Dan Price and Clara Price Joslin, brother and sister, interviewed in Clara's home by Teresa Jordan, January 13, 1986.

Clara born October 12, 1911; Dan born January 31, 1915. Came to Montana from Wisconsin when Dan was just a baby--probably in 1915. Had a small farm in Wisconsin; they weren't making it on the farm, and their father came here to go into the mines. C & D had a brother, Charles, who died in 1968. He was also a miner.

Their father didn't want Dan or his brother to go into the mines.

Dan went two years to Montana Tech--majoring in modern languages, French and German. Left Tech in '38. Went to Missoula to continue education, but his father was not working much, times were hard, he withdrew. Dan worked as a miner, in construction, for the Forest Service. He worked at 13 mines in Butte--what you would call a "10-day man." He was very unsettled, drinking too much--not conducive to holding a job.

Had worked in mines for money to go to school; also, worked at a WPA job. Hard times then, the 30's.

Their father was a very good miner. The Company was good to the good miners, tried to keep them working, a week on, a week off. Sometimes one week on, two weeks off. But it was something. Their father was a great outdoorsman. He fished and hunted when he wasn't working. Dan remembers eating elk meat with a coating of coal dust. There weren't freezers; the elk hung covered with coal dust to preserve it. You would wash the dust off to eat it. What their father hunted or fished provided much of their food. If he couldn't get it legally, he would get it illegally. He was a law abiding man, but he felt he had a right to feed his family. Dan remembers two times he killed a moose (illegal); remembers helping him carry it down. And he fished all winter, all summer.

Their mother was Irish. She took care of several other children. In the depression there were homeless children wandering about. She took some in, fed them, gave them a place to stay. She was warm hearted, affectionate. She was Irish--her parents were from the old country.

Their father--Price, Dan thinks, is a Welsh name, but he doesn't really know where the Prices were from. They had been in America for a long time. His father had a grandfather who was a captain on the Erie Canal, had boats there. Dan would call his father a Yankee with Indian blood. They think he had some Indian blood--and that helped him be such a good fisherman and hunter. Their father drank very little--would have one or two drinks at a party. And he would play the mouth organ. "When he married an Irish woman, that's where we got the alcoholism," says Dan. But their mother never touched a drop. The Irish women very seldom drank. She had three sisters, and they hardly ever took a drink in their lives. But the Irish drank a lot--and many of the sons of his mother and her sisters drank, were alcoholics. "They

always drank at the wakes in Butte, even people who weren't Irish--but the Irish, oh boy. And they told the stories, at the wakes, the tales," says Dan.

That's how Dan met Butte poet Ed Lahey. Dan was at the Silver Dollar talking to Jana [who runs the bar], was quoting an Irish friend who said that if the Irish hadn't invented whiskey, they would have ruled the world. Ed cocked up his ear, said "what was that quote?" That was the irony--Dan's friend was Irish and an alcoholic, from a family full of alcoholics, and that's what he thought.

Clara says, there is something in their body chemistry that can't handle it, that can't assimilate it like other people. It makes them crazy--the Irish and the Indians.

Dan has poem, "Irish Drunk" that he wrote, consulted with his Irish friends, they said it was authentic.

Clara says that Butte was a roaring mining camp, and everyone drank, more than they do now.

D: "If you saw the places people worked, you'd know why they drank. It wasn't all Irish, either. Most of them--not all of them. But those terrible places, you wanted to forget them. You had a burning thirst--all mines were hot, you had a terrible thirst. And nothing felt better than alcohol. It didn't seem to be satisfied with coffee or tea."

Father didn't become ill from silicosis or miners' con; he just went into a sort of depression when they had to sell the farm in Wisconsin and the house in Butte. Instead of going on welfare, they sold those things. When they were down to their last $20, they went on the welfare--that was the last of the depression. He got sick, depressed. Clara guesses that that is what bothered him, having to sell. They had kept the farm in Wisconsin up to that time, with the idea they would go back there. But it didn't work out that way. You had to have a lot of money to farm, even in those days. Sold it, just used up the money because no work. Dan notes that he was a very steady man, a very conscientious worker, took good care of his family. When he went on social security, he thought we won't make it. Dan and his brother worked when they could get it. But that put him in a sort of a slump, a sort of "permenent despair--it wasn't permanent, he did come out of it and was his own self again." (Dan)

The house had been on the East side--nothing left there now. Below Broadway, near the Belmont mine. E. Mercury. Real east side characters.

