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Interviewee: Katherine Eccleston

Interviewer: Meg Pannkuk and Patrick Cook

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MP: Okay, so my name is Meg Pannkuk and I'm here with Patrick...What's your last name?

PC: Cook.

MP: Cook, Patrick Cook to interview Kay Eccleston in Anaconda, Montana. The date is March 4, 2011. So Kay, how about we just start and you tell me a little about yourself.

KE: Okay, my full name is Katherine Stromberg Eccleston, I was born in Anaconda, [full birth date restricted], 1953. I'm married to Carl Eccleston. We have two children, Eric and Kelsey; they're both married and have their own families. One lives in Ohio, the other in California. My mom and dad were both born in Anaconda, both children of immigrant parents, my father's parents came from Sweden. My grand...my mother's grandfather came from Lettermore in Ireland, My grandmother was also 100 percent Irish although her parents came from Boston. Interestingly enough I've never been able to find a birth certificate for my grandmother so I don't know if she was born in Boston or born in Deerlodge County.

MP: Okay, and you're grandfather was from Ireland originally, is that what you said?

KE: Yes, he emigrated when, apparently when he was relatively young, in his teens some, at some point in time somewhere, I want to...it was after the turn of the century so somewhere in the like maybe like the 1910s, 19 teens. He came from Lettermore, County Galway. It's an area that's now a designated *Gaeltacht*, and English was his second language he actually spoke Irish with brothers here in Anaconda. My mom was always interested in learning a little snippet here and there of Irish but when we were kids she tried to teach us things like our prayers in Irish and we would have nothing to do with it.

MP: [laughing] Did your grandmother...or your mother, excuse me, did she grow up around a lot of Irish then, being spoken around the household?

KE: Her father spoke Irish to the kids, and he would speak Irish to his brothers and the folks that came from the general area in Ireland where he was from. But the story in the family was always that when the wives were around they didn't speak much Irish. It was kind of their secret language.

MP: [laughing] That's funny, and your grandfather, did he immigrate with his brothers here to Montana?

KE: The story that we were always told was that they came from a relatively large family. The father had...was a boatman. We don't know if, if that meant he owned his own boat but it would have been very small and they came from at that time a very poor area and it was a kind of subs- subsistence living, so he wasn't...There really was not enough work to support the number of boys in the family so as soon as the kids were old enough—14 or 15 then—they started making arrangements to join...Their mother's sister had emigrated to the United States, and she was the sponsor of all the children. One of his brothers died in Ireland in a drowning accident near the home, and another sister died very young as a child. But all of the other siblings in the family immigrated to the United States, and only one ever returned.

MP: Do you know if your grandfather went back to visit at all or did he never go—

KE: He never did. Actually my grandfather was born [died] a little, somewhere close to a year before I was born, and he did have a younger brother, Coleman. Coleman was at least ten years younger than my grandfather, but we always looked to Coley as our surrogate grandfather. It was kind of an interesting situation because my grandmother, Mary, and Michael Donohue, were married here. Mary's younger sister Julia lived with them because her mother was a widow and she didn't get along with the step father, and then when Coleman came over, Michael's younger brother, Julia and Coleman were married. So my mom always talked about the fact that the two Donohue families, they were double cousins, so the two brothers married two sisters. So Coley adopted us, he treated us as grandchildren and we looked to him as a grandfather.

MP: Okay, when they moved over you said that they came over to your, I guess it would be, your grandfather's mother's sister.

KE: Yes.

MP: Where was she living at the time in the U.S., do you know?

KE: It was a small town in Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh, and I have the name of it written down somewhere. It was Braddock, Pennsylvania? It was a very small enclave, and it was really interesting because an awful lot of people from the Lettermore area immigrated because they knew of friends or relatives working there. Then, some of them ventured out to Montana when, you know perhaps when times were tight at the steel mills and found work on the smelter. So they just gradually came out here by word of mouth. It was very interesting in that the area my grandfather was born is very remote, sparsely populated kind of like a very close-knit little community, and then it was almost like the immigrated their entire community, first to Pennsylvania and then out to Montana. It's interesting that, you know, if you ask someone from Dublin or another big city, you know, "What's the best way to get out to Lettermore?"

They would say, you know, who goes? You know, it's just so far flung. You would hear the same thing if you, say we're in Chicago and we say, Do you know the way to Anaconda Montana?

Well, you know, why would you want to go all the way out there? It's interesting that they both ended up in, or both communities kind of were in the same situation geographically.

MP: Do you think that, was that kind of just a natural transition from them to go from possibly like the steel mill in Pennsylvania to come out here and work for the smelter here in Anaconda?

KE: Yes, it, you know that is kinda logical but I think it had more to do with the fact that members of the community had emigrated and found work and I think the work was incidental. They had all been small holding agricultural folks or fisherman, but I think it was more trying to stay with the people they were familiar with, their community. The communities kind of immigrated, as it were.

MP: Where did your grandfather meet your grandmother?

KE: He met my grandmother in Anaconda, because as I said we're pretty certain my grandmother was born in Deerlodge County. Her family lived on the outskirts of Anaconda not in the city proper. I'm not exactly sure how, you know, what, how or where they met, but Anaconda in those days was...it wasn't segregated as far as ethnicity goes, but there were lots of pockets of ethnic groups. It was kind of unusual to socialize or marry outside of those ethnic groups. So her father was...her father was an Irishman from Kerry, and so, I don't know...My grandfather knew him on the smelter and met his daughter. I really...we really don't know. They talked very little about those types of things, and on the other hand too, you usually only get interested in asking those questions after the people you should have asked are long gone.

