

# **Interview of Mrs. Ophelia Fenter**

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**By**

**Dana Murphy**

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## **Interview Questions**

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The following questions had been prepared in advance of the interview. Most of the questions weren't asked directly, as we had talked about the topic of the interview in advance.

1. Where were you born and raised?
2. When did you first come to Butte?
3. What brought you here?
4. Did any family members come with you?
5. You were a teacher at Butte High School for many years. What subject did you teach?
6. Have you had a hard time because of your race?
7. When did your husband pass away?

## **Interview Background**

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Before we started the interview, Mrs. Fenter had told me a few things about herself. She was born in 1914 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and lived there until her marriage in 1939. She attended a segregated high school in Pine Bluff, and she had told me that the notion of "separate but equal" was a load of hogwash – the school she attended had fallen into disrepair, while brand new white schools were being built. She specifically mentioned the condition of the desks at her school, while she knew there were brand new desks at the white schools.

She went on to attend Arkansas AM&N College, which is now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. She received her degree in Home Economic Education. While at college, she met her husband, William Fenter. William had been born and raised in Butte, but attended Arkansas AM&N for a time. They married in 1939 in Billings, and then moved to Butte, living in the four-plex where she currently lives. William's parents lived on the ground floor, and she and William lived in one of the apartments upstairs. Since that time, the house has been converted to a single-family home.

One of the other things that she mentioned before we started the interview is that while it was relatively easy for white high school graduates to get jobs in stores or offices, that opportunity was not available for blacks.

The transcription of the interview begins with her teaching career. My questions or remarks are in bold.

## **Transcription of Interview**

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This is an interview of Mrs. Ophelia Fenter, conducted by Dana Murphy, at Mrs. Fenter's home at 714 ½ S. Maryland Street in Butte, Montana, on December 1, 1999, at 1:00 in the afternoon.

### **Education**

Now, I could get a job with having a bachelor of science degree in home economics from Arkansas AM&N – there was no problem there.

Now, one of the problems – women didn't (now, this is about women) – women that were married could not teach in Butte until 1958, so even if I would have thought about needing to work –

### **When you first came here?**

It was impossible. Nobody could – white or whatever – until 1958.

Now the first person I remember – her mother was white – and her name was Jeannette Harrington, I think – she married her sweetheart and she went to Montana State, which was the Normal college – the same as the one I come from. It was agriculture and – what outfit? – I can't remember now what it is. But anyway, it was an educational college. So, home economics was one of the majors, like at a Normal school. So by the time I went, decided I wanted to start teaching, I went there to reinstate my certificate, because 25 years had passed. So I was going to go back there so I could get my certificate and so when I went, I called Helena first to see what I would need to do to requalify. They said, "Well, why don't you go over to Montana State and see what they think you need to do to get qualified."

So I was going to go to school one whole year. And they said, "That isn't necessary, why don't you just come in the summer?" In the summer you can pick up 16 credits, so why would you come for a whole school year? So I picked up that many credits, just to get a certificate. By the time I started subbing – you see, I put in, and said, "The first thing you do, you go back, and apply for a substitute job, because if you are married, and you don't intend to leave Butte, you want to get yourself into the system. And I thought that was a nice suggestion. So I went and I signed up – I didn't go to school, I just – so when I first started, I think I subbed out – I got my application in, I could sub without a certificate. You see, because I was already . . . but to get another certificate, see, I needed a Montana certificate, anyway. So I subbed out at East for Charlotte Wren – she was going through a cancer problem, and she was going to be a whole month. Chuck Davis called me, and he said, "I got a job for you for a whole month." I

said, "Well, I was just fixing to go on vacation." He said, "Well, you talk to your husband, and be sure that he doesn't mind that . . ." So I tell him [her husband], he says, "Sure." He was proud. Anyway, that was before I had went to get recertified. So the first time I subbed, I hadn't gotten certified, but in the meantime I got certified, because I didn't have to go for a whole year. So the next summer, I went and got my certificate. And then I would keep in contact with him, and he said, you know, I think that it would be better if you would take some other classes, and so I had to do that. One of the classes was taken so that you would be prepared to teach in the Vo-Tech schools if you had to. But he also promised me, he said, "We will be opening West soon, and we're going to be needing teachers." And he said, "I'm sure that you'll probably get on then."

So after I got my certificate, when they first opened West, they took Myrtle and put her over at West. I think it was because I thought by then as she did, because I know some of the things that they told Myrtle to do, I know she didn't do it, and I don't know whether she had – well, when you start teaching, it's better that you don't have your master's because they don't want to pay that master's salary. It's better to get your master's later, but I hadn't thought about that, because when I went to get myself qualified to get a certificate, they said, "Why don't you get your master's?" I said, "Well, I don't need that." But then, as I got into it, I thought I might as well go for it. So I think I was into my second year of teaching at Butte High. And then I went to get my master's, and this is when they told me, "You can do that in the summer." Because I was planning to take the time off. And so they said, "In a couple of summers, you'll have your master's degree." So, I took their advice and I did that.

But I had worked into my second year . . .

