay, well, we thought this particular evening we would talk about what I know as the stage station up on the Mullan Trail. I guess it historically has a different name, but I don't think that we have dealt with this, so why don't you just go ahead and begin?

HM: As far as my memory goes back, I knew it as the Birmingham place. Birmingham, I found in my searching around that they had a placer claim that was dated 1893, but they had been there previous to that. As to the first owners, I never knew who they were, except I found in this bit of research that a friend of mine did that it was originally owned by a person by the name of Kim. He had filed the first mining claim in the Wallace district. For more information, see the material in the Marsh collection at the UM Library regarding section twenty-three and twenty-four.

JS: Okay.

[TAPE WAS TURNED OFF.]

HM: And another bit of research that had been done states that a man by the name of William Brant had been running the stage station at Bearmouth and in 1878 he sold it to Pat Birmingham. He went on to California. Now, this Bearmouth stage station is a probably a half mile from Bearmouth?

JS: Yes, I think it's a half mile south.

HM: A half mile south on the Mullen Trail from Bearmouth. The Birmingham continued to run it as a stage station or a sort of place where the stage stopped. I don't know whether if they ever stayed overnight there or whether it was just a place of refreshment for the horses and the people who were traveling. But that went on until about 1910. Of course before that the railroad had been through and they had had the post office. At first when the railroad went through and carried the mail, the mail was carried over to this half mile away stage station on the Mullen Trail until the post office was changed to the station at Bearmouth and the Lannens started operating it.

JS: Now, was this mail that came on the stage and was brought to the railroad or the other way around?

HM: No, at first the mail came on the stage and was distributed at the stage station which was south of Bearmouth. And then after the railroad went through, of course, the trains carried the mail, but it was still continued to be the post office until later on it was moved to the [Northern Pacific] station where the Lannens took it over.

JS: Do you know that date? When the post office went from the stage station to the..?

HM: I don't. I don't know it.

JS: Was it there when you arrived?

HM: Oh, yes, I should say many years before that.

JS: So, that would be at least before what, then?

HM: Oh, before 1910, I would say.

JS: Okay. Could I ask you some questions about the Birmingham before you go ahead?

HM: Yes.

JS: When the Birmingham bought, you know, the stage station area, did they buy that just as a business, or was this something they were doing for the government or for the state as sort of like a civil service job?

HM: As I understand it, the business was already there, but according to the papers I've found, they took up a mining claim...

JS: Oh, they did?

HM...In 1893. I guess the stage station must have been on the mining claim, I don't know. All of this is what we know now as Antelope Creek. We called it the Big Valley when we were ranching.

JS: So mining was going on in the Antelope Creek?

HM: No, but they must have found some colors there in order to have been able to take it up as a mining claim.

JS: Wait. You just mentioned an interesting term, "some colors"? What's that mean?

HM: It means flakes of gold.

JS: Those colors! [laughter]

HM: And that's what they are! That's right.

JS: Okay, so Birmingham's had it. When did Lannens take it over?

HM: 1910, I believe.

JS: Why don't you sort of give me a physical description of what that stage station area looked like? What were the buildings there, and the animals there, and then after that kind of give a description of, say, if a person stood on the hillside for 24 hours what would you actually see going on there?

HM: Well, when I first saw it as a child it intrigued me because it consisted of first...it looked like the old, original homestead cabin. It was located a couple hundred yards from the creek. I understood that there was an underground passage from the creek into this old cabin.

JS: Oh, really?