C: There was the east side and the west side. Most of the miners lived on the east side.

D: We lived on the wrong side of the tracks, definitely.

Q: Was there a wrong side of the tracks in Butte?

D: You better believe it.

C: It was then.

People who lived on the west side--a miner could live on the west side, too--but the children who lived on the west side thought they were much better. After Prices sold the house, his folks never owned another one.

Where Dan and Clara live now is "an odd enclave." (Dan) [They have small houses, side by side. Clara's is 681 S. Alabama; Dan's is 679 S. Alabama, below Iron Street.] Clara's house was the office for the old Dexter Ore Mill. A mill concentrates ore, doesn't smelt it. The Travonia was a famous gold mine in the area; this area was called Travonia City. Clara's house was probably one of first built. Area also called Dexter Addition.

Before D & C moved into the area, a couple Chinamen worked placers in the Missoula Gulch. During the depression, all sorts of people worked it. There were open sewers running down the gulch from Walkerville, and wives would turn their water on so the placers would have plenty of water to mine. The sewers didn't have sewage in them because people had outdoor privies; they just had dish water, bath water, etc. So not dangerous.

In the depression, they were all equally poor. They remember you might have a sack of beans, a sack of macaroni, a couple cans of tomatoes, some canned [dried?] eggs.

C married Milton Joslin in 1933. He was a miner. They also bought a little store on Travona St. C ran it, M worked underground. He had a week on, a week off when they first started out. The store was small, mom and pop type. There were supermarkets starting then. C and M were saving for a farm, too.

Q: Copper mining is so foreign to agriculture--was it hard for your father to adjust?

D: Definitely. He loved to be out of doors. C: Yeah, but he said he would rather work in the mines than--we went back to Chicago once and he got a job there and he didn't like that. He war raised there, too. He said, when it come right down to it, he'd rather work in the mines because it was more interesting and, of course, better pay. It was hard work and horrible conditions, but he always had his recreation, hunting and fishing.

D: The hours were good underground, because it was collar to collar [collar is term for opening of mine shaft]. You might wait half and hour to go down the shaft, and you might have to wait another half hour on the station underground. So your shift was actually only probably about seven hours. And he liked that a lot. There was the danger and the wet and the heat--and the

dust.

C remembers miners coming out, their faces just pasty white from the heat.

C and husband Milton went to Texas for three and a half years, worked for the Bureau of Fisheries. Just after they left, M's partner was crippled completely in a fall of ground, every bone in his body was broken. "Of course people had to expect that, I guess."

In WWII, Milton was called back here--he was an expert miner, and he was asked to come back to Mine Lake Camp [proper name?] --up near Absorkee--where they mined chromium, was the only chromium mine in the US. Necessary for the war effort. Anaconda opened that property up. Stayed up there about a year. Then came back to Butte, he went to work in the mines. They finally bought a place in the Bitteroot--lived up there "but that was just like repeating Wisconsin. There was no work up there except the sawmills, and they were very unstable, unsteady work. There would either be a strike or a shutdown at the mill."

Tape 1, side B

For many years--14 or 15--Milton mined in Butte; Clara stayed at the farm; he would go to the farm on weekends and work. He never missed a weekend. Clara would come over here in the winter for the kids to go to school. The farm was across a river; the bridge washed out. They didn't get the bridge replaced for about 20 years. Finally, Dan and her son in laws built a log bridge. Otherwise, they used a boat to get across, and in the high water, something sort of like a kayak.

Clara's family:

Oldest son, Paul, killed in accident. He would have been about 47 now. He was a translator in Turkey, in the service. Graduated MSU. Jane is 44. She was born in Texas. Lives in Central Washington, at Soap Lake. Works for the Public Utilities Development, has two children. Joseph is 41, lives here. He worked the farm for quite awhile. Connie is married to Paneek's son, (Panisko). Lives on Granite Street. She graduated in nursing from Louisiana State University. Paneek was a pump man for the mines, a character. In "show business"--a professional clown. And youngest daughter, Kay, '34, graduated from U. of M in journalism. She lives here, is not married.

D & C and their folks lived, on and off, in Wisconsin growing up. Dan was in the Army for 28 months.

