

Questions for John Evans

1. How did you come to Montana? When? Your history?

Family members and when they arrived in Montana?

2. How did the cemetery come under your ownership?

3. How has the cemetery business changed over the years?

4. Future and past of Montana in the oil and gas industry.

5. Changes in the Petroleum Department.

6. Friends in the department.

7. Past students at tech.

Interview outline with John Evans, November 8, 2001.

1. How did you come to Montana?

Born in Butte 1941, graduated from the school of mines in 1965. Earned Masters Degree from Penn State University. Worked for Amoco in Wyoming, Chicago, London, Norway and Trinidad. Consulted from 1978 to 1991 in Wyoming and Indonesia. Returned to Butte in 1991 because Gay's(wife) father passed away and willed the Mountain View Cemetery to them. Started teaching at Tech in 1991 till present.

2. Changes in the cemetery business?

Changes due to cremation, 50% are now cremated and 50% buried in the ground, mausoleums and crypts. Will have to sell the cemetery because family does not want to take it over.

3. Changes in the Petroleum Department.

Past teachers, Art Story, Wally Luckmansen and Dan Bradley. Old friends that retired were Joe Casperick, Jim Mickelotti. Decrease in funding has been the biggest detriment in the education at tech. If the funding keeps decreasing it will have an affect on the enrolment at Tech.

4. Out standing students that you have taught or that have graduated from Tech?

Bill Madison graduated from School of Mines and became executive vice of Marathon Oil.

5. Did you work in the underground mines while going to school?

Yes, the Mountain Con, Stuart, Badger State and Leonard Mine. Worked 2 shifts a week while in school. Anaconda Company would give jobs to students and would be able to work during the breaks. Meet up with nursing students at one of the local pubs.

6. Family history.

Grandparents on father's side were Welsh and Swedish and mothers side were German, Swedish and Irish. Grandfather Evans ran the public transportation system in Butte. Grandparents on the Bowman side owned a corner store on the corner of Jackson and Silver and grandfather also was a candy and ice cream maker.

INTERVIEW
FINAL PROJECT
BY
TREVOR JONES

FOR
MONTANA HISTORY
MR. JIM HARRINGTON
ROOM MG206

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INTERVIEW

TREVOR: It's approximately 9:15 on the 8th of November 2001. My name is Trevor Jones and I'm interviewing John Evans.

John, the first question I have for you is how did you come to Montana and when? Kind of the history on how you... how you are sitting here today.

JOHN: I was born in Butte, Montana, in 1941. Ah, I went to grade school and high school in Butte. I went to Montana School of Mines. I graduated from high school in 1959. I went to California and worked for a while and came back to Montana and went to school. Finished here in 1965. Um, after graduating from Tech, I went to Pennsylvania and got a masters degree in Petroleum Engineering from Penn State University. After finishing school in Pennsylvania, I went to work for Amoco in Salt Creek, Wyoming, and worked there for three years, as a production engineer, and then was transferred to the international department of Amoco. I worked one year in Chicago, which was the headquarters for Amaco International. Then three years in London, England, and then three years in Stavanger, Norway and then a year in Trinidad--Point Galeota in Trinidad. Then I, ah, went back in Chicago in headquarters and left Amaco then and, ah, moved back to Wyoming and started a consulting firm. I consulted in Wyoming from 1978 to 1989. And then worked in, as a consultant, in Trinidad, excuse me, in Indonesia from 1989 to 1991, and then returned to Butte, Montana.

Ah, the reason I returned to Butte is my wife's, ah, family owned a cemetery here in Butte, and her father passed away; and we came back to Butte to take care of his business, and sell his property and, ah, move away and go back into the oil business. We found out that selling a cemetery is not quite like selling an automobile--it takes some time. The cemetery needed some fixing up, so, ah, while we were fixing up the cemetery to get it ready for sale, I inquired at Montana Tech to find out if there would be part time work in the Petroleum Engineering Department and there was. Ah, and so I started here in the fall of 1991 in the Petroleum Department on a part-time basis teaching one class. And the next year, I was asked to teach two classes each semester. And, ah, as things turned out, I ended up working full time here and I've been working full time until the spring of 2001 and starting the fall of 2001 I'm teaching and working part time.

So, that's a thumbnail sketch--without any of the dirty parts.

TREVOR: With, ah, with the cemetery, which cemetery is it, and ah, how long did your wife own it?

