

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 120-004b

Interviewee: Clark Grey

Interviewer: May Vallance

Date of Interview: circa 1978

Project: Bitterroot Historical Society Oral History Project

May Vallance: Good afternoon. Would you please give me your name and tell a little bit about your family history and where you went to school?

Clark Grey: Well, my name's Clark Grey, and I was born in Anaconda in February of 1899. My family moved from Anaconda to the Bitterroot. There were five of us children at that time. Father had bought ranch out northwestern Hamilton—three miles over there from Mr. and Mrs. Renicks (?). They were the second owners of that 160 acres, and the original owner had homesteaded that several years previous and his name was Grover—Henry Grover (?). He sold it to the Renicks, and Renicks sold it to my father—160 acres there. We lived in a small log house over at the northeast corner of the ranch. Most of us grew up there until the folks built a large house over a little ways farther south in about 1910.

I started to school in Canyon Creek in the fall 1899 and stayed there until I had finished the 7th grade. I started the 8th grade in the fall and decided to move over to Hamilton, which I did, and I finished the 8th grade in a Hamilton school and then went on and finished high school at Hamilton.

MV: Do you recall any incidences that happened while you were in school at Canyon Creek?

CG: Well... [pauses]

MV: You know some of the children that went there?

CG: Well, of course I recall the names of nearly all of my classmates, and there were several of them. It was just a plain ordinary country school, and I do remember the last teacher I had over there or one of the last. Her name was Miss Cory (?), and she was a wonderful teacher and woman. I do remember that she had a boyfriend that came there once in a while to pick her up when the school closed in the evening, and they were later married after she had retired.

MV: What was his name?

CG: His name was Spencer. I can't recall his first name. Of course, the school activities were just about the same as most country schools had along in those years. They had a box social. I remember that I was very anxious to get Mabel Burnett's (?) box supper that they put up and they auctioned them off, but I was pretty much limited in funds. [laughs] Louis Downing (?) from Hamilton was over there, and he had his eye on Mabel, too. Louis was financed a lot

better than I was so he overbid me and got it, and I took one of the others. We all had a very nice time with the good lunches.

MV: Later, this Mabel, did she marry?

CG: Later on in years, Mabel finished school and married John Dowling (?) from Stevensville [Montana], and he is, of course, was the undertaker here for years until he passed away. His son Jack has taken over the business, and they're still operating.

MV: Did the Burnett's live close there to Canyon Creek? Did they farm?

CG: The Burnett's had a ranch about two and a half miles southwest of Canyon Creek School. They lived there and raised their family at that location, and that's where Mabel lived when she was going to school there.

MV: Yes. Later, I understand, she taught school in some of the rural schools—at Sawtooth and some of the other schools. You had all eight grades?

CG: Had all eight grades over in the Canyon Creek School.

MV: With one teacher? Did you only have one teacher?

CG: I think on the start there was one, but later on before I left there, I think they had two teachers.

MV: When you first started, it was a one-story building?

CG: Yes, it was. They all stayed there in that old schoolhouse until they finally built the brick building that stands there today, which is the Ricketts (?) building for the government.

MV: Yes. Later on they built two rooms there.

CG: Yes.

MV: Upstairs and downstairs. It had two rooms.

CG: Well, they were both on the one floor.

MV: Oh, I see. Of course, later after that it became the old laboratory [Rocky Mountain Laboratories].

CG: That's right.

MV: Before they built the new one in Hamilton. Where did your folks come from before they went to Anaconda?

CG: Well, Mother was raised in [unintelligible], Illinois, and Father was raised in Missouri. They came west, of course. I don't recall the year or the date. Father came to Deer Lodge, and that's where Mother and her family had settled there for a while. I think they were married at Deer Lodge and then went to Anaconda, and Father started a business there in Anaconda. He was in the butcher shop, delivered meat around Anaconda in the early days, and then he bought a ranch out three miles west of Anaconda and started a dairy. That's where we all lived until he sold the dairy and we came to the Bitterroot.

MV: Well, that's very, very interesting, and I'm sure people are going to be interested in hearing this. We thank you very much.

[Break in audio]

MV: This concludes Clark Grey's recording of the experience he had at the Canyon Creek School.

[End of Interview]