

Oral History Number: 120-011e
Interviewee: Emma Van Blaricom Freeze
Interviewer: May Vallance
Date of Interview: circa 1978
Project: Bitterroot Historical Society Oral History Project

May Vallance: Good afternoon. Would you tell us a little bit about what your name is and about your family and the school that you went to and the pupils that went there? Anything you can remember about the school?

Emma Freeze: My name is Emma Freeze. My father was born in Long Prairie, Minnesota, and he and his father and his brother came to Victor the winter of '88 and '89 and homesteaded Fred Burr. My mother was born in Deer Lodge Valley, and her and her parents came to the Bitterroot when she was a small girl. My mother's father and mother operated the first eating house in Hamilton called the Geyer House, and they also ran the boarding house in Grantsdale where the railroad turned around. I went to school at the Roll Schoolhouse my first two years in Victor on Fred Burr Creek. There was families: the Mackeys, the Castillos, the Rogers, Kerns, Wayletts, and others that I can't remember. The teacher was Betty Johnson. I went to school two years to her and then the third year I rode on the first horse-drawn school wagon and went to Victor. My teacher was still Betty Johnson. I didn't graduate from Victor School.

MV: Who drove this—

EF: My father drove the one of the first horse-drawn school wagons.

MV: [unintelligible].

EF: Oh, in the winter when it was real cold, they would heat little charcoal briquettes and put them in little foot warmers to keep the children's feet warm. Then we later moved from the ranch to Victor and I went to Victor School.

MV: Was this school—did you have any community affairs there? Did you have any box—

EF: Oh, yes, we had the Christmas parties and other get-togethers, but I was quite small and I can't remember too much about them.

MV: Did you have box socials?

EF: Well, not to my knowledge. I can't—

MV: What about a literary society? Did the older ones?

EF: No. There were just mostly just old-fashioned get-togethers.

MV: Well, thank you very much because Roll School, I really didn't know anything about it, but Frank Rummel told me that Archie McKillop, who lived down on Mill Creek put on the roof and Jeff Smith helped him. There was someone else that helped him, and Charlie was always a very careful carpenter, but somehow or other he fell off the roof and broke his arm.

EF: I forgot to tell about the R.E.A. building. The Roll Schoolhouse was torn down by Hugh Lockridge and his father and rebuilt in Corvallis. They operated a store there for a while and then that was the home of the first R.E.A. Later—

[Break in audio]

MV: Byron Thrailkill told me that there was a sawmill up Fred Burr.

EF: It isn't running, I don't think.

MV: Yes. Up Fred Burr Creek, and he said that they had a narrow gauge track coming from a sawmill up there. Do you know anything about a sawmill being up on Fred Burr Creek?

EF: I know that my father operated a sawmill on Fred Burr Creek in about 1907. It was a short setting, of just a few months setting. I can remember them telling about the Rogers brothers; four of them worked there, plus other neighbors. I remember my mother telling me that I had more money than any of them when we left camp because I was little and everyone loved little children.

MV: Do you recall anything about this narrow track and the train that they had, the cars?

EF: Well, not really, but it could have been because I don't know of any other sawmill having been there.

MV: This concludes Emma Van Blaricom Freeze's report on the Roll School, district 29.

[End of Interview]