

Oral History 244-10

Hazel Marsh Collection

Interviewee: Hazel Marsh

Interviewer: Jim Scott

March 14, 1990

Jim Scott: This begins tape number ten, side one. It begins with the summer of 1970 after Mac Enman has left Bearmouth and Jim and Sally Scott have gone back to Michigan.

[TAPE SHUT OFF]

Jim Scott: Okay, you're on.

Hazel Marsh: It's hard to realize that I had been out there for—at that time—for five years since the time I quit Notre Dame and came back to Montana. At that time when Mac gave up the place, I guess I decided to run it myself. I had oh—what's his name— Ekstrom...

JS: Danny?

HM: Danny Ekstrom decided he could manage it for me. He had no previous experience and he had grandiose ideas at managing a ranch. He decided that he should be the manager only and that I should have hired men to do all of the work. It was Loretta, his wife, who talked me into moving the big white house from Bearmouth to the ranch site at Harvey Creek. That was the same big white house that Manley's had decided was not fit to live in. So, we made arrangements with an old man who was a mover. I forget his name—Mike Devin. It seemed an incredible thing to attempt, but he seemed to know what he was doing and wasn't charging me an awful lot. I knew that if it were left there it would probably be burned or... The railroad did not cooperate at all. If they had allowed us and would have raised their wires, we could have gone straight from the site at Bearmouth to where we were going to put it at Harvey Creek, but they wouldn't do that. They said they didn't have to, but we later found out that they did. So, we had to take the

big, white house and--the first stop was—well, we had trouble getting over the Antelope Creek bridge.

JS: Yes, that's right.

HM: About two days.

JS: How—tell me about that. How did you get over that bridge? Did you have to shore it up?

HM: Oh, there was a lot of shoring up. I couldn't explain all the things they did, but they finally got across. They went as far as the east end of the slough and they stopped there. Mike was moving a house someplace else, but he said he'd be back, and the house sat there week in and week out and week in and week out. People were constantly inquiring about when it would reach its final destination until Mike finally came back--I guess it was in the fall—he finally came back and said he'd finish moving it.

JS: You mean the house was just sitting there all the time?

HM: Just sitting there and the funny part of it was — it could have been kind of a disastrous—it was sitting right on the gas line.

JS: Oh, really.

HM: Right on where the gas line branched.

JS: Meanwhile, wasn't it blocking a county road?

HM: No, it wasn't. It was off the county road, but it was certainly a topic of conversation all along the—everyone—every time I'd go to Drummond, they'd ask me about the white house.

JS: Well, it seems like just a few hundred yards west of Antelope Creek there is part of that mountain—that ridge that comes out. Didn't that have to be blown away to make room?

HM: No. There was a roadway there—the Mullan trail.

JS: Well, I know it went around it, but I thought that part of that had to be removed.

HM: No, that had been done. That was a Public Works Project during the Roosevelt administration—when they straightened that and took that point—it was all slag rock—they put the slag rock as a foundation for another road and filled it in there.

JS: So, there was room to get through there.

HM: It was comparatively easy until they finally got to this log ramp. He felt like he was needed elsewhere. I don't know—it must have been almost all summer, I guess, from the time he started to move it until the time he finished. I looked out my window one day (he didn't tell me) I didn't know that the work had been resumed, and I looked out my window and here comes— slowly comes the old, white house.

JS: Now, in the meantime, did you have the foundation all prepared and everything?

HM: I had the foundation all prepared.

JS: Now, this is summer of 1970, Hazel?

HM: It must have been 1971. You said you left in...

JS: We left in the summer of 1970.

HM: It must have been 1971, then.

JS: Yes, that seems right to me.

HM: Shortly after Ekstroms took over, and I mean took over!

JS: Yes, because when we left, there wasn't any planning of this. It would have been way too soon for this to have happened. But, at any rate, the house did make it onto the foundation.

HM: I guess it was after it was moved that I put in the furnace. We had drilled a well, and had water in the house and bathrooms made, and I had it insulated—insulation blown in.

