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Restrictions:

Please check w/ Jim Street for any quotations used in the book.

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NOTES ON USING MATERIALS FROM

"IS THERE LIFE AFTER COPPER?" ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Because of limited funds available for this project, audited transcriptions of the tapes were not possible. However, there are detailed notes for most of the interviews. The user should be aware of a few limitations on the use of these notes. Unless otherwise specified, the notes were taken at the time of the interview and were not later audited against the tape. They can give you a good idea of what was covered in the interview. However, if you find something specific that interests you, you should verify it with the tape. Because the notes were taken quickly during the interview, they may include inaccuracies. If you use information for attribution, you must go back to the original tape.

There are rough transcriptions for many of the interviews. Again, because of time and funds available, these transcriptions were not later audited against the tape. They are more accurate than the notes, but again, if you use information for attribution, check it against the original tape.

A few interviews have restrictions against use of the tape. The notes for these have generally been read and corrected by the subject of the interview and are accurate. Check the releases for further information.

Jim Street, wrestling coach and teacher of Butte-Silver Bow History at Butte High School; interviewed at BHS by Teresa Jordan, March 18, 1986.

Notes taken at time of interview; not audited against tape; not a transcript.

Jim moved to Montana from Washington when he was about 6 months old; his family moved to Butte when he was about one year old. His father worked heavy construction. Both his parents were native Montanans, born in Whitehall. His father worked for the Anaconda Company a little, but most for construction firms. He worked about 20 years for F & S construction.

Jim says, "When I was growing up, I remember that I thought that everyone that packed a lunch bucket out of the house was a miner. Even if my dad wasn't working in the mines, I thought he was a miner. So when I was younger, I didn't really know what was going on. I just thought that everybody was a miner. I was quite ignorant in my younger years in regards to what was going on. When they said they worked for the Company, even if my dad didn't work for the Company, I thought he was working for the Anaconda Company. It was so dominant that I thought everybody worked for the Company."

Jim has a twin brother, John, who is currently looking for a job. He works road construction; worked for AMC before that. He now lives in Anaconda. Brother Al is a truck driver, lives in E. Helena. Sister, Connie Wagenman (check sp.) is married to a minister in Great Falls.

Jim went to college mainly for athletics, but he got interested and actually learned something. His degrees are in Social Studies and PE; he has taught PE only this last year. He wrestled two years at MSU, then was sidelined with an injury. He wrestled at Butte High.

Q: Why do you think Butte has always excelled so much in sports?

It always has the reputation of a rough and rugged town, even outside of sports. That was perhaps a carry over from the mining camp; they do the same things in other mining camps. Butte has not been, historically, a white collar town.

Q: Butte is becoming more white collar now as mining is gone and more professional jobs open up. Does this affect Butte's standing as a sports town?

If there is a change, it will take another 15 years or so to be evident.

Q: Do you see, in your kids at school, fallout from the shutdown and layoffs?

Kids have had to adjust their lifestyle economically--you see the attendance at cream affairs decrease. For instance, participation in summer wrestling camps, which can be expensive, has decreased a lot in the last three years. Now, kids don't have both parents working, or their father is working at a \$7 an hour job or less rather than the \$10 job he had with the Company. The best kids find a way to go to wrestling camp--they reorder their priorities so they can go, even if it means no bicycle, motorcycle, car, etc.

Q: Do you see problems in your kids stemming from increased family problems or alcoholism due to the shutdown?

You see it, but Jim doesn't think it has increased due to the shutdown.

Q: What sort of family background do the majority of your athletes come from--are more from blue collar or professional families?

Wrestlers tend to be more from the blue collar families in Butte, not from professional as much. Their fathers tend to be mechanics, work road crew, etc.

Jim brought to the team ambition, the knowledge that if you work hard enough, you can accomplish. It's his work ethic. He believes you can't just give orders. In wrestling, more than any other sport, it is individualistic. You have got to do your own thing.

Q: As Butte becomes more white collar, does the support for wrestling wane?