Butte--unique because there were so many different nationalities--went to school with Austrians, Slavic, Irish. And the second generation, mixed, was darn smart. Everyone intermarried. And when D and C were young, many natioalisites you don't see around much now--Arabs, Egyptians, Syrians, Greeks.

They remember the Constantinople Club, a Greek establishment. Clara remembers that the men would smoke long hooka pipes which she thinks had hashish in them.

Q: Why do you stay in Butte?

D: I probably couldn't get by anywhere else.

It's unique. So many different people. Clara notes that now it is more or less homogenized.

D: If you go to Missoula, the faces--they might be better looking people or something, but the faces look like you see in the Montgomery Ward Catalogue. In Butte, the faces have the Butte experience carved into them. What did Norman Mailer say about a Black man that lived to be 21 in New York, his face was a work of art? In Butte, the Butte experience is kind of written on the Butte face. There are good faces in other parts of Montana, too--I like the faces up around Shelby.

C: Used to be, the farmers and ranchers around, especially, they hate Butte people. I don't know why. Well, I do know--up in the Bitteroot, they were very, very jealous. They thought that the miners were getting such huge amounts of money, and [still] they were poor. Well, it was taken away from them--by the merchants and everyone. There was someone with their hand out for the money everytime they got a paycheck. And I guess the farmers just thought they were dumb and stupid, threw the money away on drink and everything. But they came to Butte--in hard times, they always came to Butte. What they did, mostly during the strikes, they came and went behind the fence. And that way, they were betraying their own--you know, just poor people, they were poor just like the Butte people. And then they'd get that money and then they'd go back and then just sneer at Butte. So I think it was jealousy, an awful lot of it.

D: I used to define [Butte] as kind of a living museum--there are all types and all faces--I don't know. People walking around that I've seen so many years. You know, when your roots, when yo've been here 65 years, you can kind of identify Butte faces right away. You can identify Butte speech sometimes. I've been told I've got it myself. I don't know, it's hard to define. Well, the architecture is unique, for one thing. What people built, what people lived in. Such a--that's highly suggestive of the cosmopolitan charcter of Butte, the variety of architecture. Not that there aren't finer buildings in Seattle and Frisco, of course. But even the little houses--I can never get too tired of driving around, seeing the fan lights, the high ceilings...

C: the turrets and everything.

D: That in itself is unique.

C: Butte is famous for it's light, something in the air.

D: And there is so much sunlight in Butte. People curse the cold in Butte, but go to Seattle and live for six months without seeing the sun...I prefer Butte myself. Yeah, there is that unique quality to the air.

C: Even over in Missoula. It's supposed to have a better climate than butte, about 10 degrees warmer. But it's dark and gloomy.

D: I don't know what causes a person to get attached to a place like this.

C: I know, the Butte miners, a lot of people might think they were just ignorant working men, but there were lots of men came here, preferred to work in the mines, who were well educated. I mean, even in the old days, when most people weren't. And they just preferred it. Because it was a free life--you know, not like an office job or a high class job of some kind where your life is dictated more or less by your job. But here, the men could work and earn their money, and when the men were off work, they forgot all aout it. They could live their own life.

D: Yeah, from all over the country. And you could get a job anytime, there was no job history. If you quit a hundred times, you could go back and get the same job. That was something people liked.

C: You could have your own opinions--you know, not like office politics or whatever.

Q: Possibility of likeness between cowboys and miners? Yet, cowboys seem less accepting of differences.

C: Here, you could have your own politics, your own ideas. And everybody had an opinion in Butte, and they all expressed it. And people respected it--there wasn't much fighting over that.

D: It was a dangerous occupation and a lot of people wouldn't do it, wouldn't stand those conditions. If your hair was long, it didn't matter how long it was, if you knew how, if you did your work down there...

C: Well, there were lots of cowboys in the Butte mines, too.

D: Many a cowboy. And they assimilated, you know. Yet, the cowboy, I would say, has something very much of the redneck in him. (Talks about being in Ekalaka with a fellow with long hair; almost getting into a fight about it.)

Q: From what I hear, I suspect it would have been easier to be a hippy in the 60's in Butte than in Ekalaka...

C: I don't think so. Butte, at this time, is very puritanical. The hippies didn't do very well here. They did, strangely enough, over in Virginia City, there was a whole enclave over

there. And up in the Bitteroot, they all went up there.

D: We have a difference of opinion. I never saw anybody--well, I heard of them being bothered a little for their hair in Butte, but certainly people have been running around for years who weren't bothered here.