JS: Tell me about Ekstroms themselves, Danny and Loretta; was that her name? They moved into the white house then. So, this must have been the end of the summer of 1971. What kind of changes did this house undergo besides these changes that you just mentioned, now, about insulation and...?

HM: Well, they changed some of the rooms, maybe. What we had used for the dining room—kind of a waiting area and dining room, up where you live, they made that into a kitchen and dining area. Made the—what we called the old parlor, which was our luxury room...

JS: Yes, the front room.

HM: ...the front room they turned into a sitting room.

JS: What did they do with the two little rooms opposite the hallway of the parlor. In other words, on the ground floor, but they were the ones on the other side. There were two small rooms.

HM: Well, one was a bedroom, and the other was where they (Lannens) had the old desk and Johnny Lannen slept there. There was a bed in there. They used it as kind of an office.

JS: Where was the bathroom, then?

HM: That's what they made into the bathroom. The bathroom previously was a part of the old kitchen that they turned into a kind of a mud room/back porch.

JS: Which actually was a pretty big mud room because it went the whole width of the back of the house.

HM: It was a nicer kitchen than the one they made. But, as I said, they took over.

JS: Who did all the work? There must have been a lot of interior work—cabinetry and plumbing and carpeting.

HM: Danny's father did most of the cabinetry work. He was quite good at that. It was quite an attractive place. We papered it. I helped with the papering and interior painting.

JS: How did you feel about that at the time?

HM: Well, I didn't really...

JS: Do you think the house had a new lease on life?

HM I always felt I was being pushed into things by these people. I could see that that house could have been lived in before and could have been fixed up at its own location. That would be my idea, but you can't do that if you don't have anyone to cooperate with you. So, I went along with these people because I felt like I had to. At that time, there wasn't so much — well , I could have sold it, but I didn't want to. All I had was my interest in life at that time.

JS: Did Danny and Loretta have children at that time?

HM: Yes, they had two boys.

JS: So, the house had a family in it. Did they use the upstairs?

HM: Yes.

JS: With all the little rooms?

HM: No, they didn't use the back rooms. They had that partitioned off.

JS: But the first — the front four rooms?

HM: They used the front four rooms. They had heat from the living room—great big stove—a big, old wood stove. No, I think probably it was that old stove that you have now.

JS: Boy, I don't think so, because when you let me take that, you had gotten it back not all that long ago from somebody up at Poison and it was under your porch. That kind of storage area that you had underneath. I don't think that was ever in the white house since the old days.

HM: Probably not.

JS: So as long as we're on this same subject, what else was moved from the original Bearmouth site down by Antelope Creek along with the house. What else came out to Harvey Creek?

HM: We brought the big red barn and set up on the base of the hill which was built after the railroad went through.

JS: That's a lot of building. Was that hard to move, too?

HM: When we moved that, that was when we found out that the railroad were obliged to make way for it. They had to remove their wires so that we could get by there. It wasn't the problem that the big, white house was because we didn't have to go around that whole slough, which was the old, original Mullan Trail. Then they moved that very attractive log barn that had the hand-hewn dovetailed logs, which is still there, I guess.

JS: Already on that site that is down at Harvey Creek, already there was one large barn there. So, you had the white house, two big barns, the smaller barn...

HM: Cattle corrals and...

JS: ...and then a little white house was there at Harvey Creek.

HM: That was the old, original house from Mill's—original Whiteside homestead. I have all that in abstracts that I can go over and get the details—abstracts now in the Mansfield Library.

JS: So, was all of this done in the summer of 1971, then? The barns as well?

HM: Yes.

JS: The whole works. (I'm just trying to take some of this stuff in order.) When everything was moved down to Harvey Creek—or everything that was moved down there, I know you, of course, used the Big Valley, but were there any sort of working structures or facilities there, anymore?

HM: The old store is still there.

JS Oh, yes, that's right.