HM: Because the Indians were on the warpath at that time. And after the cabin, built onto that was another frame building. There was a well dug in that, and had a pump that was a source of water. Apparently that was the ranch kitchen and the place where they fed the ranch hands and whoever happened to be there—maybe the stage station. Built onto that in succession, without any breaks, was this kind of pseudo colonial-type house. It was two story and I can't remember just how many rooms it had, but I do remember the staircase that wound out of the living room up and around... it was all curves. You had to go up and curve around and then curve around again to get to the top. I remember there were about three bedrooms upstairs and they had beautiful furniture. The first lovely furniture in that era, because many of the precious pieces that I have now came from there. Like that chair that sits at the door. I remember this big, old cottonwood tree that shaded the old house. As I remember it through the years the badgers took over and it was a place that was just alive with these badgers. Then across from that was the big, old building that is now the Ekstrom Stage Station Restaurant on Rock Creek. I consisted of a big area to stable horses and then a loft where they put the hay and on one end there was what probably was used as a bedroom for the people who took care of the horses. Downstairs was a harness room where they kept the saddles and the horses and one thing and another— or the horse harness. There was also a well in that and a pump as a source of water for the horses. Next to that, to the east, there were several log barns, I guess, or sheds that you would use for machinery and for storing hay and for milk cows (they milked cows). I think there are still about two just in the last stages there now. The thing that intrigued me as a child was the old windmill. They apparently tried to irrigate with this makeshift windmill. I don't know how successful it ever was, but that was the only windmill I had ever seen. There was also a big, old log edifice that they used to store ice. It was filled with sawdust and they used to cut ice in the wintertime and store it through the summer there.

JS: What kind of services were there, Hazel, for the people? Obviously, the horses could get changed or refreshed, and there was a place to, you know, put new harnesses on them, but what about the people who were actually on the stage? Were...

HM: Apparently they went over to this house and apparently it had been enlarged through the years to accommodate people who were traveling. I don't think that they could have stayed there all night. Maybe they did at different times, but it seemed to me like it was a place that they got their mail and got refreshments probably on their way to Missoula from the stage station at Drummond or New Chicago.

JS: What were the intervals between stations? If there is one south of Bearmouth, where likely would be the next one where horses would have to be changed and all that?

HM: Well, I have talked to this Mrs. Wallace and she said there is one on their ranch. Maybe that was the next one, I don't know. Gold Creek.

JS: Gold Creek! Well, gee, that was quite a ways away, then. So you're talking about maybe, what, forty miles? No, maybe not quite that much.

HM: At least that much.

JS: Well, let's see. It would be about fifteen to Drummond and, uh. . .

HM: About twenty. About forty miles I would say. That would make a good break, you know, if they stayed there all night. No, it was only a lunch stop.

JS: But, okay, if we're talking about thirty-five or forty miles then, going west, we would be at Missoula then, too.

HM: Yes, the next one would be Missoula.

JS: Do you have any idea how often, let's say during the summer time, these stages came from each direction?

HM: Well, this resource research here says it was three days a week.

JS: Probably each way, with three going west and three going east? Actually, you can check that, I suppose, and splice that in later. Let me ask you some other questions, though. Were these stages, Hazel, coaches just for people or were there also wagons with other things that would go up and down the trail? Or by that time had the railroad taken over that function of moving supplies and stuff?

HM: Before the railroad went through previous to way up in the 1880's, all of the supplies were brought in. I would imagine, from the old wagons and buggies and one thing and another that were stored in that old building, that they had both. They probably hauled supplies in big old wagons, and then they had all kinds of buggies from two seaters to ones with fancy spring seats that would accommodate probably six people.

JS: So, are these teams of four horses, probably, pulling these stages?

HM: Gosh, I don't know. I would think so.

JS: So, let's see. Let's go back to 1910 when Lannens bought the Birmingham place. Am I right on that, 1910?

HM: Yes.

JS: Was this still a going business, or had this discontinued in 1910?

HM: No, it had been discontinued years before that and the Birmingham were getting old. They were getting so old that they no longer could stay there, so they sold to the Lannens all the ranch, all the land and the buildings and also the contents of the house which consisted, among many things, of this big grand piano, a rectangular grand, one of those old, old fashioned rosewood jobs. It was beautiful! The carpet we had in our parlor was taken out of the old stage station. It had great big roses. It was a beautiful old carpet.

JS: So, when Lannens bought that in 1910, they bought it because they wanted the land to ranch on?

HM: Yes.

JS: There was no business that they were buying at this point, then.

HM: No, the business had long been discontinued at that time.

JS: So, when you came on the scene you remember these, then, as defunct buildings.

