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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: 120-011a

Interviewee: Anne Keeling Woodruff

Interviewer: May Vallance

Date of Interview: circa 1978

Project: Bitterroot Historical Society Oral History Project

Anne Keeling Woodruff: —and then we would auction off the boxes. Well, the boxes each held a supper. It would be sandwiches and pie and cake and candy or whatever and the woman's name would be on a piece of paper inside the box. Nobody was supposed to know whose box it was. They put the women's boxes in one group, and the little girls' boxes in another group. Well, they'd auction off the ladies' boxes first and the prize was always the teacher's box. All the young fellows around us were determined to get the teacher's box. Well, that year my mother had gone all out to fix a real dandy box for me. She put [unintelligible], crepe paper around the outside, and then she had a bouquet of pink paper roses on top. It was a beauty. So we took it in, put it on the table for little girls' boxes, and all the rest of the little girls' boxes looked very pale compared to mine [laughs].

But, when the auctioneer was going on and they always had a lot of fun with the kidding the ones that were bidding, and there's quite a lot of horseplay going on in the crowd. Pretty soon here comes my box up with the ladies' boxes. And the bidding started. It kept going up and up and up, everybody knew that would be the teacher's box. Finally they got it up to \$7.50 and one of the younger boys got it. When he opened the box, his face fell [laughs] when he saw the name of a little 8-year-old girl. Evidently, some of the women thought that it must have been a mistake to have that box with the little girls' and they put it in with the women's. Well, that's about all the box stuff for this particular young man [unintelligible].

May Vallance: Oh, was it? [laughs]

AW: It also spoiled the supper for her little bashful girl, who everybody knew whose box it was. My father brought it in for 75 cents and I ate with him.

MV: [laughs] That's funny.

AW: I think they had a literary society for some of the older young people in the neighborhood that would meet at the schoolhouse over the weekend. I didn't attend any of those, I was too young. But we always had poems to learn in class. We'd recite poems when we had our Easter programs and 4th of July—or last day of school programs and the Easter programs. I recall especially one Easter program when the primary teacher had about seven little boys all the same age and each little boy was representing a different spring flora, and she had a large replica of each flower for each boy. Then, they had to sing a little song to represent the flower. Well, Little Freddy Smith was little Daffodil Dilly, the first flower of the spring [laughs].

MV: Fred would like to hear that, I know. Well Fred was—

AW: Oh, what joy you bring.

MV: [laughs] Fred was in my class, too, and I remember that we had a program, and I was to speak the piece of the perplexed housewife. I really worked hard on it because it must have had six or eight stanzas in it. The housewife was so busy, she just didn't know what to do about this and that and the other thing. I remember that one line said, "Hush, hush, now dear little Freddy." I couldn't help but look at Fred and grin at him, and he just blushed. Oh, he just really thought—but, that always amused me.

AW: [laughs] Yes, old Freddy was one to blush, all right. He was rather fair complexioned, light hair.

MV: Now is this about all that you remember?

AW: Yes.

MV: Well, I certainly appreciate this. This concludes the interview with an Anna (sic) Keeling Woodruff of the Fairplay School, district 11.

[Break in audio]

AW: Mother started teaching—

MV: Would you please tell me your name and what school you're going to tell us about?

AW: My name is Anne Woodruff, and I'm going to tell about the Fairplay School to south of Victor. It was a little one-room schoolhouse up on the side of a sandy hill. It was about five miles from our home up on Dutch Hill. My mother [who was the teacher] had to drive horse and buggy all that distance, the entire school term. Some days when my father had to go to town, she would take me to school with her. We had to have hot rocks wrapped up in burlap bags in the buggy to keep our feet warm. Sometimes it would be so very cold that when we got to the schoolhouse, there would always be one of the older boys there to take the horse and put him in the stable. They'd have a big, hot fire going in the big potbelly stove in the side of the schoolhouse.

There was always a bucket of water next to the door with a dipper hanging in it for all the children to get their drinks of water, but where they got their water for that school, I really don't know. I don't think they had a well. But they may have melted snow for it. Anyway, it was a cheerful little schoolhouse with windows all around and a belfry over the entryway. On frosty mornings when the bells would carry, we could sometimes hear the Corvallis school bell and the Fairplay school bell and the Fairview school bell, all up and ringing for the classes to come at 9 o'clock in the morning. There were several eighth grade girls in the school that really made a

fuss over me. I had my third birthday that winter. I don't remember too much about it, but some of the things really stay under that memory that I'll never forget. One of the things: Little [unintelligible] sat about three seats back of the front seat from my mother. She made a little pallet for me to take a nap on during school time. Sometimes I would raise up and look over the edge of the school room, and this little boy would make a face at me to make me cry. Nobody knew what I was crying about. He would just giggle. I remember some of the older girls—

MV: Do you remember who this boy was that—

AW: Yes, his name was Byron.

MV: And his last name?

AW: Well, there were several with—his last name was Thrailkill. I remember several of the family names [unintelligible]. There was a S. Johnson, and Tallmander, Fowler, and Applebury, Vitaur, and a Sestock. There undoubtedly were more, but those names seem to stick in my memory. Then the girls were named Jessie and Bessie and Mabel. One weekend, they were having a meeting of the schoolboard at one of the houses, and I believe it was a Tallmander house. At any rate, it was a large, two-story brick building on the east side of the county road, just south of Victor. I was quite impressed with the big dining room with the long table and all of the dishes laid on the table, and so many people around because we had been living in a tiny two-room little cabin. The mashed potatoes had been generously laced with pepper, and the first bite of potatoes that I had, my mouth was on fire. A cold glass of water put the fire out, and I up and stifled the screaming. That wasn't a very successful day for me.

MV: I don't believe you have told us the name of your mother.

AW: Oh, it was Della Hill Keeling. This school term was in the fall of 1900, and the spring of 1901.

MV: This concludes the interview with Anne Keeling Woodruff of the Fairview School District, number 10.