MP: Right. Were there any stories that you heard from your parents about your grandfather working here in Anaconda?

KE: Yes, some. Kind of. Those just...those really interesting...Well, we thought interesting—every family thinks they're interesting—little tidbits. My grandfather really like dogs and he had like a Border Collie, and the Border Collie went everywhere with him. In addition to working on the smelter he also had a couple of odd jobs around town one of which was, I think the technical term is, he was the swamper at the Owl Bar, which means that after the bar closed he would sweep the floors and clean up. So he took the dog with him all the time. My dad, in particular, used to tell stories about Mike and his dog and the fact that the dog was treated like a person at the Owl Bar. They actually had a bar stool [laughing] that the dog sat on, and if...The bartender was just as fond of the dog as my grandfather was, and if someone was sitting in the bar stool and the dog came into the bar, the barman would ask the patron to get off the barstool and let the dog sit on the bar stool.

MP: [laughing] So your grandfather was a swamper at a bar. Did he have any other jobs? Did he work at the smelter?

KE: He did work at the smelter but I'm not sure what, I'm not exactly sure what the capacity was. I would- I'm not really sure. Unfortunately, like I said, you always think of the thing you should have asked...The only person who would have known died last June and it's just one of those things. It was my mother's brother, and he'd share a few things but he was about as closed mouth as the stories I heard about my grandfather. You know, they came from a very, a very rural area that was very economically deprived, and my grandfather, my adoptive grandfather, Coleman Donohue, the few things that he would say about it was people would ask him if he ever wanted to go back and he would always say why on earth would I ever go back there? If he was asked to describe it, all he would say is well it is a terrible, rocky place. The first time that I went there, I mean I thought that the, I thought the landscape was beautiful. But it is a lot of limestone rock. A lot of the fields were built up because they supplemented them with...they carried in seaweed and all kinds of other things to make the ground better but it is very sparse, a very sparse and spare landscape.

MP: When did you go and visit Ireland?

KE: I've gone to Ireland twice. I want to say, I think, I'm not positive, but I think the first time we went was, '99—1999 or 2000—and then when my daughter graduated she did her PhD work in the UK and so when she graduated we went back again and met our son. We visited with Kelsey in Scotland and then we spent a week in Ireland. We went out to the area where my grandfather was from both times.

MP: How was that experience, going and visiting where your grandfather was from?

KE: Actually, it was really interesting. One thing about coming from a really small community like Anaconda is it's always surprising when you go some place like the big city and you hear so many times that somebody ran into somebody that knew somebody from Butte or ran into somebody in some place in New York City or Chicago or something, and we had a really, a really interesting experience like that. My grandfather had one sister that immigrated, married a gentleman, I want to say that the husband's name was Smith, but I'm not positive. But he died and she returned to Ireland, and all we ever knew, we got interested and started asking questions like, "Well, whatever happened to her?" Well she went back to Ireland and she married a man named Kelly. [Laughing] So I was like, there are a lot of Kellys in Ireland, I'm sure. And so the second time we went to Ireland we stayed at an Irish-speaking B&B very near where my grandfather was from, and, you know, the woman was very friendly and she wanted to know, you know, "Why on earth did you come all the way out here?" and so we told her. She said "Well, what was the family name?"

I said, "Donohue."

She said, "You know, let me make a phone call." So she made a few phone calls and we met a woman named Kate Donohue who was kind of a distant cousin. She said, "Well, what do you know?"

Well, basically they all immigrated to the United States, but we do know that a sister came back. The sister named Margaret and she married a man named Kelly.

She said, "Oh, let me make a phone call." So she took us out to this young man's house, his name was Kelly, but I think, I don't know if it was his father or grandfather who had a little bachelor room there. He was actually the nephew of the man that the aunt had married. And the really interesting thing is that my uncle Coley...Should we stop?

[Break in audio]

KE: Okay and I remembered where we were.

So we went out and met this gentleman and his name was Petey Kelly and it was really interesting because my great-uncle Coley smoked like a chimney and we went out to visit Petey Kelly and we were taken into his little bachelor room and the man sat in his chair and chain smoked the whole time. But it was very interesting that on my, my Uncle Coley had a pretty thick accent, I was very used to it. My husband Carl on the other hand, there were many times when he would say, "What did he say?" [Laughing] And Petey Kelly's speech patterns were so much like like Coley's. Coley had a couple of expressions, and one thing that he would always, he would always point his finger at you and say, "Now I have ya, now I have ya." [wags finger]

So Petey Kelly said, "So tell me, tell me who you're people were," etcetera, etcetera. So I told him about this aunt and all the brothers and everything and then he started wagging his finger at me and said, "Now I have you. Now I have you." So I thought that was kind of interesting that a little phrase like that, was something that was kind of a remnant of, that, of a speech pattern or something that he grew up with. I just thought that was really special.

MP: Yes, yes. So you grew up here in Anaconda.

KE: I did.

MP: What kind of childhood memories could you tell me about?

KE: It's one of those things that like looking back and looking at the way things are now, we were really blessed to grow up in a small town where everyone knew everyone else. I went to parochial school first grade through high school. At that point in time in Anaconda the population in Anaconda was large enough that it supported three parochial schools, and I'm not sure how many public schools, and there was just, there were always kids in the neighborhoods, I mean no one ever, if you had to stay inside, that was, you were either sick or you were being punished. You know everyone...there were tons of kids down on the school playgrounds. It was really nice to be able to go out and you know just walk out to Washoe Park. My sisters and cousins and I would go out to Washoe Park and spend the entire day. We always

knew when to go home because the...when the smelter whistle blew at four o'clock you knew that supper was about to begin so, that was kind of our alarm clock. I just...if you walk through Anaconda now the population is much lower, mostly because of the loss of industry and, naturally, there are not the number of large families that there were when I was growing up in the late '50s and '60s, but it's so rare now to see packs of kids playing outside. That's one thing that I think is something that is remarkable about my childhood, it's what used to be normal. That's not so much anymore.