HM: Yes.

JS: And that was your recollection of the house.

HM: That's my recollection, yes. All that I know has been from what I've picked up from different conversations. 'Cause I didn't come on the scene until 1916.

JS: Yes. So, if you had any time to play was it a fun place to go back there?

HM: A wonderful place, a wonderful, fun place to go to. We used to just love when I'd say, "Let's take a walk over to the Birmingham place."

JS: Well, does this mean, Hazel, that when the Lannens came out—and we talked about this, of course, on the first tape—did they come out on the Mullan Trail, then?

HM: Apparently, they did. They first came to Bannack, I believe, and then they came from there to Helena and settled for a while. That was pretty well played out by that time when they decided they'd come to Gold Creek. I don't know what persuaded them to come on to the Bear Gulch. I guess they heard of a strike being there. I don't know just what year that they struck pay dirt in the Bear Gulch—probably in the early 1860's.

JS: Well, let me go back to one question that I asked you before—if, you know, somebody were just like a fly on the wall or a badger on the hillside and just were watching that for, say, a week's time, you would see then a stage pulled by a team of horses and it would come up and stop and then what actually would take place then?

HM: Well, apparently they might bring the mail and people from the stage would probably stop in and get a meal. The horses would get fed and watered.

JS: Changed or just refreshed?

HM: Just get refreshed, I think. I don't know for sure. That's what I would imagine would happen.

JS: How would Birmingham's have made money, then—because they would be paid to look after the horses and they would make money on selling food and...?

HM: Selling food. I imagine they charged so much for each horse that they took care of. Probably sold butter and milk and eggs.

JS: Now, could these people be long distance travelers or just going, maybe, from Gold Creek to Missoula?

HM: I wouldn't know that, you know. Your imagination is as good as mine on that.

JS: I guess what I'm asking is [if] this could be a mode of long distance travel?

HM: Yes, it could be, because Fort Benton was on the Missouri River and this Mullen Trail was the only way to get to Walla Walla, where they went down the Columbia River. But, the Mullan Trail was the connecting...

JS: What was...?

HM: ...the connecting link.

JS: Oh, I didn't realize that.

HM: That's why the Mullan Trail is so important because it — in I think it was 1859, the government sent some engineers through to analyze the feasibility of putting a railroad through. These engineers said it would be impossible, but one of the engineers who was Mullen decided that there could be a wagon road through, so he set out to build this wagon road.

JS: This is getting just off the subject but I'll ask the question anyhow. Do you know why the boats going up the Missouri could go no further than Fort Benton? Were there rapids or did the water become too shallow?

HM: Rapids, I think.

JS: Oh, it's rapids.

HM: I think rapids.

JS: Well, heck, from Fort Benton then to Walla Walla that's a big lot of overland travel.

HM: Yes, I should say.

JS: Why don't we just take this area then and bring it right up to date. You came in 1916 and you described it as you remember it, and as people described it to you before you came. Let's say 1916 right up to 1990 today. That's seventy five years. Why don't you just sort of talk about the evolution and the eventual decay and collapse, I suppose, of that area?

HM: Okay. The year that I came, 1916, the saloon that was operated by the Lannens also burned. It had been closed for a short time, but it burned and the Lannens had the post office. People came for their mail, and so many people were going in and out of Garnet that they ran what they called the Garnet Stage every day. It would pick up the mail at the Lannen post office and they would feed their horses and after the trains brought in the mail, and it was sorted, they would take the mail and whatever passengers came in, and they'd go on to Garnet. The next day that would be the same thing. As far as the land that they bought from the Birmingham, they had started a cattle ranching business and I don't know how many cattle they had at that time, but also...

JS: Wait, I missed something. Who's starting the cattle?

HM: The Lannens.

JS: All right.

HM: Apparently, they decided it would be profitable to raise wheat and grain on the Birmingham place, so they had several hundred acres in wheat, and, as I remember it, they had big aluminum wheat bins. For several years they had some very successful winter wheat crops and then the weather got too severe and it got too dry. In the thirties it dried up and that was discontinued.