The team gets more support now than years ago because of its success. They have had seven state championships in a row.

Jim wishes his son, Randy, would work as hard outside of wrestling as he does in it. He has that work ethic; if he would just transfer it to school work, etc.

Q: Quite often those who have learned to excel at sports can transfer that knowledge to work or other areas...

Yes, and those who are most successful tend to be those who aren't the most gifted but rather had to work harder for it. If you had to work hard to succeed at sports, you will succeed at other things.

Q: You just won your seventh state championship. The school seemed to really support that tournament.

Jim thinks that perhaps they got so much support because if they didn't have it, they might not have pulled it out. Some might have come out to see it because they didn't want us to win; they

wanted to see the team lose. But Jim would like to think that they support us because we work hard.

The team did poorly the first round. They were something like 16 points behind after the first day. They pulled it out the second day, came back. They rose to the occasion. Like they say, when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

The kids didn't panic. They knew they didn't wrestle right in the first round, but they knew they weren't out of it, either.

Q: What is the attitude of the rest of the state towards Butte teams?

Jim says, "You know, I think, from teaching Butte history and understanding a lot about Montana History, that the people outside of Butte look at Butte and athletics as they may have looked at Butte, the home of the Anaconda Company. It's more of a benefit, it's a better feeling for Billings to beat Butte than it is for Billings to beat Great Falls in football, basketball, wrestling, whatever it happens to be, even if Great Falls Russel was the champion last year--they'd rather beat Butte! and I think it's because Butte holds something special in the eyes of people outside of Butte."

It's tougher to win now because everyone you wrestle is up for you. They don't overlook you. Sometimes you can have a win because you are overlooked, they just aren't paying that much attention to you. But here, "they look at you as not only an individual, but as a member of the Butte High School Bulldogs. It's not that it's tougher on us, it's just that they are prepared to wrestle us. Sometimes it's to our advantage because they are scared of us. But they don't overlook us like they might overlook somebody else. Even if we don't necessarily have a real great individual at that weight class.

"We will completely dominate a team, and then their team members and their crowd support will think they won a national championship if they beat one of our wrestlers. We'll win 11 matches and they finally win one--they might win our heavyweight match--and they think they won the tournament or the dual. We'll beat them 58 to 3 and they are happy because they won one."

Jim became head coach in '76; he had been assistant for four years before that. They won their first championship under him in 1980. He had said, I'd like to have the job; if I can't win in four years, then you can say good bye to me if you want. So he really wanted to win the championship by 80.

Missoula had 10 straight wins in the 60's. But no one knew what was going on in wrestling then; it was so new. Now, there are many good coaches. It is more of an accomplishment to win now than then. Jim doesn't mean to brag when he says this, but things have changed.

Q: Are you shooting to break the record of 10 straight?

Right now, Jim is shooting for number 8. One at a time. It doesn't get easier as time goes on. Some people say, the pressure must be unbearable. But it is no greater now than for the first one; also, no less.

Kids train year around. Outside of the regular high school season, they wrestle in AAU, American Athletic Union competition; and USAW, USA wrestling. Those are two organizations for competing in the off season. They wrestle free style, which is different than in regular HS wrestling. But the experience is valuable.

During the freestyle season, Jim tries for them to get experience, keep conditioned, have some fun. On their own, they run or lift weights. During the regular season, he is a tyrant. Monday through Thursday, they are at school before 7:00 for a conditioning routine; they lift weights and run or do buddy exercises. Then they practice an hour and a half to two hours after school. If they didn't make it before school, then they have to do conditioning routine afterwards.

Tape 1, Side B

So they practice about 2 hours and 45 minutes daily. And they have to keep their grades up. The overall grade point in wrestling this year was 2.87, which is really good. To stay eligible, you have to keep your grades up. Some have trouble during the season. But the best get their priorities right--they get the rest they need, keep their grades up, don't date so much. The team ended the season with about 40 on it; they may start with as many as 65. Some decide it's not worth the work. Some are eliminated for breaking training regulations--most for chewing tobacco. Four were thrown off this year for that. Also, alcohol and drugs. And peer pressure is responsible for some of them to drop off. For breaking regs, Jim has been known to throw kids off even a week before a tournament.

