

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 120-005b**

**Interviewee: Jack Crutchfield and Virginia Crutchfield Welton**

**Interviewer: Mary Bielenberg**

**Date of Interview: circa 1978**

**Project: Bitterroot Historical Society Oral History Project**

Mary Bielenberg: —Jack Crutchfield and Virginia Crutchfield Welton. All right girls, at what period of time did your father come to Montana do you think?

Jack Crutchfield: 1890s...1887.

MB: 1887, and why did he come out here?

JC: Well, he had a partner...He went to school with a man that his name was Browne (?) at Lexington, Virginia, at Washington and Lee [University]. Mr. Browne had come out here a few years previous, and he persuaded Father to come out when he graduated.

MB: Did your father come to Hamilton right away?

JC: No, he came to Missoula. No, he came to Phillipsburg.

MB: He was in Phillipsburg, but he found that it was a little bit too rough. It was when the mines were in full force, is that right?

JC: Yes.

MB: Then he moved to Missoula, and he was a lawyer.

JC: He was a lawyer.

MB: Now, first of all, let's get his full name down.

JC: Charles Manson Crutchfield.

MB: Charles Manson Crutchfield, okay. Now, your mother was also a Virginian.

JC: She met him while he was going to school at Washington and Lee.

MB: She was from an old Virginia family, was she not?

JC: Yes, from Warrenton, Virginia.

MB: Yes. I remember your telling me that it was pre-Revolutionary days that they had settled in Virginia, is that not right?

Virginia Welton: [unintelligible] I remember when they got up there. They were an old family though.

MB: Yes that's right. Well, now—

VW: Their name was Payne—P-a-y-n-e.

MB: I see. Now, what persuaded your father to come to Hamilton?

JC: Mr. Daly persuaded him because he wanted a resident attorney when he was starting his town. See, Mr. Daly came here in '87 and sort of scouted out the valley just because he wanted to have a mine or a lumber mill for his mines in Butte and he also wanted a ranch for his racehorses. So he wanted to start his own town. Well, there was a town at Darby, one at Grantsdale, one at Corvallis, and one at Stevensville. But he wanted to plan his own. So he told my father to go to Grantsdale and offer the owner of the land up there a certain price. He said, "But don't let them do you." The people wanted more money than Mr. Daly thought was right, and so Mr. Daly said, "Gentlemen, I'll see that the grass grows in the streets of Grantsdale." And he did.

MB: Oh, I see. Is that why Grantsdale didn't become the big place, then? Because it did have four hotels at one time.

VW: Oh, it had a lot of hotels, and it had a lot of stores.

MB: Yes. I was reading one of the old newspapers, *The Bugle*, that was published there. It was saying about how many interesting places there were.

VW: I hadn't realized that until we started in [unintelligible] that it was that large. Mother used to tell us this story that he said [unintelligible] that the grass grows in the streets of Grantsdale. But even I didn't realize that the grass didn't always grow in the streets of Grantsdale.

JC: Then he bought four ranches down here. One for Telma Nadair (?), one from John M. Eastlin (?), one from Samuel Hall (?)..Who was the other one? Eastlin? I don't know, but I can tell you about it later. Eastlin. He bought the four ranches that reached from that river to the foothills of the Sapphire [Mountains] and that's Hamilton town site. Then he built his town here. Of course, there was a little settlement down at Riverside.

MB: Oh, yes. I noticed that they unloaded the horses at Riverside. They always sat on the train.

VW: Yes, and that's as far as the train went.

JC: Because it didn't go any further.

MB: Didn't it go to Grantsdale?

JC: No, not that far.

VW: It just went to Riverside.

JC: It went to Riverside and then later on it went to Grantsdale and later on it went to Darby.

MB: Well, now, did he bring Mr. Hamilton with him, or did Mr. Hamilton come with—

JC: That I don't know. He was a manager of Mr. Daly's property. He named the town for him.

MB: For him, yeah. Interesting that he didn't name it Daly, isn't it?