MP: So just for my clarification, what is exactly a parochial school?

KE: Oh, a Catholic grade school. Yes, we had the majority of the...of the teachers were nuns although we had some lay teachers. The high school as well. There was an order of nuns that taught at the high school, some of the teachers were priests, and there were some lay teachers as well.

MP: Do you have any distinct memories of going to Catholic school at all? Or was it kind of normal.

KE: We thought it was normal. [laughing] Other people might not, might not think so. It was really interesting in that the schools rather than say going, you know having all the primary schools, primary grades first through third or first through fifth in one school and then junior high. All of the parochial schools in town were first grade through eighth grade. So it was very much a family- family oriented pecking order, almost. The eighth graders were...we lower grades looked to the eighth graders as kind of the adults of the school. It was Anaconda because as I said, Anaconda had a really large population. The nuns had absolutely no difficulty as far as discipline went in the classroom, and the other hand, though, it wasn't unusual to have 45 to 50 kids in a single classroom. I can't imagine anyone attempting to teach a grade school class of that size anymore, but it was very interesting. You know so our teachers rather than being you know Mrs. Keeney (?) or Mrs. McCarthy (?) were Sister Anselm (?) or Sister Everheart (?). Then when I was in seventh grade, probably sixth and seventh grade the nuns all got to change their names. They all got to take back their real names instead of their nun names. So we left seventh grade with one set of nuns and came back and suddenly there was a Sister Jessica. Who's Sister Jessica? No one knew Sister Jessica, and that was her real name and not her...I'm not sure. They probably had a name for it, but I can't remember their order name or whatever it was.

MP: So when exactly was...it was in the '80s, right, that the smelter closed?

KE: It was...I want to say that the smelter closed in...The announcement came in 1980 on my mother's birthday. She took it particularly personally.

MP: What do you remember about that time? Was that something that stuck out for you?

KE: Yes, it's...people kind of look back on those historic dates and it's always where were you when Kennedy was assassinated or whatnot. I know where I was when Kennedy was assassinated. I was standing on the sidewalk along with all the other grade school kids from St. Paul's school because we were lining the streets because the parish priest had died. We were all kind of attending Father Sheltie's [?] funeral on the day that Kennedy was assassinated. But the day the smelter...In fact, even in the interviews I've conducted with people who are considerably older than I am, that's just, yes, something that for Anaconda was a very devastating time. Most people just though, oh, it's just another scare tactic. Probably two years later they were thinking, oh, you know we'll just have to wait a while it'll open up again. It'll open up again.

A lot of changes in Anaconda because you know after the first the first year, then people who had young families to support and...they had to go elsewhere for work, and it was almost like that, history repeating itself. Our parents came from Ireland because of tough economic times and then we kind of found ourselves in the same situation. Anaconda, or Anaconda like Ireland, was a place where our largest export was our young people, young families. Carl and I were fortunate enough in being able to stay. It wasn't...Carl didn't work for the Anaconda Company and so, just kind of by the luck of the draw we got to stay. A lot of our friends had to leave. You know, a lot of people left anyway. People go out after college or high school for the bright lights and the big city or just a change of pace or they're interested in something that...Particularly Anaconda and Butte, the people that were born there it's always...I wish my children could have the childhood that I did, or they seem to have particularly fond memories of the area, and one thing that was kind of interesting was probably five or six years after the smelter closed a lot of homes were for sale. Times were still kind of tight but it was interesting in that people who had grown up here, who were like early retirees, started moving back. So that, that was kind of interesting—kind of like a little mini renaissance

MP: Do you think the smelter closing changed or made your kids' childhood much different from yours? What kind of effect do you think that had?

KE: You know I don't think so because like I said, we still had a small town. They still had the same kinds of circles of friends that I did when I was growing up, they were, because as I said, much smaller families, so their circles of friends were much smaller but we were fortunate enough that we didn't our livelihoods weren't dependent on the smelter and we could, you know we had a modest house, a kind of a modest lifestyle, so I don't think that my children's childhood was that much different. It was a smaller scale maybe.

MP: You mentioned to me earlier in our pre-interview that you are you are a member of the Ladies AOH [Ancient Order of the Hibernians].

KE: I am.

MP: Could you explain that for me just a little bit, what that kind of entails?

KE: Okay the Ladies AOH is...started out as an auxiliary to the men's organization—the AOH. Before they were...Before that happened they were actually they were a group called the Daughters of Erin, and they function primarily to serve as kind of a social network for young single women who emigrated from Ireland. They actually kind of, in some cases, sponsored...They would be women who came from families who might have had relatives that they were sponsoring as far as the immigration process goes. It's just kind of a social network, kind of a family away from the family that they had...that they left. I'm not exactly...That just stuff I've been told I'm not exactly sure then when you know kind of coming under the umbrella of the AOH kind of happened. And then before I joined the organization, I want to say, I've been a member a very long time. I joined in like 1977 my mother talked me into it, I was a little resistant [laughing] but at that point in time they were a separate entity they had kind of not broken away from the AOH, but rather than being a ladies auxiliary they became their own entity. It's primarily a, I guess you would call it a service club much like the Kiwanis or something like that.