JS: Now, meanwhile, while wheat operations were going on in, I gather, the teens and the twenties and the early thirties, did those buildings just stay there empty?

HM: Yes, they stayed there and they were used. There were a lot of corrals there and they used them for branding corrals: the branding was always done there. They used them for storing equipment—ranching equipment.

JS: But the house was empty?

HM: The house was empty except for the badgers!

JS: And you say the rug and some of the furniture had since been transferred to the...

HM: It had, after the Lannens purchased it, they transferred it to the Bearmouth house.

JS: By the way, I'm sorry to interrupt this, but let me ask right now—what happened to the Birminghams once they sold?

HM: They had a daughter who lived in Yakima, Washington, and they went out there to stay with her. They were both very old.

JS: Okay, so you say that...

HM: And that picture that I showed you, it's in that box over there, there's a picture of the two Birminghams. The people sitting in front of the house?

JS: Right.

HM: That's the Birminghams.

JS: I didn't realize who they were before. All right, so you're talking about the early twenties and you're saying that at some point the wheat operations are not going well because of the drought.

HM: The weather and, I guess, the price of wheat had something to do with it, but that was kind of discontinued. I remember Ralph plowing with a big horse team, and a big, old "gang plow" they called it, to put in wheat. Then afterwards they got a tractor, which never worked. They spent more time trying to get it to go than they ever did plowing with it. [laughter]

JS: So, about the time you were out of high school, in 1932, is that right? Spring of 1932. Then go ahead. What else happened up there, if anything?

HM: Well, at that time they were — it was mostly a cattle ranch and they still had the store and post office at Bearmouth. Once in a while, people would dribble in. People who'd come in from Missoula mostly to repair the railroad equipment like the coal dock and all that and they would stay with us and have their meals.

JS: Okay, but I meant up at the Birmingham place. Meanwhile what was going on up there then?

HM: Oh, it was just getting worse, I mean, as far as—what do you call it—disintegrating, I guess gradually, until it came to the point where it is now. As far as the house goes it was supposed to have been burned when I was back at Notre Dame.

JS: Why don't we back up here? So, through the thirties, through the forties, through the fifties? When were you at Notre Dame?

HM: In the sixties.

JS: Okay. So, for three decades, then...

HM: It just stood there.

JS: It just stood there.

HM: And gradually got more decrepit. It disintegrated.

JS: And tell me the dates you were back at Notre Dame.

HM: From 1961 to 1965, I guess.

JS: Okay.

HM: During that time, the old Birmingham house disappeared.

JS: Okay, between 1961 and 1965. Now when you went back to work at the library, tell me, as far as the Bearmouth property is concerned, how was it left? Was it leased, or what was going on here?

HM: It was leased to Jim Manley, and it was rumored that he sold that old stage station house and it was taken out over that south road to Virginia City or someplace. But, he told me that a spark from an engine...

JS: From an engine!

HM: Yeah! Way up there!

JS: The railroad's a long ways away!

HM: Yes. And I was stupid enough to believe him until I got to thinking about it. There was nothing there that indicated there had been a big fire. I can see now how stupid I was to just believe him.

JS: Did he write this to you?

HM: No, I came home to see what was going on.

JS: No, but I mean when he said that this spark from the engine started. Was this something that he wrote when you.. ?

HM: No, that's what he told me when I came home and the building was gone. That's how he explained it to me!

JS: He didn't think that over those four years—by the way, were you at home at all during those four years when you were at Notre Dame ?

HM: Yes, I came home a couple of times. I drove all the way from back there.

End side one

Side two

JS: This begins side two or side B again, January 23, 1990, and it's tape number six. Back to Jim Manley and the stage station—the disappearance of the stage station. You know, if this thing really were taken down board by board and moved, and reconstructed in Virginia City or some fancy ghost town tourist place in southern California, this would have been, you know, a big undertaking. There must have been all kinds of people in Missoula, or in Drummond, who knew of this wouldn't you think?

HM: Yes, but they wouldn't dare... Manley was quite a popular person up there...the old-fellow-well-met. I was just the kid that Lannens raised and thought it was just great to pull the wool over my eyes.

