

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: 120-006c

Interviewee: Kathryn Holloron Gibbons and Maxine Holloron

Interviewer: May Vallance

Date of Interview: February 17, 1978

Project: Bitterroot Historical Society Oral History Project

May Vallance: Tell us your names and something about your families and the schools that you went to as a young child. Anything that you can remember we will appreciate.

Kathryn Gibbons: I'm Kathy Gibbons.

Maxine Holloron: I'm Maxine Holloron.

KG: We attended the Mountain View School four miles northeast of Corvallis. The school was built in 1911 and at that time there were about 24 students. They held school there for three years and then it was consolidated with the Corvallis School in 1914. We had three teachers for the three years: Ruth Neil, Miss Owens, and Louie Nelson. Our family lived over two miles from school and we walked to school morning and night.

MH: There was four of us.

KG: I think there were—

MH: No, five, yes.

KG: Yes, from our family.

MH: Um, hm.

KG: There were five attending: three girls and two boys. Some of the other family names were the Nimricks, the Hulses, the Ericksons, the Reagans, the Wilcox, Whites, and Jackmans, and Snow, Donald Snow. Every Sunday, a Reverend Reagan held church in the schoolhouse.

MV: How interesting. That was before the Swansons settled there?

MH: No, they had just moved there.

MV: The Swansons had just moved.

MH: Yes, because Mrs. Swanson used to tell me that when they bought the place, they said there was a school within a block and also a Sunday school, a church and Sunday school. So after they were here about two years, they consolidated the school and moved out.

MV: Yes. Helen wasn't old enough to go to school then?

MH: No, she was a little girl.

KG: I started to school there, and I was about the youngest, wasn't I?

MH: Yes.

MV: You started-

KG: I was in the third grade when we consolidated, so I attended there three years.

MV: You were considerably younger than I was because I was in the seventh grade when we consolidated from Dutch Hill, you know.

KG: Yes.

MH: Was Hob in your room?

MV: Pardon?

MH: Was Hobbiter Ted (?) in your class?

MV: Hobart.

KG: Holloron.

MH: Our brother.

MV: I don't remember that he was, but maybe he was.

MH: I think he was.

MV: Was he in seventh grade then? Yes. There were so many of them, but the one I remember was Earl Randolph. My, I thought he was nice. You know, the seventh-grade girls moving over here, the Dutch Hill kids weren't very much, you know. [laughs] It was the same way around with the boys.

KG: When we attended school at Mountain View, there was, well, several boys and several girls walked in the same direction, and we had quite a few little tiffs on the way there, especially on the way home from school.

MV: Yes. In the morning you were in too much of a hurry to get there on time.

KG: Yes. Probably had just enough time to get there.

MV: What were some of those tiffs?

KG: Rock-throwing and— [laughs]

MV: Did they host Sunday school every Sunday?

KG: Every Sunday.

MV: And they continued after they consolidated?

KG: Yes. There were three of the Reagan children attending. I mean, it was their father whom you probably knew.

MH: Preacher Reagan?

MV: Yes, I'm sure. Wasn't he in Corvallis at one of the churches for a while?

MH: Yes.

KG: Yes, he was at the Methodist Church.

MV: At the Methodist Church, yes.

KG: I think of his family, there's just Charles living. No, and Leona in Hamilton.

MH: You know Leona.

MV: She lives in Hamilton? What's her name now?

KG: I can't think of her name.

MH: It'll come to us. She always comes to the Methodist dinners. Her name was—

[talking over each other]

KG: No, it was Martha: Martha Reagan, and she lives on South 3rd.

MV: Is that right? I probably know her, but I didn't realize she was a Reagan.

KG: Now did you want something concerning our family?

MV: That's right. If you can't think of anything more, did you have basket socials and that sort of thing?

Both: Oh, yes.

KG: They'd have basket socials and quite elaborate Christmas programs.