We do a lot of interesting projects. We have a quilt project every year, all of the ladies in the group donate squares for a quilt and then they have a sewing committee that puts it together and then we sell all kinds of raffle tickets on in and on St. Patrick's Day we raffle off the quilt and the proceeds go to a community entity. Oh one year it was...we donated several times to the Washoe Theater because it's such a treasure to Anaconda, you know one year I think they lost their heating system. We've donated to Special Olympics the Hearst Free Library. We just pick some local group or project or entity that needs a boost that year and the past three years we've raised nearly 3,000 dollars for these groups, so I guess now we are truly a service organization, but it's also...We also join it for the fellowship and the social aspect. We have a Mother's Day dinner and a Christmas dinner and picnics throughout the year and of course St. Patrick's Day, the Ladies host the traditional breakfast for St. Patrick's Day. Both organizations attend mass as a group on St. Patrick's Day and then we have a breakfast and at the end of breakfast then everyone has, everyone in the room has to stand up and introduce themselves and if you have a party piece you have to do your party piece. So if you're the person who always has a good joke you have to tell a joke or if you're the person who always sings a particular song you have to sing the song.

Unfortunately though over the years we're to the point where some of those favorites have started to...they're elderly people, and they've started to pass from among us, so it's been, it's almost kind of a wistful thing. It's like, "Remember on St. Patrick's Day when Sadie Murphy [?] used to always do such and such?" Sadie is no longer with us. Her daughter is still a member, but it's...I don't want to say that that we're better than Butte. We think that our St. Patrick's Day is a little bit more, more traditional. We don't have as much of the spring break aura that some St. Patrick's Day celebrations take on, not that some of that doesn't go on but it's really fun. I think someone was talking about it last week, we also formed a drill team.

KE: The Irish Washerwoman Brigade, and one year it was really, really interesting in that we had a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter as far as our membership went. I'm not exactly sure what our median age is, but at certain points in time we've had a 75 year old washer women marching with the drill team. So that's really its really kind of fun. You know we have traditions that go with all, with everything associated with the regalia for the brigade because the Irish washer woman is kind of the...kind of the archetype of an Irish woman who was able to take care of herself and her family. Some people think that the Irish washerwoman is kind of paddy whackery. It's kind of a joke. The number of young Irish women married and unmarried who worked as domestics in the United States and helped raise families back in the 1800s and the 1900s in the early teens. It's long before there was equality in the job market between male and female. Our mothers were always working mothers. My mother always worked. So you know that wasn't something that you know instantly happened in the '80s or '90s as a new trend. I think people who come from working class backgrounds know that you have to do what you have to do, so I think it's an honor to working women. But we also have a lot of fun too.

MP: I'm sure. You said your mother was also a member?

KE: She was, yes.

MP: Was that...Probably kind of functioned as a social group as you were mentioned before, do you remember any sort of events that she would do when you were younger with the AOH?

KE: The interesting thing was that I think my mother only, my grandfather actually was a member of the Anaconda division AOH and my mom always talked about the fact that she used to go to things that he went to and he was always telling her she should join the auxiliary but I think she just, she just never did and then friends of hers finally convinced her that after all these years you really should join and, I want to say that it was probably after I was in high school so it wasn't until...it wasn't something that I remember her going to when I was young.

As far as celebrating St. Patrick's Day when I was young, I'm not sure who used to do this but someone used to actually have authentic shamrocks flown in. Someone knew someone who knew someone so the AOH always had these shamrock sprigs, so we always just typically wore a little thing to school. You know it wasn't like the dressing in neon green from head to toe, that kind of stuff didn't happen but...so I wish I could say, "Oh yes, I remember my mom doing this, that, and the other." I'm probably more active in the organization than my mom was just because it took her a long time finally for her to decide to join.

MP: Do you have any, not related to the AOH I guess, any memories of holidays or anything else like that that you guys kind of did regularly, like a family tradition?

KE: Family tradition. It's kind of interesting that you ask that because I had my Great-uncle Coley's oldest daughter died last month and her daughter is very close to my age. We were talking about this and we were talking about Christmas and our families, both families. This is

the double cousin situation here, always had some really strange. Well, we thought strange, Christmas traditions and so did our husbands when they married into the family. The families always went to midnight mass on Christmas Eve and then for whatever reason they always had a fried chicken dinner for breakfast on Christmas Day. And when Mary-Alice died, Colleen and I got to talking about this and I said you know when I told Carl about that he, he thought it was just extremely strange and by the time Carl and I got married, my mom had, may have been just too much work, the fried chicken dinner for Christmas Day had kind of gone by the wayside but Mary-Alice's mother and father still did it and Mary-Alice and her husband, my cousin's parents, did it, and Colleen and her husband live in Boise now and they still do it. And the big question was where on earth did that ever come from? Was it an Anaconda thing was it an Irish thing was it a Donohue thing? We don't know. And the people who would've known are gone. But so I don't think it's an Anaconda tradition and I don't think it's an Irish tradition, but it was a, somehow it was a Donohue thing.

MP: That's funny.

KE: Yes, my husband could not believe it.

PC: That sounds great.

MP: Do you have any other strong childhood memories like that? Any other kind of traditions or holidays that you guys would always celebrate?

KE: You know I'm not- primarily, Christmas, Thanksgiving, you know as I said St. Patrick's Day when I was growing up was kind of low key, um.

PC: Did you ever do anything for St. Steven's?

KE: No, in fact that was kind of that was, that was you know how, once you get interested in your Irish roots and you read about certain things or you hear certain songs like the Wren Song and stuff like that, that was something that we didn't necessarily hear much about. However when I interviewed Mary Laughlin Young [?] her parents came from the Lettermore area where my grandfather came from and she says that when they were young, her brothers, based on things her father had talked about they used to...They sang the Wren Song and they had some things that they did. So that was something not so much...