### **When did you start at Butte High, then?**

In 1969, right after Christmas, that was the second semester. But you see, it was only 1958 before married women could teach. But I had never thought about getting in, but I began to think more and more, "We need to have a better bank account." And this is how I happened to get into school. My first semester was not very pleasant for me, nor the children – not that we didn't get along, so far as personalities – but we didn't have the means to work with. The money wasn't there. The new school, by the time I got there, the Home Ec department was put over – one side was Vo-Tech, and the other side was the high school – even the typing was high school, and if you remember if you took any of the business courses, you had to come across to Vo-Tech. And you remember the first room right facing down across the way, you know they put it together now, the first room was the cooking department, and the sewing was across there. Well they put me, and Chuck Davis said, "I'm going to put you in cooking." I said, "Why are you going to put me in cooking?" Cooking, I hated. He said, "Oh, you'll do okay." And Morris said, "You know, I don't see how you got away with that. There's more people needing a job, and you tell the man you don't want to cook." But, it really it turned out that I was really proud of it after I got into it. But, I was so proud of how I could do with sewing, because you know I came from Roston, you know, you did both. But before, I

had only had to do sewing. Now, I did have an extra job, because I started out with Adult Education with sewing at night, before this job was available. But this is what Margaret Leary assured me of and agreed with me, that if you have so little money to work on, the only thing you can do is demonstrations and have snacks, and that's not going to be interesting to the kids – to the Home Ec classes. So the next year, she had my budget so high, I stayed from 1969-1970, until I retired in 1983 with having anything I wanted to practice with. So, later on I'm going to show you some of the things – some of the projects we did.

### **NAACP Activities**

But I'm going to tell you, before I did that, what I was involved in was church work. And this is one of the committees. Now, we did have an NAACP, that I was active in. We had a club, because you were interested in. We wanted to do a survey – it was during the time the NAACP was pushing more things, and now, I had the page turned here, and that must have been – can you see the date there?

**April 15, 1951.**

That's about when this was done [see Appendix A]. And these people were on the committee and they would go to these different places. There was me and this lady [Margaret] Driggs that went around to these places. We were the ones that faced these people. I remember this Greek place, right here on Main Street, and we went up to the owner and asked how he felt [about colored people]. He said, "They're the wrong color people." We didn't put that in there, but we never had that kind of thing with any of the rest.

[Mrs. Fenter then gave me the copy that is with this report.]

### **Mrs. Fenter's Niece, Barbara Price**

Now, I kind of got off, I wanted to tell you that after I got here, came to Butte, we lived downstairs until we did this part, painting and that, we remodeled this in 1946 or whenever World War II was over. And so at that particular time, the reason I wanted to bring this up, how I wanted to let you know about this. We had a 3 room apartment, and my husband was like his mother and father, and didn't mind me helping out, so this is the reason my niece [Barbara Price], this is how she came to Butte, after she finished high school. I asked her, "Do you want to go to Arkansas State?" Because that's what it still was at the time. I said, "Or do you want to come out with me?" Because she told me she didn't know what she wanted to do. I said, well, you're going to do something, you either have to go to Arkansas State, because I could send tuition money, and send her food money, and my father could feed her. Of course, there were other members of my family that could help, too. So she said she wanted to come with me, and so that's how she happened to come up. You know, you don't have to stay the two years, but it was a two-year's deal.

**And that was at the Butte Business College?**

The Butte Business College. I don't know whether you remember that they were. They probably went out before your time. They were not at the big building, but it burned down.

**It was at the corner of Park and Main?**

And then they moved over in the back of the old Butte High School, which is the Catholic school now – Central Boys' and Girls' now. Central Boys was over here in front of Mountain View Church, which is the

And then Chicago Furniture and Mattress moved in after Boys Central, and then the Boys was here where they have the Development Center, and then they moved together, it was remodeled, where the old Butte High School was. And the new Butte High School, I think they got in there from what I understand, about 1937.

But, with her coming to stay with us, we got a rollaway bed, and then she would have to sleep in the front room, but sharing what you have is what I feel good about. And after you go [to school] a certain length of time, you are eligible to go out and work. I said, "You aren't going anywhere. You're going to stay until they give you everything that they can."

So she had gone for two years, and I'd like to have it recorded that she did well there. [Mrs. Fenter started to show me pictures and articles about Barbara, which are enclosed here as Appendices B-F]

**When did she first come? This article is dated April 1, 1957.**

I know she stayed here for two years, so probably two years before that. She was with us another time, too. And then she said, "You know, after all the awards the night before, did you realize that nobody said anything, they never contacted her or anything."

She was really shy, but she wanted to go to Los Angeles, so we took her so she could stay with her father. He had another family.

[Mrs. Fenter showed many more pictures of the awards banquet. She wanted to have some of the pictures recorded, so they are included in this report.]

As much as talking about my experiences, I'd like to have how we shared what we had. I didn't have all of this then. We had all of the house eventually, in the early 1970s, but the guy was here who was just like family.

## **World War II**

Of course, it had been rented a couple of times since I came here in 1939 – but I wasn't here for a while. I worked at the Pine Bluff Arsenal, which made incendiary bombs during the war. That put a little bit of money in the bank together with the money they gave my husband when he came out of the service. Now, he was in the Navy, but he was 32 or 33 and that was kind of old to be taken in, and they did that that way.

### **Was that to go into World War II, as kind of a draft?**

IT was a draft – he had no choice. He was drafted, and he was already old. I must have been about – I came out here when I was 25, and that was 1939, and he was about 6 years older than I am.

### **So, he would have been 31 in 1939?**

Yeah, that's what I'm telling you. He's that much older than I am. And then, you know, World War II, started in 1942 or 1943?

### **December of 1941 was when Pearl Harbor was bombed, then it was a little after that.**

And they took a man that age. Well, again, I went and stayed with my parents and then I was there several months and I applied for a job out at the Arsenal. Well, they wanted to put you on the production line, and one of my friends said, "Why don't you get on in Inspection – you don't want to be on the production line." It's more dangerous, you know, which means you have a better chance if you were an inspector than you were if you were hemmed. And they did have accidents. It wasn't a frequent occurrence, but there was an accident, and some did die.

But that's the kind of job I took during World War II, and you remember it was over in 1945. And then we took a lovely trip. We went back through Phoenix, Arizona, then into Los Angeles, and then San Francisco, and then into Portland, Oregon, and Seattle – we stopped all the way, but we were home at New Year's Eve.