HM: A lady that I had gone to school with at the Academy came up and visited with me and asked if her son, who was married and who was intrigued by the old store building, if he could live there. I just didn't know how to say "no" in those days. It was pretty hard for me to refuse them, so I let them in. They were there for about six months, I guess. But, anyway, they came home one cool night in the fall and built up a big fire in a heating stove and all the outlet for the smoke was just a pipe that went through one of the windows. The wind was blowing hard and it caught the shingles and burned it to the ground. They came down--I was alone in the house—

they came down and awakened me at about 2:30 in the morning and I don't know what I was supposed to do about it, but I went up and watched the old store burn down. At that time...

JS: You mean the store?

HM: Or the old store—and I all these things that I'm talking about here kind of went through my mind—all these old people that had come there with the stage and the old fellows from Garnet and people who came to get their mail. I thought, well, this is a part of history that is gone.

JS: Did you lose—besides the exterior of the store--did you lose artifacts and furniture in the store? Was there quite a bit in there?

HM: Well, it was pretty well furnished like showcases for display, candy and small articles and shelving. Ekstrom's wanted to move...they started to move it out to their place at Rock Creek. That was another thing that was just being done and I was being pushed into it.

JS: Let's save that for another — for just a minute.

HM: That all went up in smoke. Ekstroms, I would say, had the nerve to scold me out for letting those people in, so that they had lost all these things that they could have used so nicely, which were not theirs at all to begin with.

JS: This young man and his wife who were living in the store, did they have something to do with Garnet? Were they working on some kind of project up there?

HM: No. What year was that? The seventies? They were what I guess you could describe as hippies. They were interested in all kinds of medical plants that. I think that's where the story started that they were... I don't think her husband was ever there. She was, at that time, married to the man who's Gordon Construction Company. They were later divorced. She and two of her children lived in the store building. I think, I'm not quite sure...

JS: So, that must have been a sad moment to see in the middle of the night that store go up.

HM: Yes, I should say it was. I blamed myself, of course, for letting those people use me like they did. I can look back on it now, and I was so kind of alone there then. I came back into that country. All the Lannens were gone and I was not even adopted. I was taking over what everybody coveted so much. I wasn't about to get personal there.

JS: As long as we're talking about what has been moved from the Antelope site to the Harvey Creek site, or just generally the changes, why don't you back up as far as you need to go and tell me about Ekstroms, the stage station, and that incident?

HM: The time that Danny was supposed to be managing the place [and] feeding the cattle. We had the cattle in there where the barn was. They decided that they'd make the big move, so they numbered the logs and he casually stopped by one day and said did they still have permission to move it? I didn't really remember ever giving them any explicit permission in the first place.

JS: This would be what—one of the livery barns?

HM: It was the original livery barn that had the water well in it and a room for the people who drove the horses. It was a big, long place as you can see from what's left of it.

JS: Well, what does this mean, Hazel, that they already had plans for a restaurant or did they have a small restaurant there already? Or was this a brand new enterprise?

HM: It was a new enterprise as far as they were concerned. They came and got it. Took it away.

JS: Did they have a big flatbed?

HM: Yes, they had a big flatbed and loaded. The logs were in good condition but they were dirty, of course. They had it all sandblasted. They asked me how much I wanted for it. Well, I

never sold any old buildings. At the time they asked me what I wanted for it. They explained how much they had put into it, which wasn't my fault. So, I got nothing for it, except one day I and some friends were at dinner there. I ordered, I think, some short ribs. It came to \$4.50 and I got a nice little note on my bill that said I wouldn't have to pay for that and thank you for this beautiful building. So, that's what I got for it \$4.50, I think. I went there another time with my cousin from Phoenix and his wife, had dinner, and the bill came to about eighteen dollars and they took the whole eighteen dollars.

JS: Do you remember one time that you and I went there--I think with Anne Hausman?

HM: Oh, yes, I do remember that.

JS: It must have been early eighties.

HM: They always are talking about if they just had more information. Well, all they have to do is ask me. I could give them all the information that they possibly need.