JC: Yes. Let's see, it was platted in 1891 and...let's see, incorporated in 1893.

MB: Well now your mother must have been quite a Virginia belle to come out to Montana and adjust to the Wild West as it was. What would she used to say—

VW: Well, she used to say that was the hardest thing she had to do. [laughs]

MB: What did she say about the area at the time?

JC: Well, when they lived in Missoula, the Indians, as it was only the house out there, the Indians all camped around the house. We still have a lot of artifacts that they gave her for her baby, her first baby. They bought tea and sugar and stuff like that. They gave her moccasins for the baby and a shield and cradleboard, and I don't know—that sort of thing.

MB: Yes. All kinds of interesting things.

JC: So they stayed there then until till '93...No, '95, pardon me. They moved to Missoula in '93, and this house, they moved up here in '95.

MB: This house was completed then?

JC: Yes, because Mr. Daly said, "You choose the lots you want."

MB: You mentioned something to me about how many lots he gave to his workers.

JC: Well, no, he gave two lots to every group that would start a church. Two, except the Catholics and he was a lapsed Catholic, but his manager, Mr. Hamilton was a Catholic and he asked for the whole block. There was to be the church on the south end and then the rectory, and this was supposed to have been a hospital over here in this corner, which never materialized. Then they were going to build a school down on 6th Street where the Catholic center is. Then he gave two lots to every other group that would start a church.

MB: Yes, and your family, then, started the Episcopal Church?

JC: Well, they started here. Mother was—

VW: In this house.

MB: Oh, is that right? In this house? Oh, that's interesting.

JC: Mother was terribly perturbed because she said there was a Presbyterian church at Grantsdale, a Methodist church at Corvallis, a Catholic church at Stevensville, and she couldn't see raising her family in another church.

MB: Well now, if she started it here, do you remember who the first Episcopal priest was that was here?

JC: Mr. Stewart (?).

VW: Oh, Mr. Stewart.

JC: He came up from Missoula. He was a priest in Missoula, and he came up at certain times. We'll have to tell her about the...I don't know whether I should tell her about the church.

VW: Oh, sure.

JC: Any rate, they built the church, you see. They had community ice cream socials and all kind of suppers any rate. They always had them here because this was the biggest house.

VW: Pancakes.

JC: Yes, pancake suppers and things like that to build a church. Well they just finished it, and the bishop was going to come and that was Bishop Brewer (?). Mr. Stewart was bound he was going to have the first service. He wanted to have the first service before the bishop came. So they scheduled a service for him, but they had just painted the pews and the pews didn't get dry. They varnished them. The pews hadn't gotten dry, and Mother said they'd get up and they'd go squish. Then they'd sit down, and the next time they got up, squish, somebody was stuck. So we always looked over the pew in front of us, and we'd say, "Oh there's old Mr. Vandenberg's

(?) britches.” You can just see where Mr. Vandenberg had sat down where he stuck to the pew. So then Bishop Brewer came.

MB: Now, he was the first bishop—

JC: No. No, no. Tuttle (?) was the first one, but he [Brewer] was the second one. He was the second bishop.

MB: Yes. Now, I saw pictures of the old Episcopal church, and it was different than it is today.

JC: Oh, yeah, I’ve got on in there.

VW: I think even when you came here it was different, wasn’t it?

MB: It was different inside. Remember, they remodeled it inside, but on the outside they had two towers and two belfries.

VW: [unintelligible] That wasn’t too long ago.

JC: Well, they had to take one down because of the—

MB: Fire or something?

JC: Well...what do you call those—

MB: Lightning?

JC: Birds would get in—

MB: Oh, I see, they ruined it—pigeons or something.

JC: Pigeons, yes.

MB: Well, now, when your mother came to town what did she say about the streets and the people who lived here?

JC: Well, the first time she came, Father brought her up here to stay at the old Page Hotel (?). They had moved the Page Hotel up from Riverside up to the corner...well, I think it's a parking lot, right across from Citizens Bank. Right there. And that was the Page Hotel. They brought Mother up, and it was on a Saturday. It was pay night at the mill, pay night on the ranch, pay night for the river pigs that rolled the logs down, and they opened the 29th saloon that night. Father left her at the hotel to go down to the office.