JS: I suppose it doesn't make much difference now, anymore, but, boy there must be somebody around who knows that.

HM: I know there is somebody. Do you think they'd come and tell me?

JS: I wonder if now, Hazel, if you asked anybody and said, "Look, you know, bygones are bygones, but I'm writing a history of Bearmouth and simply for the sake of record, I'd like to know what happened to this. Could you just tell me? I don't give two hoots where Manley is now, or what he's doing." I wonder if somebody would say, "All right, well, in 1964, he sold it to some wheeler-dealer in Phoenix, Arizona," or something like that.

HM: Well, that's really what happened, I think.

JS: Do you think it probably went out of the state rather than to Virginia City or..?

HM: I just don't know. It might have gone out of the state altogether.

JS: By the way, have you been to Virginia City?

HM: No, I haven't. I'd recognize it if it were replaced.

JS: Yes, that's what I was going to ask you, if you would.

HM: I should make a special trip over there to see it.

JS: You know the thing is, Hazel, if this were reconstructed on the site of some touristy kind of ghost town, for this thing to have any appeal, any value at all, it would have to be identified, because otherwise, what the heck, anybody could build an old looking house.

HM: That's right. They'd have to have the history of the building.

JS: So, I would think that...

HM: If it's in the state of Montana, if I saw it, I'd recognize it. But they would paint it over and they wouldn't leave it so that it could be recognized, I don't think.

JS: Yes, but what I mean is that they would certainly have some plaque in front of saying what it was.

HM: Identifying it. I would think so.

JS: Well, what was in there when it disappeared? What still was left in there?

HM: Nothing much of anything, really. There might have been one old bed that I wanted to get out of there, that I never did get. But the bed that I have in my guest room now came from there.

JS: Were there any old stoves—like heavy things that would be hard to move that were still there. Nice, old cast iron stoves or something.

HM: No. Those were all moved over to the Lannens. They replaced the old ones that they had with these better things from the Burminghams.

JS: Were there still a lot of nice built-ins like banisters and fancy doors and all this?

HM: Yes, I would think so. The banisters on this old winding staircase would have been most interesting. That would have been the biggest attraction, I would think.

JS: What did it have in the way of a kitchen? What were kitchens like in those days?

HM: Well, I don't know. All I can think of is this old, middle building as being the kitchen where the well was and they got the water and there was a big old stove there I remember years back, but I don't know whatever happened to them.

JS: So, whoever got this got a building..?

HM: You see, I never was allowed... they had no appreciation for those old things, I guess, and I never was allowed to do anything as aggressive as ask questions about those things. I didn't have the imagination. I was pretty... as I look back on it now... I wonder how I could have been so stupid. That's all I knew.

JS: Well, okay, in 1965, then, the actual station or the home is gone. What remained then in 1965?

HM: Well, the old barn that's now the Ekstrom restaurant...They came and asked me if they could take it, if they could buy it from me. I didn't know what to do about it. Later on they just came and made their arrangements and numbered the logs and took it down and went away with

it and left a real mess there, left the open well, we had cattle there—left big, old pieces of lumber with big spikes, big nails, so the cows could walk on them. Ekstrom, at that time, was working for me and I had to have him take the bulldozer and go over and clean it up.

JS: Was this 1971 — 1972?

HM: I guess so. About that.

JS: I know Sally and I were in Ann Arbor, but we were coming back, and we came back to Montana in 1972, and I think when we came back in 1972, this had already taken place. So, maybe it was 1971. Okay, so the one building disappeared between 1961 and 1965 with Manley. That's the house. What Ekstroms took and is now the restaurant, that was a barn for hay or a livery stable or what was it?

HM: Yes, that was the livery stable.

JS: That was the livery stable. Now, there are still two buildings left.

HM: That were hay sheds and cow barns and...

JS: Yes, one of them has stalls.

HM: For horses.

JS: Okay, and then the other one is just a hay barn by the looks of it because it has rafters where, you know, you'd put hay upstairs and so on. Well, let's see, what else do we need to say about this?