Although the other thing that's kind of interesting and I don't know if it has to do with the fact that they were from a very remote area or what, is that my grandmother and I'm assuming my grandfather as well and the other Donohues were that generation. They were very superstitious people. I opened an umbrella one time in the house and I was...I had it sitting on the living room floor and I was playing with dolls or something and I thought that was really cool and I was sitting under the umbrella. My grandmother came through the door and just literally had a screaming fit. I was kind of one of these shy retiring kids and I was like, oh my. It

affected me very deeply. I didn't know what I had done wrong. She was very superstitious about stuff like that, opening an umbrella in the house. You never put your shoes on the kitchen counter or the kitchen table. They used to talk an awful lot about the banshee. It was amazing.

PC: What is the banshee? Sorry, I'm just excited.

KE: Patrick, you'd be interested in this because there's a really...it's kind of a paddy whackery-ish film—a Disney film.

PC: Yes?

KE: Called *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. And there's a point in there where the main character gets chased by the banshee and it's some kind of a ghost. Some people refer to it as a ghost of a woman that appears, a harbinger of ill, you know like someone's going...if you view the Banshee and sometimes people talk about it as being a woman ghost or sometimes a ghost of a small animal, and if you see it someone's going to die.

Interestingly enough, although my grandfather spoke Irish and I knew very little of it, I'm kind of paying homage to him by attempting to learn it. A banshee literally means a woman spirit. So in *Darby O'Gill* I think it was a horse, the banshee took the form of a horse and kind of a woman with long white hair.

MP: Well, that's fascinating.

KE: But I remember my grandmother talking about her father claiming to have seen a Banshee, so, I just think they were you know how some communities are just more into superstition and extra, I'm not, you know, those types of paranormal things, but I've always thought that was kind of interesting and I don't know if that has to do with they were so rural or, if, or if that area of Ireland happens to be you know more in tune to those cultural things, I just don't know.

MP: Wow, great, I guess that whole superstition thing is really interesting to me, but do you remember anything else that your grandmother would do, like maybe any like homeopathic things, did she have anything like that that she would do?

KE: [laughing] not exactly, except she was very...Vicks [VapoRub] was the cure-all for everything. So if we had a cold, she was always wanting to get like a tea towel and put Vicks on it and plaster it on your back, or if you had a sore throat she'd put Vicks on it on a flannel diaper and wrap it around your neck. She was always...She always smelled of Vicks and so did we.

Yes, yes, so homeopathic, I mean. It's kind of interesting that...you always...Some people disparage Irish people for drinking too much, and that's kind of like those negative connotations but interestingly enough, if someone had a really bad cold and they happened to be a kid, you

know a weak tea with a little whiskey in it or a hot toddy with lemon. So that was kind of a home remedy. I mean its not like, it wasn't like you got it very often and sometimes it was like, like...no, I don't, you know. So that was a home remedy.

MP: My father has the same thing, he's from the Midwest, and he always makes fun of his mom because that's what she would do.

KE: Yes, you know, you know sometimes well you stop to think about maybe those home cold remedies, some of them are alcohol based, and it's, like, okay.

PC: When I was a kid I had bad lungs and my mom would make me a hot toddy if I had a cold, and I don't know if that was an Irish thing or just what she had handy. It works.

KE: Well you know the occasional hot toddy, and the interesting thing is my grandmother never touched a drop of beer or whiskey or wine in her entire 85 years, but if somebody was really, she'd be the first one to say well you know maybe they just, maybe they just need a hot toddy and go to bed and sleep. But the Vic's was [laughing] the Vic's was, uh—

MP: The thing.

KE: Yes, absolutely, absolutely. The other thing, it wasn't exactly a, it wasn't exactly related to superstition and it wasn't exactly a homeopathic remedy but I never really knew what my grandfather looked like, because my grandmother only had two pictures of him. One was kind of an enlargement of a home snapshot, and you could tell it was a man but he was drinking a cup of tea, so the tea cup was obscuring most of his face. The other one was—it was kind of an interesting picture I thought—he was sleeping. I though, oh, it was interesting and it was kind of a smaller picture and I don't ever know what happened to it. He wasn't sleeping. It was a picture that someone took at his wake. And apparently that was, that was not unusual at all. So in retrospect, it's kind of like, eeww.

MP: Yes, a little creepy.

KE: Yes. Yes, yes, and I really didn't even know that until I was until I was grown. You know I might have been talking to an uncle or maybe my mom or someone and I said oh you know that, and that, we always, for some, and I as I said I never met him, but he was always referred to as Adda [phonetic spelling], my uncle Coley we called him Da, but we called my, when we were referring to my grandfather we referred to him as Adda [?]. And it's like, "Oh, you know that picture of Adda when he was sleeping? You know that, there was like that white pillow and stuff." He wasn't sleeping, that was a picture of him in his casket. But we didn't know that.

MP: Do you know, why he, or if he, wanted to be called Adda or if that was just kind of something that—

KE: You know I don't know and I always you always like later I kind of romanticized it I thought oh, you know, maybe that's its some kind of, maybe it's some kind of a *Gaelic* or Irish word or something. I asked Terry about it one time and he said oh no, you know. I have no idea. Or if it was you know how every once in a while, say a grandchild will call a grandparent something and that name kind of sticks, so I don't know if that was um- something that you know maybe my older sister had called him or my...my mom's nephews and nieces—the older ones. I really, I have no idea where the name came from and my mom always referred to her father not as Father, or Dad, or Da, but Adda, so I really don't know, maybe it was a nickname that she and her siblings had for him, I really don't know. Yes.