We have a lot of beautiful memories of what happened in my life, but I still needed some money. So that's how my teaching career came.

## **Methodist Church Experiences**

Now, these are the things – you might not need what I'm showing you now, but I would like you to see them. This is talking about my church life, and I'm still active in that church. But I was the first [delegate to conference] [Appendix G]. I think I served on all the committees, even the worst ones.

### **And this was in the Methodist church?**



Yes. Reverend Ricks came down one day, because I had been to his church once, so he stopped by one day, and he said, "I'd like to come and invite you to continue coming to our church." I said, "Well, you know I'm Baptist." And he said, "Well, you know we don't have anything against that." So I started when it was first turning from Ladies' Aid to Women's Society. The church united the Methodist, Episcopal, united with the Brethren – whatever they are – those two came together. But when we went out there, that it was St. Patrick's, Silver Bow, Grace, and Unity. Those were the ones that came together. There was a lot of division at that time, because some liked where they were. And I'm sure there was some resentment on my part, but you can see that that didn't bother me. It never did. I never thought what maybe people could feel, because I always thought I was as good as anybody else. All I needed to do was make a living like everybody else.

Anyway, I went from [committees in church] Evangelism, Commission, and then finally, I remember, I think it was Chuck Farman, he was on the nominating committee, he said, "How did you end up there? Nobody wants Evangelism, nobody wants Commission. Now you've got the chance to be the Commissioner of Education." And that was all before I had started working. So I took it and I'm kind of proud I did. One thing about being in committees, you kind of doubt your ability to learn. But, with a little bit of help, like most of us, we have some district meetings that we were proud of. But, I went to Conference and Bishop Phillips was our bishop at that time, and I think the church was dedicated – we had the Fellowship Hall first – but when the church first opened, I was still serving as the representative to Conference.

[Mrs. Fenter then showed me an article from a Methodist newsletter when she was doing committee work.]

### **Life with Her Husband, William**

**Why did you guys come back here then –**

You see, this was his home.

**You were married in Billings, but had met him in school in Arkansas.**

You see, he came home.

**He came back here because his parents were here?**

Yes, his parents were here. And that started from how his parents got here, they were looking for a way of living. But they were good to everyone – they have a history of helping a lot of kids through high school. And that's how why I shared what I had, too.

**So, what did he do when he came back here?**

He was a laborer, just working at these different places. It was more like self-employed janitorial service. And then he got a maintenance job at the Butte Motor Company. And that's what he did until retirement. And he worked for the Hannifins, too, you might have seen these people. You know, they had the jewelry store up there on, What was the street name? Isn't that awful?

## **Civil Activities**

Anyway, this is club stuff here, but what I wanted to show you this article about the people who worked at night school [Appendix H].

### **The Adult Education?**

Yes. This was one time when I was active at church, they had me as a speaker out at the Gloria Dei church, and these are the ladies – look at these hats we wore – and I was one of the speakers and we were getting into fellow experiences and trying to make things better in Butte. And that's what that was all about [Appendix I].

**It didn't matter what religion or whatever, it was just trying to make –**

This was almost like the United church women, where all the churches coming together. So, this was an article about that. But I had done it once over TV when they first came out over where they are now. What an experience! But at least telling about what your experiences were – if you wanted a decent place to live in those days, you had to buy your place. The thing about it, if you wanted a decent place, you'd probably have to buy it. And that's what that speech was all about.

And the various things, so I wanted to show you my other activities other than school. And that one was about when Vo-Tech first opened up. And I had that job [Adult Education] before I got my job.

## **Teaching Career**

Now, to my teaching, I do have an article about what my retirement, but it also gave a little hint of what I did [Appendix K]. I do have some pictures to show you about the various activities the kids took part in. Now see, this was one of my classes down on Front Street, when they were working on [the Parenting and Teaching Young Children] class [Appendix J] at the Head Start Day Care.

But, now the regular day care lady, it was too darn little, and I remember that I never got to go. Now this is an experience that I had that I found out like the weekend – the lady and I got to be real friendly – that was my problem, getting along with people – and when I asked her if we could do this Parenting and Teaching Young Children, and really make it so that it meant something. And not only that, their project was to design a pre-school. I was proud of that, because it was away from just playing at entertaining.

Now we had mock weddings, and receptions . . .

**Kind of like a Marriage and Parenting class?**

That's what this was, definitely. And then we had other projects as well.

[Mrs. Fenter showed me pictures of her students and their activities at Butte High School.]

The senior classes had a little longer period, because they were always scheduled for me so we could do different banquets and teas and things like that. The others would do it on a different level. You see, I had 2<sup>nd</sup> period, 3<sup>rd</sup> period, 4<sup>th</sup> period, 5<sup>th</sup> period, and 6<sup>th</sup> period. I had five classes, and so my senior classes would always have the noon period where they could also use their lunchtime, and they would have more time. If you remember, you only had 55 minutes a class.

[Mrs. Fenter showed me pictures of her students and their activities at Butte High School. These included wedding receptions, cake decorating, and preparing lunch for school administrators.]

The senior class would invite their mothers, and we would prepare a meal for them. And then, some of the time, you would see Bob Briney and Dan Peters and Angie Berryman were all visiting.

But these give you an idea of the activities.

**It looks like you really made it interesting and to apply it to real life for the students.**

Well, it was because of Margaret Leary. See you've got to have somebody [on your side], because when you feel what we're worth, you don't have money to share.

