

MY INTERVIEW

With

MARY D'ARCY

By

MARCI HANSEN

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We, Mary D'Arcy and Marci Hansen
(Person Interviewed) (Interviewer)

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(Person Interviewed)

Marci Hansen
(Interviewer)

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(Date)

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(City & State)

This is an interview of Mary D'Arcy conducted by Marci Hansen at Mary's home on November 5, 1998 at 6:00 pm.

OK grandma, first why don't you tell me a little about yourself.

Grandma: I, Mary McCoy D'Arcy was born in Butte on October 12, 1920; I have lived here all my life. One of the first things that I remember was an earthquake in the summer of 1923. It was a pretty good earthquake. Then the next thing I remember is I started School at St. John's in the fall of 1926. I graduated from that school in 1934. In the spring of 1927, I remember Captain Charles Lindbergh had just crossed the Atlantic. He was in Butte and he made an appearance. He drove in a motorcade that went from the airport to Harrison Ave. to Clark's Park. We saw him on Harrison Ave. in about the 2000 block. We sat on the steps of an old white church which was long; it has been long gone. One of the next things I remember happening with my father, who was with several other men, had a gold mine up in the Wise River. During the summer of 1927, I believe it was in August, there was a dam there in the Pattongail. The dam broke and it flooded a lot of the country. It took the bridge out in Wise River. It took the bridge out in Divide and Melrose. There was a dam in Wise River - excuse me- there was a dam at Divide, which I don't remember if it took it all out, but it damaged it and it was later undone. Of this tragic moment, there were three people that drowned. One of them was a man, a woman and their son. One or all three of their bodies were never found. The woman was the daughter of the man that my father was in the gold mine with. Last summer while we camping up in Elk Horn, which is south of Wise River, I met the camp host there and we were talking about this Patton Gale Dam that broke. They were not from Montana, but had heard of that tragedy and they said because of it, another mine up there that was flourishing at the time had to quit producing because it had washed out the railroad that was in this mine and did not have the wear with to continue or to rebuild the railroad.

Marci: OK, How did you feel about the depression in the 1930's

Grandma: Well, it really wasn't too good. The depression started probably 1930. My mother died in 1931 which made it a little harder on the family and my father always worked a little. He worked part time in the mine and some of the time he went up and worked at his gold mine. We were never on Welfare and we always had enough to eat and enough clothes to wear and we survived. In 1938, I graduated from Butte High School.

Marci: Did you go the old Butte High?

Grandma: Yes, I went to the old Butte High for several, 2 years. The last 6 months we went to the new Butte High. Now the old Butte High was located on the corner of Park and Idaho and it burnt on the 10th of April in 1946. In 1939, I married your grandfather and we had 7 children. Your mother being the 5th.

The next one was Shriver, who was just running for I believe, Vice President. That's all of the presidents that I have seen in person.

Marci: Did they have any swimming pools when you were little?