MP: Do you know of any other kind of, I guess, naming traditions in your family. Was there any names passed down?

KE: Yes, and it's just so generic. Everyone is either Mary or John. And in fact there are so many Johns in our family that we have John Heinz and John Francis and JT which stands for John Thomas, and then my mom marries a man of Swedish descent and his name is John, my brother's name is John. It's, it's really interesting. We heard one time that it was not uncommon for um- an Irish set of parents to name the first male child after the father's father, and the first female child, you know there was kind of like this pecking order. I'm not really sure. From my grandfather's birth certificate I know that his father's name was John, and my mom's only brother's name was John. The only surviving brother's name was John. It is kind of interesting. So we've had to attach those qualifiers to them so we could tell who was who.

MP: That's funny. So you mentioned that your father is of Swedish descent. Is that what you said?

KE: Yes.

MP: Okay, do you know how your parents met at all?

KE: You know, not really. My dad would have gone to public school and my mom went, I think she attended St. Peter's Grade School, she attended and she attended St. Peter's High School. My dad graduated from Anaconda High. They met and married after school, or after they had graduated from school. My mom was very young. My mom was 18 years old, but I'm not really sure how they, how they met. I do know that my dad got along very well with her father because you know for a long...In fact even when I was in high school, if you would talk about such and such a friend or something from school, the first thing my grandmother would say is, "Are they Irish or not?" So it was very common to you know kind of, wasn't like you couldn't marry outside the clan but, you know it a lot of ways it was a little unusual, but I do know that my, my dad and his father in law got along very well. In fact to the point where you know my, where some of the most interesting stories, you know, your grandfather told me one time, so it was a story from my dad but it was something that my mom's dad had told him. They kinda shared the same interests, they both liked to hunt, my dad wasn't much of a hunter, but they

like to fish and so did my grandfather so my dad always...My dad got interested in tying flies and so he would always tie flies for his father-in-law, Mike. So I think you know they were really good friends.

MP: That's great.

KE: Yes.

MP: Let's see. I had a question but now it's gone. So a lot of your father's stories were about your grandfather, your mom's dad.

KE: Yes, yes.

MP: Do you think they got along well? Did your grandfather, or your father, did he work in the smelter as well?

KE: Yes. Yes, he did, my dad was a machinist, so he was, on the smelter there were two general classifications, either you were a smelter man or you belonged to the crafts and the crafts were the carpenters, and the electricians, and the iron workers, etcetera. So, my dad was a machinist. When we were kids I never could understand why when we had trouble with our cars, why couldn't my dad fix them. I didn't know there was a difference between a machinist and a mechanic. But there was.

MP: Does your dad have any close ties with the smelter? Did he work there until it closed?

KE: He did. He was...I want to say that he was in the machinists union for probably, it was a very long time, you know something like 35 years, and then he did accept an offer to be like a maintenance supervisor on the smelter. So at that point you left the Union and became part of the like the management team. One of the, one thing that that...I guess one advantage for my dad was that when the smelter closed in 1980, he was still a number of years away from the minimum age for retirement, but because he was in a management capacity, he got to stay on a lot longer because there was certain things that just had to be done by management to, you know as part of the shutdown and whatnot. So between that and the...Then they offered like early retirement for some of those people and some incentives, so although he retired at an age younger than 65 there was, there was kind of a, there was a stop gap that saw him through until...he could get full Social Security plus his company retirement. Those individuals who were in the management side were really, really fortunate in that they had full health care coverage through their retirement. So they didn't have to depend just like on Medi...What is it, Medicare? Yes.

So my dad, that was you know...Those individuals who retired from the smelter who were in kind of that area, those people...did very...they had a real comfortable retirement mostly

because they had that real, that safety net of the full health insurance and it was wonderful health insurance.

MP: So your father was able to stay here in Anaconda?

KE: Yes.

MP: After it closed?

KE: Yes and our family is very spread out age wise. I mentioned an older sister. My older sister is 12 years older than I am, and my youngest brother is 12 years younger than I am.

So my dad, when the smelter closed, my brother was still in school—um in fact my brother graduated from high school in 1983 so when the smelter closed my brother was like a freshman in high school, so it was really good that my dad was in the position that he was, and able to still have a working wage retirement income.

MP: Did he stay with them until he was retired?

KE: Yes.

MP: He did, okay.

KE: Yes, he stayed on past the closure because they kind of had to oversee certain aspects of the shutdown. And then, and that extended along long enough that he was able to, you know, then they had some kind of a, it was like a severance package. Yes. Yes.

MP: Let's see. I'm very interested in...So you ended up growing up here and your parents grew up here too. What was the house that you grew up in? Was that like...did your parents buy a house, or was it like a house in the family?

KE: It was a house in the family. When my grandfather Mike died, my grandmother was 52 years old, and they were in the process of buying a house. It was a really modest house actually just a couple blocks over from this house. It was a small two bedroom house, so it was two bedrooms a bathroom a living room and a kitchen. My grandmother, you know, she was left without a pension of any kind, and my mom and dad...I think they...No, they actually were purchasing a house because my sister was a small child and they sold their house and bought my grandmothers house and moved in with her. So until I was...In fact when I was in seventh grade my dad took the roof off the house and built two more bedrooms, but up until that point...There was a point at which there was my mom and dad, my grandmother, my older sister had actually graduated high school and gone on to nursing school but there was myself and my two younger sisters in a two bedroom house. [Laughing] My dad was a very handy man and he had a good group of friends, and it was like every year there was a project on one family

or another's house. One year it was our turn and we got two new bedrooms upstairs. When they were finished my brother had just been born. At that point in time my sister and I both got our own bedrooms. We thought we were a-okay. But we didn't think. That was normal for us. And I knew a lot of people when I was growing up when I was in grade school it was not unusual for the living room to be converted into a bedroom every night. You know we had, everyone had like a sofa bed. You know, we treated the living room as a bedroom as well. The oldest daughter always got to sleep with mom, because my grandmother had her own bedroom of course [laughing] so, that was interesting. And it was a really small house, but—

MP: And it's still, it's still up?