Q: How big a problem do you have with drugs and alcohol?

It is a problem, especially alcohol. It's not as much a problem in season as it is out, and it's not as common in athletics as in other activities--Jim thinks because sports take up so much time. And drugs affect your conditioning. The professional athletes who are using are those who are so gifted that they can jeopardize their conditioning. They get so much print for getting in trouble. Jim says, just think how great they WOULD have been if they followed the code. It's the individual who didn't have to work so hard who gets in trouble.

Q: Coke can be a real problem because it seems to actually improve your performance at first...

If you perceive that it improves you, you will keep taking it.

It will become a problem.

Q: Have you had any tragic losses on the team due to alcohol or drugs?

There was one kid. He had so much ability it was scary. Then he started having trouble from missing practice. Jim only found out later that it was alcohol. He quit the team.

About seven of Jim's students have moved on in wrestling in college. Two that he has now want to go on very much. Most, before, didn't want anything more than to wrestle in high school, get their letter, be a champion. Kevin Parvinen and Sean Moodry have both been state champions for two years; they are motivated to go on. Jim may take them to see the National Tournament in Las Vegas; to see the world cup the Russians vs. the US.

Q: An article in the paper mentioned Randy Walund, a good wrestler who couldn't quite beat anybody at his weight in the Butte team so couldn't wrestle at the tournament; yet he would have been seated on almost any other team in the state. Still, he was there for the tournament, really supported his team.

Randy is a neat kid. He has character plus, he is a hard worker. He has placed each year, yet he can't quite beat his weight class. He has wrestled at everything from 119 to 145. But he is as much a team member as the 12 who wrestled. He wanted to be there so bad. Yet, he handled it SO well--he didn't panic or pout. That's important for the team; it's also important for society. He will be the executive secretary for the Vice President someday. or in the military, if you have people like that supporting you down the ranks, no one can defeat you. He is very definitely one of the spokes on the team. He may even be the hub. He wants to compete at the college level and he may. If anything, he is too nice, not as aggressive as he might have been. In a tournament, he will keep the intensity level up, but in challenge meets, against his own team mates, he may be too nice. He looks out for his friends.

Q: What would you write in a letter of recommendation about Randy?

It would take four or five pages. Or else, Jim would just say that he was the best he could be. Two summers ago, Randy went with him to a wrestling camp in Oklahoma--21 days. He was like an assistant--he drove the van when Jim couldn't, kept things organized. There were four other boys along.

Q: Is there any wrangling over the money spent on wrestling among other departments in the school?

The wrestling program doesn't take much money. A mat is about \$5,000 and that's a lot, but that's only every 10 years or so--\$500 a year.

Q: How long have you taught Butte-Silver Bow History?

Jim is in his 9th year teaching the class. The first year, there were just two sections, about 25 or 30 students each. Right now, there are four sections, about 20 each. It is an elective, a semester course. It runs with a teenage and law course taught by Dan Sullivan--they take one course first semester, the second the next.

There is interest because the material is there. The first thing they do is analyse the classroom references. Jim uses 17 texts--either directly on Butte, or related to it.

Q: Where do you think the interest in taking the course comes from?

From parents, from grandparents, ex-students.

The second thing the course does is outline the books to analyse them--their date of publication, who the author was, what his exposure to Butte was, why the book was written, what it contains, how it is organized.

The course goes from the gold days on forward, with an emphasis on the pioneer days--they affected not only Butte-Silver Bow, but the nation and world as well. The class deals with the three copper wars--the Clark Daly feud was related to initial competition with the Michigan mines. And they deal with the Secretan syndicate. Then there was the Heinze phases, and its relation with Butte and Montana politics.

There is so much material. By the quarter, they are not even up to Marcus Daly coming to Butte.