JS: Was there anything on that site before? I'm talking about the Rock Creek Restaurant.

HM: I don't think so. Just bare land.

JS: Well, what I really don't understand—we didn't talk about this is but what about the actual ranch operations? Were these your cattle, Danny's cattle or what?

HM: They were my cattle. I sold the house here in Missoula where the Lannens died and borrowed some money to buy cattle.

JS: Now, what house in Missoula--the Sussex house?

HM: The one where the Lannens died.

JS: Okay, you still had it that late.

HM: Yes. I had rented it to Luther Richmond from the University.

JS: And you bought cattle?

HM: Yes.

JS: Angus?

HM: Mostly Angus--some Hereford. Somehow or other Ekstrom got it in his head that he should have a percentage of the cattle as part of his wages. The way he had worked it out, pretty soon I wouldn't have any cattle. They'd be Ekstrom's. So, I finally just told him that I couldn't—that that was just kind of bad agreement that he had made up for himself.

JS: This is Danny now, or the father?

HM: Danny.

JS: Was he a skilled ranch foreman?

HM: No, he was not a skilled ranch foreman. He did pretty well the first winter,

JS: Were you growing hay in the Big Valley?

HM: Yes, and buying machinery and trucks and I had to borrow money to buy machinery. They used the machinery and they were real reckless with it.

JS: Did the father have any stake or participation in this?

HM: No, but Danny had a friend, an older man who had worked as manager on a big ranch up on Rock Creek. He brought him down and set him up in business in the little white house.

JS: Was that Tyler?

HM: Tyler. He has passed away since then. Between Tyler and Ekstrom, I was made to feel like I was just kind of excess baggage there.

JS: In the way?

HM: I never felt free to go down there, walk through the yard, or . . .

JS: I remember that you showed Sally and me the white house. This must have been in the fall of 1971. It had to be because anything before that it hadn't been moved. I remember that Sally and I were feeling uncomfortable because you seemed to feel that you were an interloper. I remember that you really had to tread lightly about bringing us down to show us the house and this kind of thing. But, we did see it because I remember very clearly that the kitchen had been moved into the dining area and the big area in the back was a mud room and so on.

HM: Yes, it was a very unhappy situation. It was just as if they planned in really taking over and that I would eventually probably go back to Notre Dame or something. The very fact that I deserted my ownership even though I wasn't a good boss, I just couldn't go out and tell them I wanted things done that weren't done. There was resentment there. As I look back on it you can see kind of a plan because Cliff Nelson and this Tyler, the Ekstroms, were all very close friends. It was one right after another that descended upon me.

JS: Is this Nelson the one that used to lease from you up by Hall?

HM: He was leasing when I decided to sell.

JS: Well, when did the Ekstrom agreement dissolve? Can you give me a date on that?

HM: Well, I let Ekstrom go. I can't give you a date.

JS: But—a year or two years after?

HM: Nelson was just leasing pasture then. Nelson was kind of edgy, and Ekstrom pretended to be an ally. Ekstrom just wasn't doing anything. He was supposed to be the manager and he wasn't doing a thing. Finally, I was going to fire him and he came up and said he was quitting. I said, "Fine." He seemed disappointed that I wasn't just shocked to death. I did give him a thousand dollars extra when he left because he had this feeling that because of managing it he should gradually get a percentage of the ownership or something.

JS: At any case, he never had his own stock on there.

HM: No, never. I ran probably one hundred thirty head of cattle. I ran them with Nelson's when he took over. Nelsons often—a calf with Nelson's brand on it would sucking my cows. [laughter] So, that's the thing that I knew that he was taking me, too. Besides that, I had all that equipment. I had—what do you call those that you cut hay with [swather] — anyway, I had one of those, and I had a drill, all the necessary equipment [and] trucks—two trucks--three trucks. Nelson took all of that over and used it. I paid insurance on it and he paid me nothing for it. But it went with--it sold with the ranch.