VW: The office, by the way, was over here where Dowling Funeral Home is.

JC: That was the company office. That was only house on this side beside this house.

MB: And the Dowling Funeral Home, then, is an original building that was here at that time.

JC: Yes, Mr. Daly had it built.

VW: That was Mr. Daly's office.

JC: He was upset because they made it so big, and he didn't need it that large for an office but of course, he was in Butte when they made it here. So Father had gone to the office. He came back, and Mother was scared to death. They were going up and down Main Street shooting off guns and [unintelligible]. When Father got here, she'd pushed the dresser in front of the door and she was sitting in the middle of the bed crying. She was going back to—

VW: She wanted to go back to Virginia.

MB: I don't blame her.

JC: Scared to death, she was simply scared. Twenty-nine saloons, and they were just in shacks and tents and whatnot. So she was pretty scared.

MB: Well, he had to do some persuading to have her come down, then, didn't he?

VW: Oh, her father didn't want...he was just furious. He didn't want her to leave, and he didn't want Father to take her.

JC: At any rate, when they came up on the train, it took seven hours from Missoula to Hamilton.

MB: Because of all the stops they made, I suppose.

JC: Yeah, they said they stopped at every fence post. They called it the old sun tour (?). They came as far as Riverside. Then they had to get a horse and buggy to come up here.

MB: At the time that this house was being built, was Mr. Daly also building the big house for himself and his [unintelligible]?

JC: I think his had been built first.

VW: Yes, but his was that old house.

JC: Yes, that burned. Mother said that Father came up on the train with him to Riverside, and he looked at Mr. Daly looked out the window and he said, "My god, Crutch, did they expect me to live in a church?" It was all—

VW: [unintelligible] [talking over each other]

JC: So they had built that.

VW: Mrs. Daly was here, but I guess she liked that house.

MB: Oh, she did? Oh, I see. Now, what did your mother and father have to say about the Dalys as people and knowing them.

VW: Father was very fond of both of them. And Mother was. Of course, I can't remember our father.

MB: Oh, I see. Did he die when you were young?

VW: He was sick when I was six.

JC: She was six and I was eight. So she he was only 47 when he went.

MB: Oh, he was? Oh, isn't that a pity?

JC: He came up here and he was just a young man and people ask me, "Well, how come Mr. O'Hara did some of the buying and whatnot?" He wasn't the only attorney. You know, Mr. Daly had attorneys all over the state for political reasons, no doubt. Mr. O'Hara was here before Father was here before Father was here, but Mr. Daly asked Father to come here, so he said that they'd build a house for him. They built this house, and while they were working on this one, then they built the one across the street, where Jenny Homm (?) lives, for the manager of the mill. Then they built the one on the next corner where...What's his name?

VW: [unintelligible]

JC: [unintelligible] lives, and that was for the manager of the store.

MB: Now, you mentioned the store, was this the mercantile?

JC: The company store.

VW: [unintelligible]



JC: The old Bitterroot Development Company. Bitterroot Development Company was first, and then it became the Ravalli Mercantile.

MB: Yes. Well, now, the Bitterroot Development Company was located down where the St. John's Drugstore was, was that where it was?

JC: No. The first Bitterroot Development Company was a small building that was down where the Citizen's State Bank was. It was just a small...I don't know if there was one or two rooms, something like that. Then they moved it up to where Irene's (?) was. [unintelligible].

MB: Oh on that side. Western Montana Outfitters now.

JC: Yes, they moved it up there, and then they built the brick building across the street and then called it the Ravalli Mercantile. I think that was when it was sold to the Anaconda Company.

MB: Now, the Ravalli Mercantile was quite a store, was it not? Even the Bitterroot Development Company?

VW: Carried everything: buggies and everything else.

JC: Yes, hardware and groceries and men's clothing and women's clothing and shoes.