JOHN: It's Mountain View Cemetery on Harrison Avenue across from Wal Mart. And, ah, the cemetery was started in 1910 on a 40-acre plot on Harrison Avenue, which was way out of town at that time. And, ah, the address is 3910 so it's way

out there. The four mile road is just across the street from the cemetery. Ah, Gay's (who is my wife) grandfather, bought into cemetery shortly after it was, ah, started. Ah, he was working there and he bought into it and then he started managing the cemetery and eventually bought out a total of 50% of the ownership in there. He passed away in 1938; I think it was. And Gay's father took it over and he was just a young man, about 30 years old or less then. And, ah, shortly after that he purchased the other 50% so that, ah, the cemetery was owned entirely then, by Gay's father. His name was Carroll Fabien. So, it's been in the Fabien family then, ah, for three generations. He passed away in 1991. And, so, ah, she's, ah, Gay's been running the cemetery since 1991.

Ah, we have two employees; two full-time employees, that work 12 months out of the year, and with Gay doing the paperwork, and sort of managing things. In the summer we hire two part-time employees to help the full-time employees with watering and mowing. And, ah, then, I also help in the summer time out there too. During the busy time of the year it takes five people to, ah, do the field work out there.

TREVOR: Have you seen any changes in the cemetery business in the ten years that you... that you've been here?

JOHN: Yeah, I really have; ah, when we first took over the cemetery, just about all internments were bodies in caskets buried in the ground, with a few buried in mausoleums. And now, ah, the burials are roughly 50% cremated ashes and 50% bodies. Ah, most of the bodies are buried in the ground with a few in the, ah, mausoleums, in crypts and mausoleums. And, ah, of the cremated remains, probably half of those are buried in the ground and then half in niches in mausoleums. So, the business has really changed; it's ah, mostly due to cremation.

TREVOR: Do you have, ah, are you going to sell it, or is it... ah, what are your plans with the, ah, with the cemetery?

JOHN: Well, sooner or later it has to be sold, ah, to somebody, because, ah, neither one of my children have any desire to move to Butte and, ah, run the cemetery. And, ah, as time goes on there's less and less work that my wife and I can do; so we need to sell it and make sure there's an orderly progression of ownership of the cemetery so that it's a professional end.

TREVOR: Hmm...

TREVOR: Some of the more recent activities that have happened in the States, was ah.. was the September 11 attack on the New York Trade Center, and you were the first person that told me about it. Ah, what are your..., ah, what are your feelings on that and how do you think that that has affected Montana?

JOHN: Well, I think that, ah, it's certainly affected economics, ah, the economic well being of the state. Ah, there's little doubt that the entire United States as well as Montana is beginning to suffer economically ah, because of the, ah, onset of a recession. And ah, the, I'm not sure we're in a recession yet, but, ah, the incidences of, ah, September 11, certainly, ah, contributed then, to even a further down turn in economic activity, ah, not only in Montana and the United States, but around the world. And, ah, I think the United State's Government is doing everything they can to prevent a full-scale recession. So, what I've seen here is just, ah, mainly a, ah, change in ah, a reduction, I should say, in economic activity across the state. Being in the oil business as well as being in the cemetery business, ah, you don't see much change in cemetery activity, but you do in the oil business. Um, the other changes I've personally experienced is, ah, in travel on an airplane; the security is really tight on an airplane. I haven't crossed any international borders, so I don't know what that's like; but, ah, it certainly is tight on airplanes. Ah, very extensive searches of luggage and carry-ons and also on what you're wearing. And what you have on your body.

TREVOR: How do you see the, ah, the future of Montana's oil and gas industry?

JOHN: Well, it's improving right now. Um, there's been some changes in, ah, taxation in Montana, particularly with respect to gas. Um, the, ah, taxes have been reduced in terms of production taxes collected by the states and... by the state and the counties. Ah, particularly in the first year of production there's barley any taxes in the first year of production and then, ah, in subsequent years, it's a percent or two less than what it historically has been. So, that's helped, ah, spark a little bit of activity in Montana. Um, there's been a recognition I think, by the oil and gas business in general, that Montana is pretty under explored. And, ah, so there's been an influx of companies coming in here leasing, ah, prospective acreage. Um, so I suppose, ah, to summarize that, what you could say is that, ah, companies that are non-Montana, are now perceiving Montana as a somewhat friendlier place to work than it has been in the past. And, ah, then there's also a recognition that the state is pretty well unexplored. There's many townships in northern Montana where I'm familiar with; there's only one well in a township being drilled.

TREVOR: Getting back to the, ah... your Montana Tech days, ah, is there any, ah....