HM: Well, that is it now.

JS: Yes, 'cause I've seen it just a couple of weeks ago.

HM: At one time, while I was living out there, between the time I came back from Notre Dame and the time I sold it, it was leased to Nelson at Drummond. He had a wonderful field of alfalfa. There happened to be a lot of rain. He was able to put an irrigation system in, and he used to put up just tons of alfalfa. Then it got dry and the winters got severe and froze the alfalfa out. Then it was just used for pasture. That's what it's being used for now.

JS: Well, don't you suppose that there would be some antiquarian value to the two buildings that are still there right now?

HM: I don't know.

JS: I wonder if the historical society or out at Fort Missoula, you know, whatever, [would] want one of those buildings?

HM: You would think so. I should talk to them.

JS: I know what I was going to ask you. Do you know why Birmingham's, or I guess the people before Birmingham's, decided on that location. Why didn't they get closer to the river?

HM: Because Lannens were there and the water table was close.

JS: Okay.

HM: I guess. There were several little homesteads right around there. There was a man by the name of Ben Smith took up a homestead right on the Mullan Trail between Bearmouth and the old stage station.

JS: Oh, there was something in between.

HM: And they bought it. Lannens bought that land, and then one brother took up a homestead further up, about two miles up on the Mullan Trail. They bought that from him. That little building that was moved down was his homestead shack. (You know that little building that's over there.) And then the Buchanans, I don't know much about them. I should find out. I don't know when they came there. I could find out that. They were pioneer stock, though.

JS: The Mullan Trail—as a trail itself--was it always just pretty much a two rut road? I mean, did it look significantly different eighty...

HM: Not very much different.

JS: Well, not eighty, but sixty years ago?

HM: It was always just a trail, I think.

JS: Yes. I know what I wanted to ask before. Talking about seasons now. I realize it was before you're time, but if that piece of research is correct that there were three stages a week. (Actually, it doesn't make any difference if there were three or if there were 33,) the thing is did they ever attempt this in the winter or was it strictly a summer.. ?

HM: Sure! They used sleds in the wintertime.

JS: They did!

HM: Yes. Great big, old sleds.

JS: Really.

HM: Sleds that had two parts, a front and a back.

JS: Like on a hinge?

HM: Yes.

JS: How in the world did the passengers ever stay warm?

HM: I don't know whether they did or not. I don't imagine they were very warm. I know they had big, old buffalo robes. Great big, heavy, old robes around the place. I don't know what ever happened to them.

JS: The horses just pretty much beat down a trail for themselves?

HM: I guess so—plowed through the snow. That must have been a rough trip.

JS: Good night! You would think that in the wintertime with, obviously, conditions being more severe and daylight being so short, that at the Birmingham place there probably would be accommodations for the night. I just can't imagine sending somebody [out] in the middle of the night for another forty miles to Missoula.

HM: I can't either. There must have been accommodations. There were several bedrooms in that house.

JS: Can you imagine how luxurious the train must have been compared to this coach?

HM: I should say!

JS: We talked some time ago about the old Radke place. What was that before Radke had it?

HM: Buchanans.

JS: Oh, that was Buchanans place, okay. I know that's on tape someplace.

HM: Old Hans Kofoed--the old fella that had the big ranch in Hall, the old bachelor, and Radke worked for him. Radke came out of the Dakotas when the Dakotas all dried u p — s o many of them moved here and worked for Kofoed and I guess he was real good to him and in the meantime Kofoed had bought the Buchanan place. When he died, he left it to Radke.

JS: Yes. I think I said this before, but I remember very distinctly that in the school year of 1968-1969, when Sally and I would drive back that at the Radke place there was still some nice furniture in there. I remember a nice bed and a couple of nice chests and a wood cook stove.

[TURNED TAPE OFF]

HM: About three miles up the Mullan Trail from the old stage station was [what] we called the Crane place. Tim Crane, who was married to Mrs. Lannen's sister, took up a homestead there and lived there until he died. I don't know what year it was he died, but anyway the Lannens bought that from his estate. And John Lannen, the nephew, also had a homestead. It was between the Crane place and the Birmingham place. He took up a homestead and later on I think the Lannens bought it from him. So it all became one big area in there — a part of the Lannen ranch.