VW: Millinery place.

JC: Yes, millinery. All of those things.

MB: Everything was shipped up I suppose, from Missoula on the train. Was there a coach at all, a stagecoach that would come up at all?

VW: I don't remember hearing about it.

JC: All she said was they came up on the train. Father brought her up once in a horse and buggy and changed horses in Stevensville, and then made it in a day. Everybody thought he had just done the impossible to bring her up here.

VW: Came from Missoula in one whole day.

MB: Yes, isn't that marvelous? Well now, when your mother was a young woman with her young family and all, and Mrs. Daly would have her afternoon teas, was it quite an occasion for the area?

VW: Well, I think when she had those parties that she gave, she gave quite a lot of parties, didn't she? Don't you remember that?

JC: I remember when we had to go out and play with the kids that I disliked.

MB: Oh, out with the Daly kids. Oh, I see. You didn't care them.

JC: Well, I liked them alright, but I never wanted to go up there.

VW: Jack wanted to go places, you know? Always did since she was little.

MB: Catherine Byrd was telling me there was a pool out there, a swimming pool. Tell me about the area out there. What was it like?

JC: Oh, gosh I don't remember. They had the lake out there, and they had the swimming pool and they had the greenhouse. I don't remember anything else much, do you? I remember all of heads of when Marcus, Jr. had gone hunting, all the trophies he had. I remember all of those, but I don't remember much about him.

MB: What happened to Marcus, Jr.?

JC: How was he killed?

VW: I don't remember. I can remember when he died, but I can't remember—

MB: Was he a fairly young man, too?

JC: Yes. He was married to a Hungarian woman—one of the most beautiful women, I thought, as a kid. I thought she was beautiful.

VW: Was she Hungarian, too?

JC: Yes, she was Hungarian.

VW: I didn't realize she was Hungarian.

JC: I'm pretty sure she was.

VW: But she was beautiful.

JC: She was a beautiful woman.

VW: That was his last wife, the one that—

JC: No, you're thinking about—

MB: You're thinking of Marcus Daly III.

JC: You're thinking of Marcus Daly III. Mark was only married once.

VW: I thought he had a lot more than one.

JC: I don't think so. I don't know.

MB: Well, when Marcus Daly died, it was in 1900, so what did your father do then? Did he continue on working for the company, and was their lawyer over here?

JC: Yes, he kept his own office here, and his office was there above the bank club. That was the old Ravalli County Bank, that was built for the Ravalli County Bank, and his office was back in the corner on this side. When he was going to come home for lunch, and this was before they had telephones, he would put a newspaper in the window, and Mother could see it here and know when he was coming home.

MB: Oh, I see. That few buildings between?

JC: There wasn't anything. You could just see anything. There wasn't a thing in between.

MB: Well now, where did you girls go to school?

JC: Over in Hamilton.

VW: Well, of course when Father died, other people, relatives in Virginia wanted Mother to bring us back there. Mother didn't want to do it. She said, "We planned to make...that's where Mr. Crutchfield wanted us to be."

VW: [speaks to someone / something else] Oh, you get off of there!

JC: We went to the grade schools here.

VW: So we went to school [unintelligible] school, public school. Even if you do want to send her on to—

JC: Private school.

VW: —private school.

MB: If there weren't very many homes around, you didn't have very many children in your schools?

VW: Oh my goodness. When we were little kids we had—

JC: Within two blocks there were 42 youngsters—42 after this built up.

VW: This was all before we grew up.

JC: Before we were born.

MB: It began to build up. Were they all employees of Daly's who lived here?

VW: No, no. A lot of them were.

JC: Most of them were. They would stay either with the mill or with the ranch or some of the Bitterroot Development Company's businesses.

MB: Was the original ranch...Now, in one of the newspapers I was reading, it mentioned that the ranch was 3,000 acres. Well that was in 1889, I was reading. Now of course, it got considerably larger than that. It's about 12,000 acres, I think.

JC: I have it written down in here. I'll look. I forgot [unintelligible].