KE: My dad and mom lived in that house all their married life. My dad lived almost ten years after my mother died. He was fortunate enough, and he always felt himself blessed that he got to live in his own home. After he died, we sold the house. That was, oh, maybe five years ago.

MP: How was that process, selling the house?

KE: It was hard. But you know it was just one of those things. It's kind of interesting then you have to kind of walk away from things like that. It once was your house and now someone else owns it and it's not as well kept up. In fact it's at the point where finally I just stopped driving down that street because I didn't want to look at it anymore. Not that it made me sad, but I just thought my dad took such pride in the house and it's not receiving the same care that he showed toward it.

MP: That's hard. I have the same...the house that I grew up in, it's sad. It's hard to look at.

KE: It is, it really is. On the other hand we lived, we lived in a very small house on Locus Street, I was telling Patrick, up until...It was about five years ago. We bought this house and worked on it for a couple of years and suddenly I was without a job and put our house on the market and sold it within a week and we had to move in here. But we sold our house to a guy who is just happy as a clam to have it and takes good care of it so, it's really nice to see that you know somebody is enjoying the house. We don't have any wistful memories about you know, we don't weep every time we go by it because we love this house.

MP: That's good.

KE: Yes.

MP: So you are also an interviewer with The Gathering?

KE: I am.

MP: I don't know...Could you tell me a little bit about that process? How that's kind of helped you or maybe changed your idea about what it means to be Irish or anything like that?

KE: I think if anything it has confirmed what I already knew. The fact that often you just get so busy anymore. It's not like people have shorter attention spans. It's just people are pulled in so many directions and I think a lot of it is you have to do so much more to make a living you know and your time gets more valuable and I don't think people take enough time to sit down and really listen to what other people might have to say. I don't know how many times I have...it's one of the reasons why I was interested in becoming an interviewer for The Gathering. You don't know what you have until you don't have it anymore. It's like, if only I could ask certain questions of people. I just think it's such a valuable project because these personal stories are really...Yes, they are personal stories or they're family stories, but they are so connected with who we are as a community and I...One thing that I think is really unique is the fact that I don't know a lot about where my grandmother's folks came from, other than it was County Kerry. We know a lot more about my grandfather's area mostly because he wasn't one of these folks that emigrated in famine times. He emigrated long after that. But the fact that he came from such a small close-knit community and was supported by a very small close-knit community of friends and family members and came over to...first to Pennsylvania and then to Montana and that Anaconda in a lot of ways has those little enclaves of close-knit supportive—extended. They're not just families. They're extended communities or extended families that form communities. I just think it's...I just think it's something that needs to be recorded so that it's not lost.

MP: Has it kind of opened up your feelings about Anaconda and the community that you live in at all or—

KE: I think that it's really easy to be very critical of the place that you're from. You, you notice all its flaws and I think it's really...I think it's really a blessing to be able to stop and think for a minute and, you know, I'm not one of these Polly-Annas—the glass is half empty the glass is half full—but really if you stop and look with a critical eye at the fact that you might not have had a lot of monetary benefits or a lot of say the opportunities culturally or otherwise that you might have had if you had lived in a metropolitan area, but there are just certain things that make you who you are that came from the fact that you came from a small town—a close-knit town. A community that by in large it was okay with our parents if we left the house at eight o'clock in the morning and took a sack lunch and spent the entire day at Washoe Park. You know it's like, seven, eight year olds. You'd be beside yourself if your eight-year-old went somewhere at eight in the morning and didn't come back until four o'clock in the afternoon. It would be so stressful you wouldn't know what to do, so I think you know, we just we were so lucky.

MP: That's great. Let's see. Have you ever interviewed or encountered possibly like long lost relatives through this process or anybody who had any more information about your family through the interview process?

KE: You know, not exactly through the interview process and because I'd known her before I interviewed her, Mary Laughlin Young [?] was one person who, she remembers my grandfather. So in the pre-interview process, you know we got to talk about a few things kind of, you know, I was more interested in trying to prepare for what I was going to ask her about her family but, you know, she just had some interesting little tidbits, and some are kind of comical, she told me that, "Oh yes, I remember Mike Donohue," and "I remember him down at the AOH hall on St. Patrick's Day," because they always had like a young peoples dance in the Big Hall, whatever the Big Hall was and the more traditional stuff in the Small Hall with the older folks who played the piano and the accordions. She said, "And every St. Patrick's Day, Mike Donohue would start a fight with someone," so little things like that. That's probably something my mother wouldn't have told me [laughing].

MP: Let's see. I guess I was a little bit interested in learning a little bit more about what you had to say or what you remember about the different communities that were here in Anaconda. I know that Butte had its separate or different ethnic neighborhoods and stuff and I was wondering if Anaconda had anything like that at all or if it was more kind of...people living mixed up, I guess?

KE: Just kind of...You look at these kind of remnants of say social organizations, Anaconda has had, always had, a really large and thriving Croatian community, Yugo...I guess I'm not up on Eastern European geo-political situations, but Yugoslavian and Croatian. There were large enclaves. There were some groups of French families—families with French backgrounds. Italians—huge numbers of Italian immigrants, Well, I mean people of Italian descent to the point where there were actually like subdivisions of Italian communities in Anaconda. There were the West-End Italians and the East-End Italians, so it's...Some of those had to do with the areas in Italy that they come from. So probably...Oh, and Scandinavian, Norwegian and Swedish.