Now can you imagine how frightened you were when the lady [the Head Start Day Care people] tells you we can take you – and this is the weekend before class – that you can't come at one time. Which means that – what am I going to do? That means that I have to have class for half the kids, with have the kids gone [to the day care center]. I had to go and lease a bus, and that was fine, and then I had to figure out – you can't allow these kids, trust them to go to the bus – I had to go to the bus with them, over on the Gold [Street] side, you know where that entrance used to come out of the high school – I had to go from my room, with cards, and check them out. Check their names out on the card, and when the bus came back, I would have to take my cards and check them back in. I also have to give to Peters the names of the kids that would be going down to that place. And I never did hear anything bad about them. And then all the week, they would have to be using the book. But, on Friday, they would have to have a meal prepared for the kids, and so there was no class instruction on that day. It was getting ready and everybody came home and had lunch. And that's the way it was

done – they had to feed them. And they couldn't wait until the weekend came, because they were prepared. That was for a quarter, and then the other group would go, and they had to do the same thing.

But to know the fear that came over me when she said, "I can't have you coming all at one time." What am I gonna do? Okay, so she told me that about Friday, and I said, "I'm going to have to have the names ready, I'm going to have to check these in." And Peters backed me up. He said, "If you don't get on that bus, you are absent. And you will get detention." I said, "No, no, no, you have to be on the bus, I have to check you in, and I have to check you out."

Every time I would discipline those kids, I had no problem. I would say, "Now, if you don't want to abide by the rules of the class, and you have to be corrected, and can't be drawing attention from what we're trying to go over, because if you decide you don't want to follow instruction, you can get out of the class, because you don't have to be in here. You get your five credits if you stay, but you don't have to."

One experience I had – a kid did something, and he knew he shouldn't have done it – it wasn't anything toward me, it was just an attention getter – and I marched him over to the office, and I told him he would have to go see Peters, you will have to bring your mother back [to get back into the class]. He said, "Mrs. Fenter, you can kill me, you can do anything you want with me, as long as you don't tell my parents." I said, "Uh uh, you knew better – you knew I wasn't going to take that." I took him over to Peters, and he said, "Peters, you can do anything" – and he just said, "Uh uh – she told you!" And so, we called the parents and told them we were putting him out of the class, and when they came with him, that we would let him back in. That's all we needed to do.

So I had another one of those – I don't remember what the girl did – oh, she wasn't eating, and she was a beautiful girl, and I said, "Well, in this class, we're going to have to get you out if you prefer not to eat, because you can't evaluate food if you haven't tasted it." I had a schedule and it said who was cooking, who was washing dishes, who was putting things away, and then whoever went to the store. We even had to sign out the name of the student, and when they got the groceries, we even scheduled that. But they had to sign, put the student's name, the student would sign that. When that student got the groceries, you had to sign for them, and that had to come up with the idea of keeping somebody else from charging the groceries. We did have somebody charging groceries once that shouldn't have – I don't know who it was, but it wasn't one of our students. They bought the same thing we'd buy at school.

### **So it didn't show up right away?**

No, it showed up, when we got it, I said, "Who's this?" But, see, the bills would come back to me, and I had never seen that. And the district, at the Administration Building, paid the bills – there was no problem, there was money set aside – but the kids did their own shopping.

One time one of the students let another kid have his car and go over to Excelsior to Leo's IGA to get something he didn't have. I said, "Don't you EVER do that again!" It worked out fine, but I said, "If we don't have it, you can't have it."

Buttrey's told me that anything I wanted I could have out there, but I said I would only send one girl – one person. She could do it on her way up to school, because she was a senior and she could stop by on her way to school and pick up what we needed. Because there wasn't that much that we needed, because we always went to Pay N Takit to get our stuff, except for fresh vegetables and things the Pay N Takit didn't have.

So that would be my experience with that.

### **Acceptance within the Community**

So far as acceptance, I didn't really feel it [unaccepted] that much. Kids never had the nerve in school – once in a while you would hear someone in the hall passing by, but you could never tell who they were. I think it was just juvenile mischievousness.

To feel not wanted – now, one of those pictures where the kids were giving me presents – they said, "Uh huh – you thought we didn't care anything about you, but we do." They would buy me flowers, or do something like that.

But there was one boy, that I understood was in the sewing class, seemed like he made one of these white things that the Ku Klux Klan wears. Now, he wasn't in my class, because I didn't have that, but I heard he brought a sheet and that's what he did. Dorothy Williams was the teacher at that time. But, I don't know whether Dorothy told me or if it was Angie Berryman's sister. And, so he also had to come to me, and I said, "You're a troublemaker, aren't you?" And he said, "Oh, no, no, I'm not." But I had heard him make a remark in the hall, and he had said something about niggers or something like that, and I just acted like I didn't hear it. But when he came to me [they'd spend one quarter in cooking and one in sewing] I didn't have any trouble with him at all. He was just an attention-getter.

Getting along with teachers – I think you can tell that they maybe not inviting somebody that the whole group was invited to – you might notice that they made no effort to go to places unless everybody was invited. But that kind of thing didn't bother me, because you had your own thing to do. I never got to go to the cafeteria, anyway, because of class. But some of them would say, "Come and go with us to The Restaurant [El Taco Dos, now]." So sometimes they would ask if you wanted to go over there for lunch, and one time we went up to what used to be the Black Angus, and it got to be the Gold Rush Casino. That's a nice place to go, but it's nothing compared to what it was when the Black Angus was there. The best salad bars in the world, I believe! But, I got along with the teachers real well, I thought.

The students – I remember one girl, and she wasn't calling me a name or anything – but I told her to do something, her name was Cindy Rogers, and Cindy told me to go to hell.

And I said, "Cindy, nobody tells me to go to hell. You are out of the class as of now." The parents had to see her counselor to get her back in. I didn't let her back in, I figured I couldn't afford to. Then parents I had never heard of before, called me and told me they were glad I did that. I had never met some of these parents. And at that time, I don't think Cindy was a senior, because normally I'd meet some of the seniors' parents, because we did invite them in for lunch. She is a really good person in her life, finally turned out all right – she had a disastrous life for a while, just because of her mouth. She had all kinds of abuse and separations and all, but this last fellow she's married to, I think they have this business where they do carpet cleaning. But anytime she sees me in the store, she always hugs me, and she always tells her husband I was her teacher. She never mentions getting thrown out of class.