Ah, Dan Bradley, who was department head for a while, and became Vice Chancellor, ah,... any situations or friendships; or not with Dan alone, but other people in the petroleum department that have left or in the school that have left or instances that stand out in your mind; of ah, certain activities or something happened in your Tech days?

JOHN: The changes in the petroleum department since I've been here, we had five professors, including me, when I started, and ah, a fellow by the name of Art Storey, who taught drilling and production, retired. And ah, he was replaced by a

man by the name of Wally Luckmansen. And Wally passed away while he was here, shortly after he started working. Wally was preceded by another guy whose name I can't remember, ah, from the University of Oklahoma. And ah, he worked here for six months and left. I don't know if--he was a black man from Nigeria; I don't know if he was discriminated against or his family was discriminated or he didn't like the weather, he didn't Tech, but for some reason he left very abruptly. He was replaced by Wally. And Wally worked here two years and died of natural causes, and, ah, he was never replaced, except that, ah, I started working full time after Wally left. Then Dan Bradley was, ah, promoted to Vice Chancellor and he's never been replaced. So, now we have, ah, ...well and then, ah, we were, we were really—I can't remember exact timing, but we were down two people and Margaret Ziaja was hired. So that gave us, ah, when Dan was here we had five professors for just a short period of time. Then Dan left and he's never been replaced. There's only four of us now, and now I'm working part time so, the department numbers as far as faculty is concerned are much lower than they should be.

Ah, there's people in other departments that, ah, I socialize with, and did socialize in the past. Most of these people are retiring. Ah, Joe Casperick, and Jim Mickelotti have both retired. Ah, I'm trying to think of others that, ah, spent time socializing with. I never really have socialized much with the people in the petroleum department. So, ah, I guess my acquaintances spent at Montana Tech are diminishing through retirement.

You asked me about changes in Montana Tech and another change that I observed since 1991 that has been very detrimental to Tech is decrease in funding from the State of Montana for operating this campus. And, ah, I really don't know the percentages, but, ah, as a result of this decrease in funding, as professors, faculty in general have left Montana Tech generally due to retirement. They haven't been replaced and so the ratio of students to faculty has increased as a result of that because the enrollment here stays fairly constant. Um, that's a big change and it's had a drastic affect on Tech. I think it's been pretty demoralizing for a lot of the faculty, ah, in that they haven't had any raises to speak of, ah, very small raises, in the last ten years. And, ah, have been required to teach more and more all of the time. And so, the result, ah, overworked and underpaid, and, the enthusiasm of the faculty has diminished considerably since I've been here.

TREVOR: Do you see a change in the future, or, how is this going to affect the Montana Tech enrollment, or, if it keeps going on the way it is, how is this going to affect Montana Tech?

JOHN: It's difficult to say. I think Tech has maintained because of it's, ah, it's reputation of, ah, being a fairly good educational institution and also does a very good job of placing graduates. And, because of that, people continue coming here, but ah, sooner or later, if the quality of education diminishes it's going to have an affect on enrollment here, because people recognize ah, the education

they are paying for isn't as good as it used to be, as compared to other schools. And, they, ah, may be as cheap as Montana Tech or even a little more expensive and, ah, the students will find other places to go.

TREVOR: Ok, John this is a final question here. And it's to do with, ah, some of the past students at Montana Tech that have gone on to fame and fortune, and if there's any student or students that stand out in your mind that have done an exceptional job and moved on. So, if there's anyone that you know that attended Montana Tech.

JOHN: Well, there's been, ah, like you say, a number of people who have risen into high positions in large oil companies. One that comes to my mind is, ah, Bill Madison who, ah, went to School of Montana Mines, when I was here. We graduated together and we lived together. And, ah, Bill rose to be executive vice president of Marathon Oil Company. And, ah, he held that position for about five years, and then was forced into retirement when Marathon changed it's overall management positions, ah, management philosophy I guess you'd say, by hiring outside to replace their CEO. But, ah, Bill has been very instrumental in raising money for the petroleum department. He works diligently with the, ah, foundations and helps raise money. I think he's a good example of a lot of people that have graduated from Tech, in that they do maintain their loyalty to Tech. Bill was born in Butte, and went to school here and probably wouldn't have had an opportunity to go to school other places, because, ah, in the days we went to school, Tech was inexpensive and we could work in the mines and pay for our education. And, ah, probably wouldn't have had an opportunity, to do, ah, higher education if Tech wasn't here. And, ah, he's remembered that opportunity over the years as things progressed through Marathon Oil Company, and he repays Tech through his loyalty in helping raise money and doing those sort of things. And I think that, ah, my experience has been, I'd say that well over 50% of the people that have graduated from Tech freely give back in monetary forms, ah, or in service forms, something that they gained through their education.