JS: So actually if a person were on a stagecoach, you'd really see a lot of homesteads and activity before you got to Birmingham.

HM: All the way into Drummond. Sometime you should go over that road. It's interesting to see the old fallen down buildings that used to be homesteads mostly owned by the Hendersons, now, who run a big herd of cattle.

JS: Did you say Henderson?

HM: Yes.

JS: Are they the people who are on that little "S" curve on your way to Hall?

HM: Yes.

JS: They have black cows?

HM: Yes. They have black angus cattle.

JS: That's interesting because I think of that Mullan Trail as just having absolutely nothing on it except for the stage station.

HM: Oh, yes, there were many, many homesteads along there later.

JS: I suppose that would be the ideal place to build where you've got some access to the mail and transportation.

HM: It was back there... I often wanted to go up that hill where the Mullan Trail ascends that steep hill and go to the west and find myself on top of those cliffs, those sheer cliffs. I never did get to do that. My nephew and I tried it once but there are a lot of intricate roads there and we never did get to get all of the way. We were always going back, but we never did.

JS: But that's right. At some point, you'd have to be at the top level of those cliffs. Do you mean the cliffs by Bass Pond or the ones over by Joe Nelson's ranch right across from his...

HM: Yes. The ones that are right, you know, where the...

JS: Where the valley opens?

HM: ...Rattler. They call it Rattler Gulch.

JS: Yes, I know where you mean.

HM: Well, it's right across from that.

JS: Yes. And that's Joe Nelson's place, too. Obviously those horses were capable of pulling up that hill. Did they put extra horses on for that or.. ?

HM: I don't know. They must have. I never thought of that. That was quite a lift!

JS: Yes. What does that do, then, Hazel? Does that drop down then into New Chicago, or do you just get up that high and stay that high?

HM: No, it just winds down, just like it winds up.

JS: Okay. Is that kind of a saddle? I mean is that the low part of those hills where the..?

HM: Yes. The high part of it is where the road goes over.

JS: Yes.

HM: I imagine that at that time there was just kind of a trail down the Hellgate Canyon. There were people who lived there. They used to come to Bearmouth for their mail. I remember one of the names was Baldry. They were good friends of the Mrs. Lannen's. It wasn't until the convicts, I don't know what year that was...

JS: Made the road? [laughter]

HM: ...the convicts came and built the highway through.

JS: We have that on an earlier tape. We've got that date someplace. That always amuses me, because that sounds like something out of Great Expectations where some of the convicts who were all working on the road... I don't know how you can answer this question, but you're just enough older than I am and obviously lived in a place that underwent much greater change than the Chicago area where I grew up... I mean, it almost as if in your lifetime you're spanning many,

many generations. It's hard to believe that you can sit here in this sort of high tech kitchen with microwave ovens and a car that has all of the comforts that one could imagine in the garage and yet at the same point in time you're talking about a stagecoach and convicts building a road!

HM: That's right. That makes me pretty old, then! [laughter]

JS: Well, it only makes you about 20 years older than I am. I guess just somebody your age has seen bigger changes than western civilization has ever seen in its history.

HM: Yes, that's right. I saw it go from, you might say, a wagon road to the ultra-highway.

JS: The interstate. I mean, who knows, that there will ever..?

HM: That would be a good way to start it wouldn't it?

JS: Yes...the contrasts between the two... The difference between being on these sleds with the buffalo robes that you were talking about and...

HM: Oh, yes, I remember at Garnet they used to use sleds on the Garnet road and you'd be all bundled up with these fur robes. That's fascinating to you, isn't it?

JS: Well, yes.

HM: To me, it's just old stuff in the back of my memory.

JS: Now, you know, Hazel, it would not be that fascinating if I were reading it in a history book and this went back a few centuries ago: I'd think, well, that's just the way it was. But it's hard to imagine talking to somebody—I mean, you're my mom's age and...