**So you didn't feel like as trying to get into your teaching job, that you were discriminated against?**

No, I didn't – my husband would listen to Party Line on the radio, and he never did hear anything. But I'll tell you what did happen – one of the times after I was employed at Butte High, somebody called my mother-in-law and said, "Is she colored?" My mother-in-law was a little nervous about it. They had just begun to talk about using the term Black, instead of Negro or colored. And so, she was still into the "colored" line, and it was kind of difficult for me to not be a Negro. And to say nigger when you knew it was Negro was an insult. I do think it did help to be accepted – I had to grow into that, to be accepted as Black, because it didn't incite a fight.

My husband, I'm going to tell you a little bit about him, because I wasn't here, but this is his experience here. Now, we've got different personalities – now, that doesn't have anything to do with this – I'm going to tell you another story about little kids if I don't forget that happened to me, but he went to the grade schools and would have to go out of his area, because of getting into fights with the kids. And he would be the one that would have to go to another school. Now that's what he went through. So you see, maybe my attitude would be different from what he would have to do. Now you can see he was a letter A guy up at Butte High, so that part didn't affect that part of his being at Butte High, and he did graduate in 1927. And there are pictures of him there at Butte High, too.

But you can see where he might have developed a different attitude than I did, you see, because they would follow him after school and pick a fight, and then when he would fight back, he'd get the move, so and my mother-in-law was a fiery thing, but it didn't affect him from being on these teams. I think maybe his – where you would get your inspiration to do something you realize you have to do – maybe he was a little more shy than I am. And I think maybe he needed my kind of person to back him. We're two different personalities, because I'm outgoing and he was shy. He would just be happy even though there were groups he could run around with or a mixed group, but he'd be happy just sitting there reading books. You know, that was before TV time, or radio, and he was home most of the time, unless he was working.

## Butte Motor Company

George Shoddy's place [owner of Butte Motor Company] was more like a family.

[Mrs. Fenter then showed me more pictures of Butte Motor Company's Christmas parties at Meaderville, Basin Creek Reservoir, or the Columbia Gardens.]

One time we had it at the reservoir, and I remember we had a picnic out there, and sometimes he [George] would have several of the guys over – he could tell who was more friendly – and we'd go over to his house and just have a visit. He did that, and one time they had won an award to go to Honolulu, and I said, "You can take me – I do hair really well, and I could do your wife's hair!" And another time, he won something else, and had a party at 4B's – that 's now Joker's Wild – upstairs, and I think they were doing a Hawaiian thing then – it was a family type thing.

You know, after my husband died [in 1987 of cancer], George Shoddy would call to see if I needed anything, to see if I was doing all right. He got so he couldn't see, and he began to get like that before he retired, and he said, "I couldn't see to dial your number, so I waited until the nurse came, and I had her dial the number for me."

And then George – he was out at Crest Nursing Home when he died – but you know, he had had an accident, and he really didn't get over it. You know, Chuck Davis got killed – he was at the Convalescent Center – and his friends picked him up to go for a ride, and they had an accident, and Chuck was killed. Chuck Davis and my husband played football together on the same team.

[Mrs. Fenter showed me the retirement article from "The Mountaineer" again.]

I thank you – this has been very enjoyable.

-- End of Interview --

## Appendix

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- A. NAACP survey results of hotels and restaurants.
- B. *Montana Standard* newspaper article and pictures from April 1, 1957, about the Butte Business College Awards Banquet.
- C. Copy of picture used in above newspaper article.
- D. Picture of Barbara Price receiving Secretary of the Year award from Mrs. Rice, 1956.
- E. Picture of Barbara Price with award for Secretary of the Year, 1956.
- F. Copy of ticket to Butte Business College Awards Banquet.
- G. Article from Methodist church newsletter.
- H. *Montana Standard* article about Adult Education classes.
- I. *Montana Standard* article about Butte's Fellowship Day.
- J. *Mountaineer* article about Parenting and Teaching Young Children class, dated December 18, 1981.
- K. *Mountaineer* article about Mrs. Fenter's retirement from Butte High School, dated June 2, 1983.



4-15-1951  
Appendix A

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE.

To the citizens of Butte:

Our organization recently made a survey of the hotels and restaurants of Butte in order to learn which ones live up to the policy of non-discrimination common to the vast majority of such public service businesses north of the Mason-Dixon line. While lessening in other states, due to public education and anti-discrimination laws, discrimination against the Negro people in particular has increased in Butte in the past several years. Some people have said that this is because most of the people of Butte simply do not know that this condition exists --that if they knew it, they would do something to overcome this situation.

Hence our survey, the results of which are as follows:

**Hotels:** The committee did not get a chance to see the managers of every hotel in Butte, but we saw most of the hotels managers and received friendly reception in four. These are: The Towey--Martin Towey, Mgr. The Arizona, A. L. Sipes, Mgr. The Tait, Robert J. Olds, Mgr. The Acoma, Joe McGrath, Mgr. The manager of the Finlen made the familiar excuse that he was forced to discriminate because of the demands of his patrons, and seemed to feel quite injured that anyone should object to his policy. The manager of the Y.M.C.A., Mr. Sam Parker, also refused to sign our petition, claiming that he was bound by the prejudices of those whose contribution maintain the Y. He would not admit to a hard and fast policy of discrimination, but would make no commitments in favor of accepting Negro guests, either. Mr. Parker also laid the blame on the shoulders of the regular guest "whose wishes must be respected, you know."