Q: There hasn't been much coverage of Butte's more recent history.

No. The class's analysis of Butte books shows that the purpose of Butte books was to show Butte's colorful past--the pioneer days and the War of the Copper Kings.

Tape 2, Side A

The most colorful is the copper kings at battle. If you had the opportunity to be successful, that was the time. You could make it big. After WWI, things slowed down; during WWII, things were prosperous, but things were happening all over, not just in Butte.

Malone, in The Battle for Butte, guesses that mining will end in Butte. He was right.

There is more to be written--labor history, a look at the Anaconda mining projects, the Greater Butte project; the open pit.

Jim hopes that mining will not be dominant again. It's not as healthy to be a special function city.

Q: Have you been surprised at how well Butte has weathered the loss of its mines?

Jim says, "I think we're doing great. I really do. We haven't quit, we haven't pouted, we haven't lost our composure, as I talked about with how you have to deal with any kind of adversity. I think we're in trouble, yes, but we haven't thrown in the towel. I think--it might be a question--that the reason for this is, it's not the first time. We've been in trouble before, many times. Whether it be a shutdown as took place in 1903 when, according to many historians, 80% of the labor force in Montana was put out of work. Our ancestors were involved with that. The many labor problems, the strikes, the shutdowns for months...--we handled it. The people would leave Butte temporarily to come back to Butte when the mines reopened. When they get hit with the fact that the mines aren't going to reopen, some people did leave. some people left and then they came back. They figured, if I was going to be in a job that paid less money, I'd rather be home and Butte is a home to a lot of people. I think that we're doing real good. I think that we've come to the conclusion, at least the great majority of the people, that 'hey, we don't need 15,000 mining jobs here. We are going to be able to pick up the slack with a few hundred jobs here, in mining possibly, and 10 jobs here and there with the smaller associated types of businesses. Which I think lends itself to a more stable economy anyway. If one small business shuts down, it doesn't dictate the shutdown of the whole town--or the whole state, as it did in 1903.

Q: What's different about Butte's response? An AFL CIO plant closing specialist told me that Butte is doing better than other towns she deals with in the Western states that have had plant closings.

Butte is colorful--like New Orleans, New York, San Francisco. It's colorful past is repeated in books, newspapers, on the air at the dinner table. It's a living history. Jim hopes that doesn't die out.

Some is already dying out. Like certain terms. A duggan, for instance. A miner, walking off shift, might say, "You better be careful of the duggan on the 2200." That was a big overhanging slab of rock; if you got hit with it, you would visit Larry Duggan--the undertaker. Jim worked once breaking duggans with a double jack. Some of these terms are lost in the move from a mining camp to a more diversified economy. The term double jack came from drilling--the drills to set charges were so large, one person would hold the drill, the other would hammer it. Jim grew up with the term double jack--a large jack hammer. A lot of early miners were Cornish--a lot of them named Jack. It took one Jack to hold the drill; another to swing the hammer.

Q: What makes Butte more special than other places?

Jim says, "I don't really know why Butte might be more special, but I think it IS. Possibly it might be--I might be an example of the Buttian, the attitude, that there is something special about Butte. I've had opportunities to leave Butte and economically better myself and I won't. I shouldn't say that I won't; I haven't. And take a look at the people that have made the move from Butte and there's a lot of them. But when they are asked by somebody in a third party community or state 'where are you from?' they'll say 'I'm from Butte.' 'Oh, you live in Butte?' 'No, I live in Helena.' 'I thought you said you were from Butte.' 'Well, I am from Butte. Right now I'm living in Helena, but I'm from Butte.' That is something that is extremely common. You can go to other communities in Montana, and you always know of somebody who is from Butte, and they are proud of it. You can go down to Arizona to the retirement communities in the winter and they'll say, 'where you from.' 'Montana.' 'What part of Montana?' 'Butte.' 'Oh, you live in Butte?' 'No, I live in Great Falls, but I'm from Butte.' It's just something that is there. Why? Oh, it would be a wild guess for me to know why, other than the fact that Butte has been, Butte continues to be colorful. And why not be proud of it? Even if some of the colorful aspect of our past might have been of a negative nature--the labor problems, the political criminology. It's still colorful."