HM: I remembered it all.

JS: Remembered it and lived through this. It just doesn't seem possible that in one person's lifetime that this much change can take place.

HM: No, it doesn't.

JS: And so, therefore, it seems like you probably should be thinking you're living in a dream world, but I guess you just make the change with it.

HM: It's kind of hard. It really tires me. I feel kind of exhausted when I've gone through a session like this. Just kind of trying to grasp and bring back to mind the things that would be of interest. I never thought of it very much. They're way in the back of my mind.

JS: I'm not referring to you, of course, but elderly people who, at some point, just get a little confused in their old age...

HM: Sure, it's true. I am confused. [laughter]

JS: Well, I'm talking about, you know...

HM: I'm doing pretty good, though.

JS: Yes. No, I'm talking about really confused. I mean, it's no wonder, you know if your mind just slightly starts getting fatigued. It would seem that this whole chronology would dissolve into just chaos.

HM: Good thing I'm making this. In case something would happen to me at least you'd have these tapes.

JS: Yes.

HM: 'Cause I'm not everlasting!

JS: I worked down in Stevensville during the seventies, primarily, and early eighties and there was some work being done there on the history of Stevensville. Naturally there is a lot of good material down there with the Saint Mary's Mission and so on. But the local people who collaborated to do the work on, what was it called, The Origins [?] or was it Origins of Montana?

HM: I don't know.

JS: It had a title like that, and of course it was in reference to the Saint Mary's and Father Ravalli and so on. But, what professional...

HM: Written by a woman? I have that book someplace here.

JS: Actually, she was the librarian at Stevensville High School--Marian Gebhart, but she was with a group of people. It was like the Stevensville Historical Society: it wasn't a one person job. At any rate the professional historians who sort of gave advice on how to pull this together said that serious history, I mean, whether you are talking about going back to a Herodotus and Thucydides or whether you're talking about, historians of World War I, that they rely heavily, in fact, exclusively really on local historians. That really the responsibility for writing history ultimately goes down to the local historian who sort of like a tributary, contributes to a larger stream, and then that larger stream is fed by other tributaries and so forth.

HM: Say, I was laying thinking in bed the other night—didn't you have me up for dinner one time, way up on—when you were living way out near Hamilton or someplace?

JS: Up at Burnt Fork Road?

HM: Yes.

JS: Yes, it was a little...

HM: Thanksgiving or something? That was a real nice occasion...

JS: This was that little sheep ranch.

HM: Yes, before the baby was born.

JS: Yes. Quite a bit before the baby was born. This might have been—well, not quite a bit, maybe about a year or two.

HM: That was nice.

JS: Yes, now I remember that. I had forgotten about that until you reminded me.

HM: I had completely forgotten about, and I said, "Well, gee, I know that happened. It isn't just a dream."

JS: But I don't remember whether it was Thanksgiving or whether it was...

HM: Just Sunday afternoon. But, how did I ever find that place, I wonder? I did, though.

JS: Must have sent you just a map. I know I sent a lot of people maps on how to get there. But you went to Stevensville...

HM: It was a cute place. I had a delicious meal.

JS: Gee, this is all coming back into focus. I'll have to ask Sally since, no doubt, she cooked the meal. She might remember specifically whether it was a Thanksgiving dinner or just a Sunday afternoon. You went to Stevensville, then you went about eight miles east up into the Sapphires—yes, into the Sapphire Mountains.

HM: It was pretty up there.

JS: Yes, beautiful.

HM: What were you doing there?

JS: I was teaching at Hamilton. That was my first year teaching Latin and English at Hamilton. It was the school year of 1972- 1973 .

HM: You stayed there two years.

JS: One year.

HM: One year.

JS: Because, then, Sally and I moved into Missoula. That was the school year of 1973-1974, then Christian came the next year in 1975. That's right, I'll ask her about that. Well, do you think this pretty much does it for the stage station?

HM: For the day, yes. I'm tired.

JS: Yes, this was a nice session. Okay, this ends tape number six. This is all there is to it here.

End side two