TREVOR: Did you work in the mines when you were going to school?

JOHN: Yeah, I did. Yup.

TREVOR: Which mine did you work at?

JOHN: I worked in several of them. I worked in the Mountain Con mine, the Stuart Mine, the Badger State Mine, and, ah, the Leonard Mine. These were all underground mines. And, ah, we used to work two shifts a weekend. It was very good pay. Worked as, ah, what we called day's pay work, which was, ah, just straight laboring work. And then, ah, as we gained experience, we used to work on a contract basis. On a contract basis you get paid by how much ore that you broke, how much timber you stood, and things like this. You got piece meal pay on a contract basis and you could make real good money doing that. And, ah, so

I'd say probably ah, when the days that the mines were running, the Anaconda Company would give any student, who wanted a job, a job. They would let you work two shifts a week, and then they'd hire you during Christmas break, Easter break, summer break... So, a lot of us spent quite a bit of time underground working in the mines here in Butte. And, ah, it definitely helped us pay for our education.

TREVOR: Do you remember your first day, going to work.

JOHN: Oh, yeah, I do.

TREVOR: What was that like?

JOHN: That was at the Mountain Con Mine on the 4600 level. That's 4600 feet from surface. And, ah, myself and another Tech student were given a job to clean the ditch in a cross cut. And, ah, the ditch is to drain the water, you know, that seeps out of the rocks. And the water goes to a, or funnels, into a central collection point and then it's pumped out of the mines. So, the ditches get filled with silt and rocks and stuff like that and they have to be cleaned out. They give you, ah, a little car that's on the rails that's in the tunnels so to speak, and then you just had to clean these ditches out. And the temperature's really hot. Ah, I forget; I'd say the temperatures in the mines were about, ah, over 100 degrees F. And pretty hot and wet. Then you had to stand in the ditch in order to shovel it out, so you had to wear rubber boots and, of course, your feet got real hot because the water was hot. And, it's a pretty, ah, pretty tough job. Ah, definitely came out of the mines at each shift very thirsty. We'd beat it down to one of the local bars and replace some of the water that you lost.

Another fun thing, ah, in those days there was a, ah, nursing school here in Butte. There was probably just about as many nurses going to school at this nursing school as there was guys working in the mines. But the nursing students, they were from all over Montana. But they had to work at the hospital on the weekends at night as well. That was part of their requirements. So the nurses would work from four till midnight and we would work from four till midnight or either that or from six till two in the morning. And then the bars were all open in Butte. There were a lot of 'em, and they were open 24 hours a day in those days. There were a few of them had music playing all night and the nurses would show up there and all the guys that worked in the mines would show up and we'd party after the shift every shift. So as result of that kind of combination of things, our social life really wasn't lacking at all because we were working in the mines every Friday and Saturday night.

TREVOR: Were your parents from Butte?

JOHN: Mine?

TREVOR: Yes.

JOHN: Yup.

TREVOR: So, a little bit of your family background, your family history on who came over and their names and stuff.

JOHN: I don't know much about it. My parents were both born in Butte and my grandparents were both born in Butte; or all four of them were born in Butte. Um, my grandfather on the Evans side, is ah, came from a Welsh family who originated in Tennessee. My grandmother on the Evans side was Swedish. And her mother and father were both born in Sweden even though she was born in the United States. And then on my mother's side, ah, her maiden name was Bowman. And, ah, some of that family came from Germany, and Switzerland, and some from Ireland. And I really don't know much more than that.

TREVOR: Like your grandfather on both sides. Their names?

JOHN: My grandfather on my mother's side was Bowman, and Evans on my father's side. My grandfather Evans ran the, ah, public transportation system here in Butte. It was owned by W. A. Clark, one of the, ah, Copper Kings, until the turnover to Butte. But, ah, he ran the street car system before it was taken out, and then the bus system. And then, something with the Columbia Gardens. I'm not sure just what his job was, but he was an overseer of some kind at the Columbia Gardens. And my grandmother and grandfather Bowman ran a corner grocery store. The building still stands on the corner of Jackson and Silver Streets. It's a paint shop right now. They ran that for many years. My grandfather also worked as a candy maker and as an ice cream maker in a creamery, as well as running the store. And that's about all I know about them.

TREVOR: Good. Ah, I think that's enough there. Thank you very much, John for the opportunity to interview you.

JOHN: You're more than welcome. I think you have a future in the interviewing business.

TREVOR: Thank you.