

Jane Bartscher, interviewed in her home by Teresa Jordan, November 22, 1985.

Came to Butte after High School to look for job. Worked at Woolworths. Husband, Garry, from Livingston. m. 1965.

Garry started working for Anaconda in 1966, left when they had the strike (68?) Didn't go back until '71. In interim, had moved back to Whitehall; moved back to Butte in 1972.

Jane went to VoTec 73-74, took-off highway truck driving class. Hired by Co July, '74.

J and Garry were in bad financial sit'n when the class was offered. J had heard of some women at pit. Was a hard decision to take class.

No one treated her badly. She felt like she had to do better than they did. Drove 100 ton truck; didn't drive the 150 ton trucks. Class was good, but really learned how to drive on the job.

Trucks--had huge steering wheel, hard for Jane. Also, seats were built for big men, probably 6 feet tall. She small. Never got over the fear of losing brakes. For everyone, problem of going to sleep. Round trip took about an hour, most of which is going uphill.

Two kids, Jody 15, Stacey 19. Stacey is sophomore at Tech. They were about 5 and 9 when Jane drove truck.

Belonged teamsters. Were a couple women with more seniority than Jane. Also, some women who worked in other areas, as operating engineer, at dumps. One woman Jane had gone to school with--Helen Woods. She works at Boulder now.

It was a very independant type of job--didn't have to communicate with others if didn't want to. Sometimes someone would throw rocks at her windows. That was about the only harassment. When first started, didn't have women's bathrooms. Got them. Women not too well accepted. Seemed the lights in the womens bathroom always out.

management was pretty nice.

Backing up under shovel--J always worry that would run over someone. Sometimes, have to climb up over truck to see where she was. Afraid, one time, that she had run over someone--was broken down, man had come to repair. She sitting in cab; air brakes gave way and truck rolled back. She couldn't even get out to go look for 10, 15 minutes, she was so scared. Finally did; he wasn't anywhere around; had finished and left.

Weather conditions could be treacherous in the pit--fog, very dangerous. Snow, ice, mud. Drove on opposite side of road from normal. roads had large berm of dirt on one side; if started slipping or lost brakes, just go into berm.

Could get so icy that if had truck w/o much power, couldn't even get up small hill. If that the case and didn't have another truck available, would sit in lunchroom until one available. J never got to sit in lunch room. Only had truck w/o enough power once.

Accidents--remembers that one man got run over. Another time, a runaway truck tried to ride it out, hit the wall at the end. doesn't know how badly he was hurt. Most injuries came from people falling off the ladders on the trucks; J doesn't know why.

Everything safety oriented--had to wear steel boots, safety glasses. If you did something in an unsafe way, would be fired. J would almost have to say that if someone got hurt--not that it was his own fault, but that he wasn't being as careful as he should have been.

Never got over being afraid--of running over someone.

Couldn't really trust people there, had to trust yourself. Remembers a dumpman who tried to back her up over the dump. She thought going back too far; got out and looked. Maybe he did that to everyone. Or maybe he had anger toward her driving truck--dumpman almost a demotion from driving. Some dumpmen were former drivers who were afraid to drive.

Tape 1, Side B

Worked July '74 to July '75. Laid off with reduction in force. About 150 laid off. Husband not laid off until 1981.

Usually Drove truck 322. worst truck--but it had a good heater. J would always have a truck, because no one would take 322.

Got to know the pit; once, was sent up to the Gardens--got completely lost, and had to stop, get out, ask directions.

Station 10--control office. Had infrared system so knew where you were. Could talk with you by radio.

You would take your load to the crusher if it was ore, to leach and precip if it was low grade ore, or to the dump if overburden. Very bad to take it to the wrong place. If you went beyond where you should have taken it, can't go back down. Really a bad mistake. Jane made it once--could have gotten reprimand, but didn't.

About 100 trucks worked a shift.

As far as quota--paid by the hour, not by the load. Could pass another if your truck was faster. Co was really into production. Get on you if you took too long in bathroom. J can't remember what she made, but she brought home about \$230 a week clear.

When laid off, got unemployment, but felt guilty about taking it. Got job at Woolworths again. Then restaurant--the Ponderosa. Worked for awhile at the Safeway warehouse, but the lifting was too heavy and she was laid off. On unemployment again. That was 1976, and jobs were scarce because so many laid off. Didn't work for about a year. Also got money through Trade Readjustment act--if employed in co hurt by imports, could get this money (check?). W everything, got about \$300/wk unemployment. Not too motivated, making money like that, to look for job. Moved into this house 1976. Worked at War Bonnet as maid. Worked at Boulder as habilitation aid (for mentally handicapped). In school now, in education. Wants to teach special ed. Started a year ago.

Garry--laid off in '81. Had several years in the Nat'l Guard, and given a job there. Wouldn't go back w/ company now.

What think about Dennis Washington buy mines? At first, had mixed feelings. Butte had depended so much on mines, seemed to be getting over it. Thinks Butte has learned to adjust, make due with other employment. Garry would never go back to company.

Butte's economy--promising for future. Most have done something--found employment, gone back to school, left town.

What think about Our Lady of the Rockies? Shows togetherness of Butte, will draw tourists. Skating rink is another example of Butte rallying, getting something done. J would like to see a new High School.

Growing up, what thought of Butte? That is was the most active ghost town I'd ever seen. Thought it was tough--kids carried switchblades, etc.

Columbia Gardens--a real sad thing that we don't have that anymore. totally blame the Anaconda Company for that. They mined it and didn't even get that much. And we will never have it back. When lived here, would go once a month.

In conversation after tape turned off, says that Garry not want her to drive truck at all. Very much against it. that made her more determined to do well.