**Restaurants:** A Number of leading restaurant managers explained that their customers forced them, very much against their personal wishes, to refuse Colored people. The manager of the Chequamegon declared that no one in Butte need go hungry, and finally admitted that he couldn't serve Negroes, But would give one a meal to take out. Our petition was signed very freely at Morgan's Cafe on East Park Street. F. W. Woolworth Co., E. J. Greenman, mgr. Grand-Silver Co., W. F. Garber, mgr. Burr's Dept. Store, W. C. Sterzenbach, mgr. Harrington's Ice Cream Store, Wm. Harrington, mgr. The Creamery Cafe, Sam Barich, mgr. The S. & L. Ice Cream Store, Dave Yorath, mgr. The <sup>East Park</sup> managers were away but we were assured in each of these places that they were now serving anyone without exception, altho the Creamery admitted that policy has been adopted only since the war. Green's and the Moxom both said they would serve Negro men in uniform, but no one else. This survey indicates that there are quite an encouraging number of business people in Butte who do not discriminate, and we sincerely appreciate the very kind reception accorded our committee in these places. However, we feel that as long as there are still so many that do refuse to serve Colored people, and since they one and all give customer resistance as a reason, the N.A.A.C.P. urges all organizations, especially the churches, schools and labor organizations, to give special attention to educational work to break down racial prejudice among their members and do all they can to promote a more enlightened attitude toward all racial minority groups in the city of Butte.

*Survey Committee: Margret Briggs, Ophelia Pentec, Laura Kelley,  
Lena Brown, George Lowery, Gurley Pentec*

Appendix B

### Award Winners at Butte Business College Banquet



### Barbara Price Adds To Laurels At Business College

Miss Barbara Price, winner of the Butte Business College Miss Secretary of 1956 award, added to her laurels last week by passing the difficult shorthand transcription test required by the college. Miss Price transcribed 500 words from rapid dictation into typewritten letter form within 11 minutes with 99.8 per cent accuracy.

This represents a much more difficult achievement than the Gregg awards test previously won by Miss Price, which gives dictation at 120 words per minute and allows one hour for transcription with access to a dictionary and with the privilege of retyping. college officials said.

The business college test requires a minimum 95 per cent accuracy on first transcription with no access to dictionary, no retyping and with a maximum 15-minute time for transcription.

Miss Price also was awarded her 70-words-per-minute typewriting pin for qualified tests passed during the month of March.

Miss Joan Lee Hersey, named most promising secretarial student for 1956, and Mrs. Rose Morgan each received their 60- and 70-words-per-minute pins for qualified typewriting in March tests. Miss Alice Given was awarded her 60-words-per-minute typewriting pin.

New classes in the secretarial and accounting departments are beginning Monday and April 15 with special emphasis upon Stenograph machine shorthand and business law, it was announced.

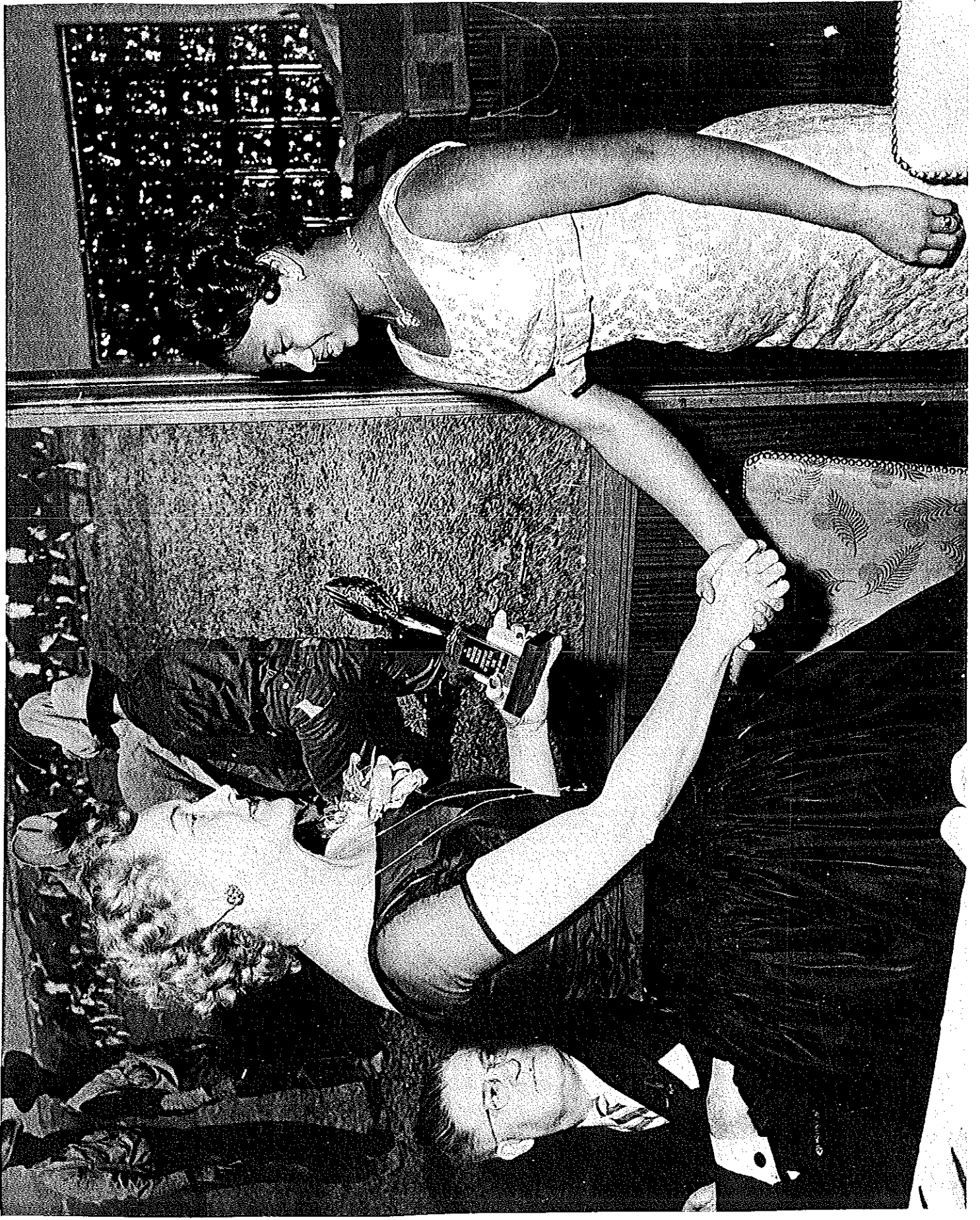
Pictured above are the winners of the top awards in the first annual awards banquet of the Butte Business College. First row, left to right: Roger N. Youlden, accountant of the year, 1956; John N. Newland, winner of the First cup ward for Achievement and Service; Miss Barbara Price, secretary of the year, 1956, and Miss Joan Hersey, most promising secretarial student. Second row: Miss Carol Solugub, stenographer of the year; Miss Evelyn Ambrozak, typist of the year; Brian March, excellency in typing, high school; Frank Woy,