VW: [unintelligible] sold a lot of that stuff.

JC: Yes, Uncle Horace (?) most of the stuff. So he bought everything after he bought the town site. Then he bought all the property from Grantsdale to Corvallis on the east bench.

VW: We always called him Uncle Horace because [unintelligible].

JV: On the east bench.

MB: Gerard, you're talking about.

JC: No. Horace Dersten (?).

VW: Wasn't he related?

JC: Yes, he was related.

VW: [unintelligible]

JC: I think he married Mrs. Daly's sister, didn't he? I don't remember what the relationship was. We called him Uncle Horace. When he was a manager here at—

MB: Oh, he was the manager, I see.

JC: [unintelligible] after Mr. Daly died. He sold a lot of it off, you see. Then I don't know how many acres Margaret still has.

MB: Well, I think it's 12,000.

JC: Well, it seems to me it was...I've forgotten how many thousand.

MB: Anyway, it's considerably larger than the first group that he bought when he first came here. Now, he had a mill; where was the mill located?

JC: Down where the Presbyterian Church and the hospital is. Right down there, at the end of Main Street.

MB: Oh, I see. The Main Street went right down to the river.

JC: Main Street didn't go, it wasn't the main street then. Didn't go down that far, did it? The main part going up the valley was on 2nd Street, now where the highway is.

VW: The other highway was on 2nd Street for years.

MB: I see. Well, it's a nice wide street. When was the Ravalli Hotel built?

JC: Well, it was built before Mr. Daly's death. Now, just what the date was, I don't know. I don't remember when it was, Mary, but a Mr. William Jennings Bryan was coming here to make a talk. Mr. Daly wanted a place for him to stay and he had no place. There was no hotel except the old Page Hotel, which turned out to be the Ravalli Hotel later...not the Ravalli Hotel but the Hamilton Hotel. He said he had a lot of guests coming from Butte, so he farmed them out to all the people that lived around. Then he said, "I'm going to build a hotel to take care of this town, and we hope eventually to put a railroad between here and Butte so the Butte people could come over Skalkaho [Pass] on the railroad." So many of those people from Butte came and spent the summers here.

MB: Yes. I imagine it was quite a social event, wasn't it?

JC: Well, I don't know how much of a social event, but I know they got away from the smoke and everything of that sort in Butte. See, they'd bring the families over here for the summer because there were a lot of homes around town here that people came to.

[speaks to someone else] Can you make it?

So he built the hotel then. I don't know who was the first manager? J.O. Reid (?) was the one I remember.

VW: The first? I don't know.

JC: Then the people would come from Butte and stay at the hotels, a lot of them, if they didn't have homes here. They'd stay at the hotel. Then the wintertime, it was rented out to teachers. But it had a bar, and it had a dining room.

MB: Didn't they have a number of social functions—dances and things—there?

JC: Oh, yeah. What was that one that I have the picture of upstairs?

VW: [unintelligible]

JC: I can't remember. Any rate, it was quite an affair. Then during about the 1910s is when that was that was. That was after Mr. Daly's time. It was during the apple boom. That's when they had all the social...I don't think there was much social life before that.

MB: I see. Now, did the Dalys spend a lot of time here during the time that he was building up this ranch?

JC: No, I don't think so. I think he came back and forth from Butte all the time.

MB: And how about Mrs. Daly?

JC: She came every summer, didn't she?

MB: Oh, I see, just in the summer.

VW: Yes.

JC: She didn't stay here in the wintertime.

VW: She always came in the summer.

JC: She came in the summer always.

VW: They had their place in New York that they stayed in then, didn't they, in the wintertime?

JC: She was in Butte part of the time, and Anaconda. I don't [unintelligible].

VW: She came from Utah, didn't she?

MB: Yes, she was from Utah.

JC: Her father was a miner—a mine owner in Utah—but I don't know where she originally came from.

MB: Wasn't she an Episcopalian?

JC: Yes. She was buried from here.

MB: Oh, she was? Oh, that's interesting. Now, the present Catholic church, is it the same on the exterior as it was when it was first built?