JS: But in the meantime, Nelson was leasing—not only leasing the land, but then he got all the equipment--the use of the equipment. Does this take us up to the point where you started to consider selling the property?

HM: Well, I had many chances to sell. The people who bought it were trying to get me to talk it over for a year before I sold. Finally, I decided that I had had enough. I hated to leave the place. I loved the house. I loved living up there. I loved Harvey Creek, it was a beautiful place, really. If I'd had some decent help—if I'd had an honest person come there and offer to take over and help me I'd have kept it. I wouldn't have sold it. But there just didn't seem to be that kind of person

around. I've met them since I sold, but at that time, it seemed like they were trying to get as much as they could for as little as possible.

JS: So, who made the offer that you accepted and where are we in time?

HM: Dexter Delaney had a realtor who was a very good friend of his and has since passed away. I don't remember his name, either. But, he came out and I almost spent days going over the whole ranch. It takes days to go over it. Finally, he made me an offer that I thought was good. I knew that I couldn't live forever and my health wasn't good. I thought the best thing to do would be to sell.

JS: Now, is this—you say to a realtor, but it was a consortium?

HM: The realtor had gotten these five people together here in Missoula, and the realtor had convinced these people that that land, because of its proximity to Missoula and its attractiveness and all that it would turn over in no time as homesites. Of course, it didn't work out that way.

JS: So, Hazel sells to realtor.

HM: The people that were—that had gotten together — do you want me to name those?

End side one

Side two

JS: Okay, so you're telling me that the buyers called themselves The Bearmouth...

HM: They had formed a small corporation under the name of the Bearmouth Land and Cattle Company. They consisted of Skibsted (who was H. O. Bell's son-in-law,) and Dr. Deloit Wolfe, (he's a — what is it—orthodontist?) and Mitty who's a builder, (he builds low income homes like all those that are over there across from Wagners,) and W. J. Blair, who had that moving company, Mayflower I think, and Bill Steinbrenner, who was in the real estate business. But

Blair just lost what he put in it and pulled out of it: he said he couldn't afford to keep it up. It didn't turn out the way they thought it would.

JS: Why is it that this venture didn't pan out as the initial advertisement of it promised? Was it still too far from Missoula for development or what?

HM: Well, at that time the bottom just dropped out of the economy: land had reached its peak and it started going down. People were not interested in buying homesites that far away, though they did sell some of it. My house seemed to be the biggest attraction. My house, you know, the new house, sold right away and ninety acres along that ledge which are beautiful homesites. But, that's been sold--resold since then.

JS: Didn't they have big hopes for the lake and the lakeside property? Remember that little lake that was...?

HM: No, I don't know, maybe they did, but that did sell. They sold that and about 300 acres around the base of that hill. I don't know who owns it. I think it's been resold too.

JS: If you can just jump up to 1990 as far as the land is concerned, do you know how the division of this stands now—the original Bearmouth parcel?

HM: They still have all of what we called Big Valley. There were several sections of land in there. They did sell where the old town of Bearmouth was. Those people are interested in that mining operation, you know the old mining diggings up along the. . .

JS: Yes.

HM: They did some work there, but I don't think it ever panned out, so I don't know whether they continued their contract or whether the Bearmouth Land and Cattle Company has it back.

JS: Is this across the highway?

HM: It's directly south of the old red bridge that used to be there.

JS: Yes, okay. Anything interesting done with the ponds on the extreme east end of the property?

HM: Well, they've become pretty popular fishing ponds. I guess at one time, maybe it was before your time, there was a truck—a tank of small—what are those flat fish?

JS: Perch or bass?

HM: Bass...was it bass? Anyway, they didn't want them all to die so they dumped them in the warm water ponds and they just thrived. It became quite a mecca for Missoula fishing people and all over. I don't know if there are any — it's bass.

JS: Because they call it Bass Pond?

HM: The Bass Ponds, yes. But at this time the highway was working through and they took out the warm springs as we used to know it (our swimming pool) and put a frontage road. They took that one big rock out and changed the river bed. And this litigation was going on during the seventies, I guess, eighties?