most promising accounting student; Mrs. Ellen Cragwick, achievement in secretarial service, holding the plaque presented to A. F. Rice, who founded the Butte Business College in 1890, and Mrs. J. L. Scott, president of the college, holding one of the plaques upon which is engraved the names of the accountant of the year and secretary of the year. Plaques are kept in possession of the school and the individual awards are kept by the students.



Appendix C





Appendix D



BUTTE BUSINESS COLLEGE  
First

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

at

Hotel Finlen  
December 27, 1956  
7:00 p.m.

\$2.75 per person



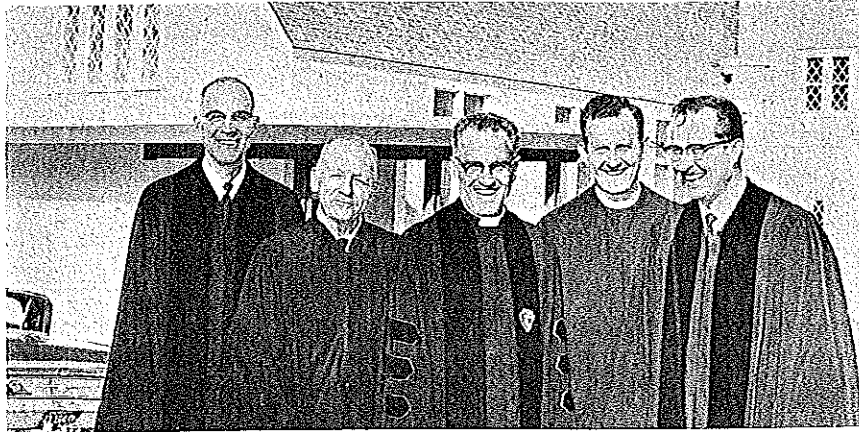
TOGETHER/NEWS EDITION  
**Denver** Area

BISHOP  
*R. Marvin Stuart*

EDITOR  
 The Rev. Jack Hill, 2200 S. University Blvd.,  
 Denver, Colo. 80210.

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MAY, 1967



*New addition to the Shelby, Mont., Church was consecrated in February. Participants included, left to right: George Sanders and William Starnes, former pastors; Bishop Stuart; John Pugh, pastor; J. Holland Vernon, district superintendent.*

**Will Serve in Malaysia**

Miss Petra Dolven of Shelby, Mont., has been accepted as a special-term missionary to teach home economics in a Malaysia high school. Her overseas orientation will begin June 18.



*Miss Dolven*

She is a 1962 graduate of Shelby High School and a 1966 graduate of Berry College in Rome, Ga. Presently Miss Dolven is teaching home economics in Sunburst, Mont.

**Conference to Examine Wedding Procedures**

The wedding ceremony is not to be entered into hastily, but with planning and regard for the sacred experiences of life, with joy, honesty, anticipation, open consent, reverence, and the love of God. So counsels a recommended document on Christian weddings to be presented at the 1967 annual conference sessions in Denver this coming June.

Prepared by a special committee under the RMC Board of Christian Social Concerns and chaired by the Rev. Albert Scarffe, pastor of Asbury Church, Denver, the statement suggests guidelines for pastors and local churches.

When a wedding is conducted in a Methodist church it represents both a Christian ceremony and a civil contract. However, the minister should remind the couple that a church wedding involves a divine dimension in their union. Civil

weddings are held elsewhere. The minister performs a religious ceremony for those who desire it.

Premarital counseling is greatly encouraged. This allows the minister to discuss with couples the nature of the ceremony, the meaning of marriage, the details of the service, and to establish a relationship by the minister and church.

A survey of local churches in the RMC shows that many provide study materials for couples to assist in interpretation of and practical suggestions surrounding wedding plans.

**No Uniform Practice on Fees**

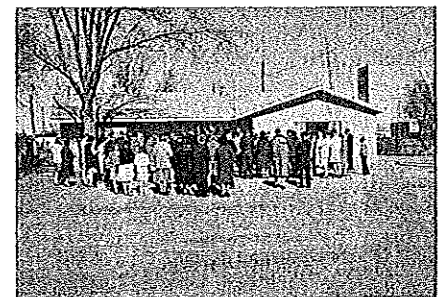
Survey results also show that most ministers do not state definite fees for services and that many do not accept fees from members of their parish unless special expense is involved. Many ministers designate wedding fees to worthy causes. It is common procedure for ministers to state fees for organist, soloist, custodian, and use of facilities if there are such charges.

A very important proposal in the statement encourages every local church to make provision for study of the Christian view of sex, marriage, and family life.