JC: Yes.

MB: Oh, I see. How about any of the other churches in town? Did they build any besides the—

JC: Well, they all built their own. All the Presbyterians built this one across the corner here. Then—

MB: Christ Church or something?

JC: Christ Bible Church. No.

MB: I think it is.

JC: Christ Bible Church. Nicest fellow you ever saw that's the minister over there. Then they built our church and they built the Christian Church.

MB: Which is?

JC: What was the Christian church then. It was right behind the Episcopal church.

JC: That one over there. That was to be the Christian church, and they were building that at the same time that they were building this house. Carpenters work seven days a week. So the Christians wouldn't let them work on the church on Sunday, so they built this house on Sunday. So Mother said she didn't know if she had the best house or the worst house because it was built on Sunday. [laughs]

VW: It was either the best house or the worst house because it was built on Sunday. [laughs]

MB: Well, it looks to me like it stood up under a lot of years.

JC: Then they finished the Christian church, and in the meantime, the Baptist church was down there by the old hospital, that little one. It was a little wooden building, and then they federated with the Methodists. So they had the Federated Church down there. That property was bought by the Missouri Synod Church. Then they tore it down and built this one that's there now. That's the one that's there.

MB: How about the high school? Was there a high school here?

JC: The high school was over where the courthouse is. That was what we called the Central building, didn't we? [unintelligible] Jefferson and Lincoln. It was Central building or the Lincoln. The grade schools were downstairs, and the high school was upstairs. The first four grades were down at the Washington, where the Washington School is, how it wasn't the same building. That was the first four, because I know when I was in the third grade, I started down there. Then they sent us up to the Central building. They were finishing the Jefferson up here at the end of 5th Street. I finished the 3rd, 4th, and 5th, and then went back to the Central building for the 6th, 7th, and 8th. Then I went back to the Jefferson; in the meantime, that was made the high school, and I graduated from high school up there. Then I taught over here.

MB: You taught? Where did you teach at?

JC: [unintelligible].

MB: Oh, you did? Well, Jack, when the apples were in full sway here, was it mostly in the west side that the orchards were, or where were most of the orchards?

JC: No, no. Up around Charlos Heights and up around Darby and down on the east bench.

VW: Down around Corvallis.

JC: Over on 1,000-Acre Ranch. Then the Bitterroot [unintelligible] was down to the east of Stevensville. It was all on that side of the river—on the east side of the river.

MB: It was really quite an occasion here, wasn't it, when they had the apple boom here? They had people coming from all over to live here.

VW: We're getting the same kind of a boom now. We're going to end up just like we did.

MB: Well, but what's bringing them? Just the beauty of the valley now.

VW: It should bring them, but I think it the mining that these fellows that want to sell them—

JC: Sell their property.



VW: I think it's really—

JC: See, before, they had the...How many real estate offices did I count in that things that day? That Mr. Romney (?) put out? Real estate offices just sprung up just like mushrooms all over. Everybody was—

VW: That's what they're doing here now.

JC: Everybody's selling real estate.

MB: When the apple boom was on, and so they could sell all this property, yes.

VW: Still, when I was a little kid, I can remember every house that was built in Hamilton at that time. Then after the 1910 era, you just can never imagine how it is. We could look at new houses every time they'd be built. There wasn't one in several years after that big boom. I'm afraid that's what going to happen with this boom.

MB: Well, of course, it's a different group of people that are living here now. They're not here to work at [talking over each other]. Yes, they're mostly retired.

VW: [talking over each other] Because they all moved out then, you know?

JC: They all moved out. Because we can go up and down the streets and say, "Well, this was so-and-so's house during the apple boom, and this was so-and-so's house during the apple boom."

MB: Were they people who bought it as an investment and they thought they'd make some money, or they were people who worked [talking over each other].

JC: They thought they were making money. It was mostly people from around Ohio and the Midwest, a lot of them because...What was the name of that man that sponsored most of them? That they built up the Charlos clubhouse?

[End of Interview]