My dad's family were Swedish, but there were lots of Norwegian and Swedish immigrants in Anaconda. There was like Sons of Norway group, like a social network, two or three large Lutheran parishes. Someone once describe, really that Anaconda is really similar to Butte in that regard and that Anaconda and Butte, unlike say the typical western town that most people think about when they think of Montana, that Butte and Anaconda more closely resembled little microcosms of cities like Chicago. Because they were more...industrial? Urban? It would have been very small but more of, you know that kind of ethnic mix, more so than you know say a close-knit rural community like Cutbank or something like that.

MP: Do you think it was probably that just kind of like the industry kind of pulled all these people together? Did it create more of like a close-knit community or could you really...I don't know if you personally could recognize it or if you heard other people, but you...Could you recognize the difference between the different international communities in Anaconda?

KE: You know I don't really think so, um—I guess my experience was, yes, it was really a melting pot—type situation. But really, even when I was in grade school, typically that was one of the first things that you were interested in knowing about someone. If a new kid, which was kind of rare, it wasn't like, even now society is more mobile so it's not unusual to have a whole batch of new faces when you return in the fall, but Anaconda had, you know, kind of relatively like a, a new kid was kind of a novelty, and the first thing you wanted to know was okay were they German or were they Irish or where they Swedish or you know what were they? So that was, you know, interesting in that, because I attended Catholic grade, or a Catholic school system, you know so maybe if you met them in a social setting that might be the second question you'd ask, you know, what nationality were they and what religion were they. And not that, I don't think that set up any barriers, it was just something that, it was just something everyone was always interested in: were you this or were you that?

MP: That's interesting. I guess this is more of a pointed question but when I think of like Butte and Anaconda just from the very small amount of exposure I've had to them, I think of you know the Irish population and you don't...I don't normally think about the Italians and Croatians playing a big part, but I mean apparently they were. Why do you think that might be that the Irish have had such kind of a, a lasting impression on these areas?

KE: I would, I'd be willing to say that it's probably two things, and I mean you know this is just my view of it. One is just the sheer numbers because for example when I was in grade school probably 75 percent of the kids in any given classroom were of Irish descent. Then the other thing is I think that by in large they were very active in the communities particularly in either labor efforts, union efforts or government—you know politics at like the local level or the state level. So that might be one reason, you know. I really don't know. It's kind of hard to say.

MP: That's a good answer I think.

Let's see, I think that's is kind of almost everything, but I did want to ask this last question. If you were to write the history of the Irish in Montana what would you include for further generations?

KE: That's a really hard question. It is. I haven't actually...I don't actually ask that question in those same words when I've conducted the interviews so to tell you the truth I've never even really thought about it.

PC: It's worded difficultly.

KE: It is.

PC: I think of it more in terms of what...What would you want [phrase unintelligible]? What would you want future generations to know about the Irish or what's important to know about the Irish in Montana.

KE: Well, one thing that and, again its more of a, kind of a more narrow focused on my family point of view, is that when I stop and think about the fact that my grandfather and all of his brothers and at least two sisters left a close-knit community and what I'm...I know nothing about their personal family life other than it was probably very difficult, but I can't imagine my son at the age of 16 or 17 leaving the country full well knowing that they would never see their parents again. To me that...the courage and sometimes I think too...I mean, it was an economic necessity, maybe the decision was not theirs. You have to...or you know, you're faced with the fact that this family can only support so many people and you have to leave. In the case of, for example my great uncle, why would I ever think of going back there again? It's kind of interesting. I do know, though, that one thing that also that and I think it must have been, I think it must have been frightening in a way for them because I know that they came over and my grandfather for example, joined the United States Army around the time of World War One when he was in Montana. I do know for a fact that at that point in time, he did not have papers. He had not gone through the legal immigration thing. I also know that he could not read or write, and I know that I can't remember how I...maybe it was through something Ellen Crane had mentioned one time, that there was an effort to entice young immigrants, or they made an offer to young immigrant men to get them to enlist during World War One that if you served then they would waive the paperwork and when you were discharged you would be...I'm not sure what they call it, naturalized? So I know that was the case for my grandfather.

Luckily he did not have to go overseas. His younger brother Coley, whom I've mentioned, my mom's uncle actually came to Montana and then he and his family moved out to Oregon and he worked in the shipyards prior to World War Two. He had no papers, and he actually had to leave the country. Get in touch with the Irish Consulate, leave the country and come back through Canada with the help of the Irish Consulate in San Francisco, because he was here illegally and at that point in time I think there was probably, you know like, some kind of regulations as far as working in the industry at that time.

I don't think any of those...Now I don't think I ever stopped and thought about how much courage those types of things took, and it wasn't exactly courage in that okay I'm going to go steal myself and to this, but they were just put in these situations and they had to deal with them. So the character. I think too often people get swept up in like the stereotype of the, you know, the Fighting Irishmen mascot from Notre Dame, and stop and they don't look past that to see that...real human stories. So I don't know if that's a good answer to the question, that's my answer to the question.

MP: Great answer, that's a hard question. Where did your grandfather server in the army? Do you know where he was stationed?

KE: I do not know. I have...when I put together those digital things that I send you, it has interestingly enough, he's got like one of those plain white military head stones, so it actually

has the brigade. I do know that he did not have to...My dad told me that he did not have to go overseas, and being as it was World War One, that's probably a really good thing.

MP: [phrase unintelligible] Thank you.