JS: Why is it, Hazel, that--wait I have another question here— so, as far as you know then Blair bailed out but the Bearmouth Land and Cattle company is still owned by the remaining four people?

HM: Yes.

JS: And are they just holding on, hoping that something is going happen ?

HM: Yes, there was a big burst of enthusiasm for a while last year. They're about to move that Blue Mountain Rifle Range the government training ground. They wanted the Big Valley: they

wanted to put it up there. Of course—these people were pushing it. They thought they'd be able to sell all that land.

JS: Make a killing on a government contract?

HM: Make a killing, and Granite County just rose up in rebellion. Of course, Nelson is county commissioner, and he is kind of a weighty guy in Granite County now. I guess they changed their mind rather than go in against everybody's. Of course the people that bought my house (Gallahan?) they bought it because of the seclusion there because of their privacy. They weren't about to see a rifle range and a training area right across the hill. They fought it. So, the people are still trying to sell it. Thanks to Dexter Delaney who drew up the contract, there was no provision made for the timber. The timber should have been mine, you know. They took it off. They should have had to pay me but there was no provision made so they just scalped it. You go by up there [and see] they just took every stick of timber that was saleable off and I got nothing for it.

JS: You mean the Bearmouth [Land and] Cattle Company did it?

HM: Yes. I had it timbered off before I sold it. I had it done very selectively. It really looked like a lot of little parks up there because they left enough trees. They [the company] went through like a hurricane--took everything. But I don't need to worry about it. It isn't mine anymore. But it just makes me kind of sick to look at it. People can talk about environmentalists. When you think of wrecking that swimming pool and taking out that beautiful canyon just for highways and then taking all the timber off and selling it. There's a real good example of what people can do to the countryside.

JS: Tell me about the move itself—you leaving your home at Harvey Creek and moving into town. Once the deal was pretty much consummated how did you go about all of this?

HM: I went about it almost all by myself. Blair came out and looked the situation over. They promised to move me, the transfer company, and brought me boxes. He could see that I was

there alone so he said that I could pack everything that I was able to and that his men would do the rest, which they did. But I had it pretty well packed. Frank Fitzgerald, you know who he is don't you? He's a remote relation of the Lannens. He calls himself my cousin. Anyway, he lives in Garnet in the summertime. He's kind of the watchman there. He came and helped me some. When I came in, he brought the cat and I brought the dog.

JS: Meanwhile, of course, you had purchased the house on Skyline Drive.

HM: Yes, I came in and...

JS: There certainly must be a number of things remarkable about the move. I suppose the feeling of going out of that driveway for the last time...?

HM: I should say it was hard. I often kind of wished that I hadn't done it. Financially I could not have carried it paying the insurance and taxes and getting so little out of it.

JS: Something I forgot to ask you is — I have a part back here where you say Ekstrom quits or is fired, and then you run your cattle with Nelson's, and then you spoke a little about how Nelson kind of merged with you, somewhat against your awareness. Tell me about actually disencumbering yourself of all this livestock and just having...

HM: It all went with the ranch.

JS: Oh, the cattle did, too. Oh, that's why they called them the land and cattle company.

HM: The cattle and the land and all the equipment went with the ranch.

JS: Of that consortium, whom did they get to take care of the cows? They needed to be tended, of course, right away, so who did it?

HM: I guess they had a man that went out...

JS: Did Nelson stay on, though? Did he continue the lease?

HM: No, his lease expired, of course, and they had a man from down here that they had hired. He went out and took care of the cattle, I guess, for one year. They did nothing, you know, to improve the ranch—raise hay or anything. Finally they sold the cattle. They had a big sale and just sold all that equipment for peanuts.

JS: Well, you're in Missoula, now, at Skyline Drive. The consortium owns Bearmouth, divides some of it up as you explained, has difficulty in disposing big pieces of it, you just said that they sold off the cattle and the machinery...what..?