If the statement on Christian weddings is adopted at the annual conference it will become a basic guide to every pastor and local church in an examination of present and future policies and procedures.



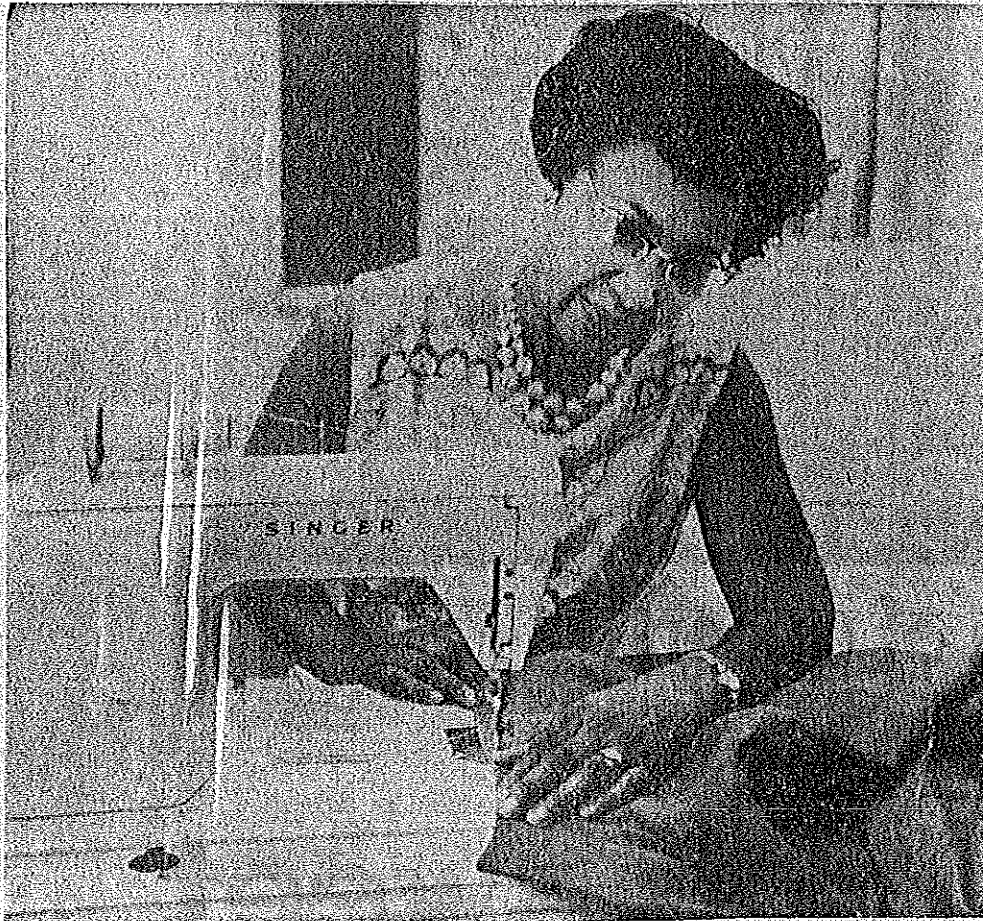
*School of Mission planners for the Butte Methodist Larger Parish involved the Rev. Robert Link; Esther Elderkin, seated, chairman of the commission on missions; and Mrs. William Fenter, planning committee member. The four Sunday series included a movie, The Long March; a panel on the Job Corps; talk and slides on his mission to South America by Marion Hixson, pastor; and a skit, Two in a Trap.*



*Cheraw, Colo., has a new parsonage. Consecration services were held in February with Hugh Critchett, district superintendent, officiating. The Rev. Donald Malone is pastor.*

**In Appreciation**

Dr. Randall C. Phillips and daughters and Bishop and Mrs. Glenn R. Phillips express their sincere thanks to the friends in the Denver Area for the many messages at the time of the death of Donna Phillips. They wish it were possible to answer each one personally, but since this is not possible they asked this notice be printed.



**MRS. OPHELIA FENTER**, high school home economics teacher, demonstrates her sewing ability. Mrs. Fenter is scheduled to teach

sewing classes in the evening adult education program at the Vo Tech School. (Staff photo by Sam Donnell.)





PARTICIPATING IN YESTERDAY'S May Fellowship Day services in the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church were from left Mrs. Leroy Ishmael, soloist; Mrs.

Robert Guest, participant in the worship service; Mrs. William Fenter, speaker, and Mrs. Robert Lewis.

# Mrs. Fenter Is Fellowship Day Speaker

*may*

Mrs. William Fenter was guest speaker yesterday afternoon at the May Fellowship Day services held in the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

Her topic was "One Family Under God." Mrs. Fenter said in part: "I notice even in our own area we have race restrictions, specifically in regard to Negroes concerning job opportunities.

"I wish to remind you that this nation was founded on the principle that all men are created equal yet discrimination against minorities is practiced to some degree in every state in the Union."

Mrs. Don Ulrich led the litany, substituting for Mrs. Rex McCulley who was unable to attend.

Mrs. Norman Ammerman, Mrs. Joseph Holly, Mrs. Lilly Kestle and Mrs. Robert Guest led discussions on "Significance of May Fellowship Day," "Freedom of Restrictions," and "Job Opportunities."

Mrs. Leroy Ishmael was the soloist and Mrs. C. D. Charles organist.

After the meeting, a fellowship tea was enjoyed. Pouring were Mrs. Karl Schmidt and Mrs. Robert Lewis. The Lutheran women were in charge of the tea.



VOTERS AT THE Democratic presidential caucus in the Butte Civic Center Sunday cast their votes in the ballot box. Slightly more than 1,000 voted. Mondale won by a hair. Please see story on Page 1. (Staff photo by Jerl Pullum)