MH: Kathy and I were talking; we remembered a Christmas program. She was to be the little red hen. Well, she was only in the first grade, and they thought that was a little bit too much for her to memorize, so they had two little red hens. I was the other little red hen.

MV: Oh, isn't that fun? You don't remember any other incidents that happened at school?

MH: None that we'd like to tell. [laughs]

KG: I remember, well it was our brother, Hobart was a very good artist, and for every, you know, holiday, Christmas, Thanksgiving, he always drew on the blackboard. He'd have big turkeys and big Santa Clauses.

MV: Oh, wonderful.

KG: It was a lot of fun, really.

MV: Really pleasant memories.

KG: Yes, real pleasant memories.

MV: Especially when you have a sizeable family. There's always so many things that—well, they continued to have it as sort of a community center for quite a while, didn't they, after they consolidated?

MH: Yes, they did.

KG: Now the Swansons use it for an apple house.

MV: Yes.

KG: We drove by there yesterday after we got talking about this and it's standing there and it doesn't look a bit dilapidated.

MH: No.

KG: It's in very good condition.

MV: Yes, that's amazing. They used good lumber and did a good job building.

KG: Yes. Then, the carpenters really put things together well.

MV: That's right. They certainly did. Did you have something you might tell about your family?

KG: Well, of course we're a pioneer family. Our parents, James and Elizabeth Holloron, came to Montana from Jim, Idaho, in 1901. To the Bitterroot in 1902, and at that time, they and their six children came: Alma, Blanche, Morris [Maurice], Edward, Hobart, and Veta.

MH: Veta likes to tell that she was born in Granite.

KG: Yes.

MV: Oh, really?

KG: Veta was born in Granite, and then Maxine, Kathleen, Donald, and Robert were born in the Corvallis area. In 1908 they homesteaded 160 acres, four miles northeast of Corvallis. By the way, that isn't too far from the schoolhouse. The final homestead papers were dated 1910 and signed by President William H. Taft. Veta and Bob still live in the original home, which has of course been enlarged. Dee [Donald] and Robert Holloron own and farm the original 160 acres and an additional 50 acres. The ten children, five: Veta, Donald, Maxine, Robert, and Kathleen, still live in the Corvallis area.

MH: We have many pleasant memories of driving up through the sagebrush. You know, there wasn't a road anywhere.

KG: No.

MH: All the bitterroots, you know, was growing in that sagebrush.

MV: That's right. Beautiful in the spring.

MH: Yes it was.

MV: Were your parents born in Idaho?

KG: No. Our father was a miner, and he worked in mines. That's what took him to Granite, Montana, was the silver mine.

MV: I see.

MH: He also made bricks, didn't he?

KG: Yes, he was a bricklayer.

MV: From what state did they come?

KG: They came from Iowa.

MV: Oh, I see. And of course they were married when they came from Iowa.

KG: Yes.

MV: Kathy, you were a school teacher for some years. Did you go to Normal School after you graduated from high school?

KG: Yes. I graduated from high school in 1924 and then I attended teacher's Normal at Dillon for one year, and I was issued a provisional certificate. Then I did get a job in Florence before I went back. I taught in Florence four years. Then I had enough money to go back and finish school and when I finished, I finished in April. The county superintendent called and told me they needed a teacher at West Fork and would I finish the year? So I went up West Fork to Overridge School and taught two months.

MV: Well, that's interesting.

KG: Then I was hired in Corvallis, then, and I off and on taught 24 and a half years altogether. But I was married in the meantime and there would be years I didn't teach and then something would come up and I would go back to teaching again. So I did teach 24 and a half years.

MV: What grades did you teach?

KG: I had the third and later the fourth grade.

MV: Well, that's very interesting and I certainly appreciate all the things that you girls have told us. I'm sure it's going to be of interest to youngsters coming on up and studying the history of the valley and thank you very much.

[Break in audio]

MV: This concludes the interview with Kathryn Holloron Gibbons and Maxine Holloron of school district number 36, Mountain View.

[End of Interview]