HM: Then they finally leased to Nelson again.

JS: So, we're into—where are we, now? Are we in 1980, 1981?

HM: We're up in the eighties, yes. See I'm in Missoula, now. I think maybe I should end it there, pretty much.

JS: Yes, probably so, but give me a date when you moved into the Skyline house.

HM: In October of 1979.

JS: So, this takes care of the decade of the seventies.

HM: Then, just a year ago, I moved in here.

JS: So, you were there for ten years almost exactly.

HM: Yes.

JS: Should we save the last tape for the 1980's, whatever we can say about it?

HM: Okay, I'll try to think of something.

JS: Well, we can have some sort of summary and reflection on things that we talked about and maybe..

HM Yes, I go slowly through it then. I can just jot down things that should be included in it and all and taken out. I think I could get to work on it--get to feeling better. As you can see, I've got some sort of a sore throat yet.

JS: I guess one thing for sure I'd like to hear from you is...I suppose next week. I'll just say it and put it on tape now as way of preamble. But, among other things, how you feel about having gone through nine or ten fairly intense taping sessions and probably thinking about things in a kind of a system or an organized way, but probably with a certain amount of depth and intensity that maybe you haven't thought about for a long, long time?

HM: Well, I never did think about them. They have made me see things from the viewpoint of-Hazel Marsh—seventy-six years old—instead of a kid that grew up out there. I can see how unusual it was. It just amazes me some of things that happened and things that I went through. I could hardly believe it even after I went through them. That was such a different life.

JS: Well, that's certainly one of the main points of interest and themes that comes out for me, too. It's a different life: it seems like a time warp. I can't believe that I'm talking to somebody who was...

HM: It's almost like Rip Van Winkle, that's right. The things that happened there, the way we lived, I don't blame her... I don't blame them. She (Kate) knew nothing else, was beautiful for what...she was a very dainty, little red-haired person.

JS: Sounds as though she learned to take charge.

HM: She did. She had to. There wouldn't have been anything there. Just the same way that I had to take charge. I have no qualms. The kid who grew up there and was made feel kind of inferior... I have to get away from that feeling because I earned everything that I got or there wouldn't have been anything to fight about. But during all this time there was litigation going on...Lannen relatives... There was a trust agreement after he died, I guess. Things got to the place where there had to be somebody make decisions and sign papers and one thing and another. The lawyer suggested that there should be this trust agreement which he drew up. All the land that was in the trust was described, of course, legally. It was all to be used for their benefit. I guess he was still--no, he must have been dead, because he couldn't sign it. He must have died before this trust agreement was made. The first five years that I took care of them I wouldn't have gotten one penny if they had died. But after this trust agreement everything they had was to be taken care of and used for their benefit. If there was anything after all the bills were paid it was to come to me.

JS: Who initiated this consideration?

HM: Russell Smith. Well Father Mead, the old clergyman over at Saint Anthony's. She would tell many times, talking to him, that she wanted me taken care of. He'd ask her, you know, if she'd made any arrangements for me, and she'd just tell him that I was the only one who really had helped her when she needed help, but she had done nothing about it. So, he convinced her that she'd have to do something. She had kind of a loyalty to her people in Kansas, too. You naturally would have. She would wonder about it, and a couple of years after it was made up she'd forget and she wouldn't realize what it all meant as far as I was concerned. So, I gave it back to her one day and I just told her I can't live like this. I can't live with you thinking that I'm trying to get all your money. I said, "You just take that and tear it up if you want to. You don't need to worry about my taking care of you because I will. But give your money to whoever you please." George knew about that, my husband; I told him about it. I guess that was one of the reasons he decided he didn't want any part of me anymore.

JS: What did she do with the document?

HM: She kept it awhile and then gave it back to me. She knew that's the way I would want it.

JS: Why, then, after her death, would there have been any grounds for these Kansas relatives to try and make claim to the estate?