Grandma: Oh yes. There were many swimming pools around. The first one that I remember going to, I wasn't very big and this was, I can't recall it's name but it was located west of Helena and it was a beautiful big pool and a big pavilion and housing in there. But I can't even recall the name and it has long ago been torn down. What's there now, I can't even remember. The next swimming pool was one at El Hambre, one at Boulder Hot Springs, there was Bozeman, and there was Chico. Then closer to home here, there was Pipestone, which was a very nice swimming pool, and Silver Star. Those two haven't been open for a long time. There was another one that was between Silver Star and Dillon. I don't remember the name of that one either. Then there was Elk Horn and Jackson, Lost Trail and Medicine Hot Springs. Medicine Hot Springs was one of the finest hot springs that I ever saw and oh, about ½ mile from Medicine Hot Springs was a lovely camp grounds and we would go and camp for maybe a week and would go swimming about 2 or 3 times a day. And from Medicine Hot Springs the next one was Sleeping Child Hot Springs, which was southeast of Hamilton. Then going farther north was Lolo which was southwest of Missoula and then coming back towards Butte and down on a creek was another Elk Horn which is another beautiful place to go and then of course, the first one I ever knew of was Gregson and now it is Fairmont. That has been changed over the years several times and it has been remodeled and it's a fine, outstanding pool and place now. Besides swimming there were lots of other sports in Butte over the years. One big sport that they had was the annual Bobcat/Grizzly game that was held every year at Clark's Park that happened up until a few years back which they now take turns and now play one year in Missoula and the next year in Bozeman. Then going on in other sports there is lots of sports that were in Butte and one that I particularly like was ice skating. Now they had a big ice rink here in Butte called the Holland rink, which was located just a little south of Front Street on Montana Street. That was the big rink. Then they had one at Clark's Park and then in later years they had one in Stodden Park. But in the years at Clark's Park, they had the school races every year. Speed Skating which was the highlight of the year which sometimes they would have over 500 kids entered in it. Of this, all 7 of my children have got a medal in speed skating while they were in school. My younger brother was the first of the family to ever get a medal and after that when the kids were a little bigger, they had the MASSA here which was the Montana Amateur Speed Skating Association which the main rink at that time was Clark's Park and the kids would skate there and they would go to Canada to skate and would go back east to skate. In later years they went even as far back as New York. Of these now, I had children skate in that and I had grandchildren skate in that which was a lot of them. They earned medals and did very well. One grandson, Donny Foley won the National Title one year, probably 7 or 8 years ago. Now when they built the High Altitude Sport Center, they had many and still do have many races there. The world cup was here the first year it opened and that was very exciting and brought lots of people from all over the world and they had people here in Butte on horseback which really surprised a lot of them. The didn't really know what it was but they were for the

security but they were on horseback which I don't think some of them had ever seen before. We had them, like I say, from all over and it was a very good time. Then a little later one year, there was Eric Heiden and everybody knows who he was and he was in Butte. One of my nice thoughts was I did get his autograph.

Marci: In your earlier years, did you do much traveling?

Grandma: Not really except when I was young we used to go pretty near every year to see my grandmother who lived in Sun Valley or Ketchum, Idaho. That's where my father was born. When we were young, it would take us 3 days to get there. We would go and we would camp out. One route we would go and we would stay up at Wisdom all night. Then the next night we would go as far as Salmon City and the next night we would go into Challis, Idaho. The next day we go to grandmas. Another route that we went was we would go down to what is I-90 and at that time Armstead was there and Armstead now is where the Clark Canyon dam is located. From there we would go into about Dubois, Idaho in one day. The next day we would go down across the desert which was really a desert then. Then the 3rd day we would reach my grandmothers.

Marci: Ok—Name some important people you've seen or met.

Grandma: Well, during some of the time there was here at the Civic Center, I saw Jeanette McDonald who was really my idol all my life. Then in later years two important things that I saw was we went to the Governor's Ball twice. We went to the first one for Gov. Anderson and the second one for Gov. Tom Judge. Getting back to the younger days one of the things I remember was the transportation in Butte. There were very few people when I was young that had cars. What they relied on most at first were the streetcars, which would run every 20 minutes. The one closest to our home was on Oregon Avenue and this ran and they were always on time. Then in around 1935 they turned to buses. There were routes that would go from say Oregon Avenue and that one would go to Walkerville and return. There was one over on Englewood that would go from, oh, out by Lake Avona which is long gone that was there for years which is now some of the country club golf course. It would run from there to the West Side. Then there was one that would run over by the Continental Divide or Continental drive and it would go a ton up and down Montana Street. Then there was one probably as a kid was the most important of them all. I don't know where it started, probably on Park Street, but it would run to the Columbia Gardens and on Thursdays were free days. You could ride free to the Gardens. You could go out Park Street turn and go on up to the Columbia Gardens where they have lots of, they had the merry-go-round, live planes, rollercoaster, and they had some of the rides that are now at Clark's Park. They had a beautiful pavilion there that for years they had many dances and they had the thing where you could buy ice cream, pop corn, and souvenirs. That was, as a kid, on Thursdays, the highlight of any kid.

Marci: Well, thank you grandma. It was very good talking to you.