We had Fat Jack, Nickel Annie.

Q: Some say that Butte is classless. I've come to think that it's not so much classless--there are different classes here--but that there is more movement among the classes, more fraternity among them, than elsewhere. Do you agree?

Yes. There's not that division between who sits together. An executive or lawyer will meet at Gamers, sit at the same booth with a street cleaner. There is no nose snubbing. At the country club, the names on the lockers are doctors, lawyers, miners.

The First National Bank of Butte--75 Years of Continuous Banking Service, 1877-1952 is a book Jim uses in the class. He uses it to talk about Andrew Jackson Davis, Montana's first millionaire. He was born in Massachusetts, quit school at 13. In around 1834 or 5, when he was 16 years old, he became a merchant. Started the first chain store in Iowa. Came to Montana in 1863, had first flour and grist mill in the Gallatin Valley, the first smelter in Helena, was vice president of the first bank. When Butte was reborn in '75, he financed claims and machinery here, opened up a bank. In February of 1877, he organized the S. T. Hauser and Co Bank of Butte--he was president, Hauser (whose bank he worked for in Helena) was VP. In 1881, renamed First National Bank. That was the first bank in Butte. Clark opened up his bank later in 1877.

Davis was an example of the fact that it was not necessarily the miner who made it big, but the merchant. In pioneer days, if you had desire, ambition, and some luck, you could make it big.

Q: Are the kids who take your class mostly from older Butte families, or do you have newcomers as well.

Many are from older families, but Jim has newcomers as well. Many from older families don't even know where their parents are born, or what their ethnic background is.

Jim wishes he could teach seniors. And he would love to teach an adult class. Right now, he just doesn't have the time.

The class was Jim's idea. Before he started teaching it, it hadn't been taught. He had been teaching world geography and Montana history and he would delve into Butte's history. He suggested Butte Silver Bow class, wrote it up, and here we are.

Q: How do the kids respond to it?

It was originally set up as a sophomore class though he has a few juniors. He has had students take it a second time for no credit.

He feels he doesn't teach enough on contemporary Butte; he could speed it up if he just spoonfed them material, but he wants them to think, to verbalize beliefs, feelings. So much in the books differs--dates, etc. For instance, Patrick Albert Largee--was a magnate in Freemans book, a copper king. Yet he's not known at all now. In the books they use in class, there are five different dates for his birth--four years, 1836, '38, '47, '48; and a difference in the months and days. Jim tells his kids that historic investigation is somewhat like criminal investigation. You look at a lot of sources. If they agree, you can figure it probably happened like that. If they don't agree, you try to understand why, and you know that it's possible none of them have it right.

Jim would like to be more involved with the Butte Historical Society, but he doesn't have the time right now. He is here at 6:30 each morning.

His ethnic background is Scottish.

Tape 2, Side B

His kids are Randy, Jason, and Jackie. Jackie is the oldest, is at MSU in PE. His wife, Barbara, works for Montana Power Company.

Q: Can you define Butte Rats?

They are the ones who are going to move away from town, dominate the campus,

the job. They are going to stick out like a sore thumb. Originally, the name was given to kids who played on intramural teams at college. The name Butte Rats, and then there was Butte Rats 2, Butte Rats 3, etc.

That name doesn't bother the kids from Butte. "I know who I am, who we are." Kids associated with it, who aren't from Butte, would like to be called Butte Rats.

Jim started college at Eastern Montana College. He was only there for one quarter. He didn't misbehave--he didn't drink, etc, in fact, didn't like that. The only trouble he got into was fisticuffs. And even now, he hears stories about how he was in a fight every night, in jail fifteen times. The only time he was arrested was for jay walking. But the stories still grow; and he was only there for one quarter. That comes from Butte's reputation; also, a name like Street is hard to forget.