HM: It's a thing that I don't even like to talk about it bothers me. At one time Judge Pope was Russell Smith's partner-in-law. They were partners and there was a law clerk that worked for Pope. Somehow or other he got their attorney in Kansas, contacted him, and he told him that I was just a hireling, you know; that I had just come in to work there and I had taken unfair advantage of Mrs. Lannen. So they were all for breaking this trust agreement. The court, the judge down here, there was a question of the tax exemption—whether I would be considered her child or whether I would be like a stranger. There was even a place in the law book that the judge found that a child who had been raised with a family and lived as their own child would have the same exemption as their child. So it was all settled pretty much in my favor.

JS: It sounded like there was always a struggle because no sooner were you cleared of this than you had all the litigation on the land with the highway coming through?

HM: I don't get very much pleasure out of the darned stuff. I often think I wish somebody else had it. The only one who really worked to earn anything was—I don't know whether blood relationship comes in stronger than a person that has taken the part of a child. The only one that really did anything was my brother. Every time he needs anything he gets it. I've given him more than he would have gotten had he been one of many, many relatives who could then have divided up.

JS: Well, I'm going to stop this here.

HM: But you see why I didn't want to write about it--didn't want to go into it?

JS: Yes, although all of this sort of thing that's unpleasant to recall is really not tangential. It really is central because this is why you did have it in the sixties and seventies.

HM: Well, I worked honestly from the time I was a little kid; then I went away to high school and then I came and lived for ten years there. I was married for a little while during the war, then I came back and it was another ten years. So, there weren't very many years only in my later life—that I was free of that. I'm still not. Every time I spend money I think "the darned old stuff". The money that I earned when I was working at Notre Dame meant so much more to me. I earned it all, but I...

JS: But this is what I don't understand because—in this narrative over nine or ten weeks, it's so clear that you have earned the money that came out of the sale of Bearmouth. In other words, you slaved when you were a kid, you were deprived of all kinds of other things as you were growing up, you returned and took care of Mrs. Lannen off and on and then, of course, really that other sacrifice when you all moved in—including your sort of foster uncle--her brother when you were all in on Sussex! I don't see where there's any question about your primacy or your claim to that.

HM: No, there isn't.

JS: I mean, it's not as if you were living in California and had the good life for forty years and suddenly this came to you in the mail one day.

HM: Then I took--I decided I'd do all the good I could with it. I give to the school for Catholic education which is education in general. Any time a person is educated in a Catholic school, it takes them off the rolls, the taxpayers burden.

JS: But, anyhow, this strikes me as probably being earned again and again and again--particularly those valuable years of your life when you were at the Sussex. Those are the best years of a person's life.

HM: I know, I could see that, too.

JS: So, I can't imagine a job that one could ever do where you would feel any more deserving than what you had done, and particularly those later years of the Lannens' life and certainly when you were a kid, too.

HM: My brother has such a good attitude about it. He's not bitter at all, except sometimes he'll say, "That makes me so mad. If I could have just gone to high school," he said, "I would have been so good in athletics." He was really good as far as anything like that is concerned and quick to learn. That's what makes him mad, mostly, is that he didn't get to play football.

JS: He would have gone to high school in Missoula, is that right? As you did — or could he have gone to Drummond?

HM: He could have gone. They could send him to Carroll or someplace. But they could have made arrangements. It wasn't impossible. Every time he comes here he uses such atrocious English. He uses the English that he picked up when he was growing up out there. I tell him that no one would know that you were uneducated if you just would correct your English a little bit. To him, it isn't important.

JS: But he is self-conscious about not going to school.

HM: Oh, yes. He's interested in everything. He reads a lot and has managed to put his family through college.

JS: Did he have any strong opinion, Hazel, about your sale of the property in 1980?

HM: No, he was glad I did...only thought if I didn't do it, I should leave it for a boys' home or something. He didn't want it. He was happy. I mean, he earned money. What he earned is independent of all this.

JS: When he left there did he have anything more to do with ranching? What was he doing before he retired?

HM: He was working in a plywood mill.

End side two