D talks about other run ins in Cowboy towns/bars. Cowboys didn't like the miners either. D has only run into that redneck thing from ranch type people--though he has known many fine ranch people.

C: Well, like up there at the mullet [?] mines, when we went up there to live--below Columbus, some of the farmers wouldn't even speak to us, called us mining camp trash. But they went up and worked in the mines too.

Q: Butte spawned many different, extraordinary people--like Ed Lahey, the artist, Rudy Audio, Evel Knievle. Evel Knievle couldn't have come from Missoula...

D: No, I don't believe he could. To be as crazy as he is, he'd have to come from Butte.

Q: It's hard to get to, what it is about Butte that breeds that extraordinariness, that different character.

D: If you worked in the mines, you lived under certain tension. As soon as the cage is quivering, moving up and down on the end of the cable, as soon as you step on that cage--well, the most dangerous part of the job is riding the cages sometimes. I don't say it took guts. But a guy that worked underground--and I had that feeling myself, and Kip has it, a friend of mine--as soon as you are underground, you get a sort of a high. C: Maybe it's the radiation. D: Well, that may be part of it. But the air is never as good, you have a definite lack of oxygen.

Tape 2, Side A

D is delighted to see Ed Lahey put Butte into words--he has said some things about Butte that D would like to have said. About the ancient buildings--he calls it, D thinks, "the city of my dead youth."

D: Ed got the feel. He worked underground, too. I tried, before I ever knew Ed, to put into words what he did, about the underground always confronting you. I don't know if that's a quote, but I always had that feeling. You had that sense of danger, of excitement, that high. And you had to go through that everyday to work underground. ...you probably carried it over into your life outside the mine. Miners were great outdoorsmen because if you lived and worked all the time never seeing the sun, trees and streams seemed so beautiful to you.

D went to Tech. He grew up with the toughest kids in the world,

Irish and Finn. He didn't fit in very well. He observed that world, but didn't fit into it very well. He wanted to be a writer, thought he would teach, which many writers do. But after the Army, he didn't go back to college. He was "very unsteady," drank a lot, hit the mines. Worked in 13 different mines.

D talks about Clara's husband--if you ever wanted to talk to an educated person...

D: He liked mining, but when I first met him, he was studying perspective. He was a pretty good artist. He was studying it out of book written in German. He was studying Russian in a book written in French. He never went to college. He was a brilliant linguist, brilliant in music. And he was a guy who liked mining. He was a guy you should be talking to. Brilliant, God he was a brilliant man. And educated. I don't know what he liked about it--well, he was a very independant person. There were some very unique people worked underground. I met a guy from an old Irish family in the Butte mines, and he was--this was one of the better old Irish families, very well educated, and he was a student of Arabic. They were the O'Donnells. And the O'Donnells in Ireland were earls. We came from that part of the country, but I'm quite sure we weren't related. Anyway, he was studying Arabic and he and I got together down there, and he was writing Arabic on an air door, a wooden door. And I often wondered what became of O'Donnell until one time I picked up the Atlantic and there was a story written by, I think it was Jim, O'Donnell. And there was a story about the old Persia. (explains story.) But he wrote this story, and I'm quite sure it was the same guy that was writing Arabic on the air door.

C & D's mother studied Gaellic.

Q: Clara, what was it like to be female in Butte?

C: We had an Irish mother, and of course it was the boys, they were first. Everything was oriented around them. And the girls, they got the leavings I guess, more or less.

Talk about limited educational opportunities for women. Women worked as school teachers, went to business college on the corner of Park and Main, became stenographers, secretaries. Most just expected to get married. Not many jobs for women--bookkeeper made maybe $50 a month. Wages were not that low for men. Woman could be a waitress. Clara worked as an usher at the Rialto and the fox. $12 a week.

C & D remember the Hennessey building, home of the Anaconda Company--they used to have gunmen on the top. During strikes, but other times, too. Armed guards. They always had them there, kept them stationed up there.

Q: I have had some people tell me that men made the money in Butte but women were the managers essentially--for instance, in a mining family, the man would bring home the check, but the woman

would manage...

D: That was certainly true in our family, wasn't it? Of course, our mother was Irish, and a little domineering. In a nice way.

C: Yeah, our mother handled it. And I always handled the money. My husband didn't want to be bothered with it.

Q: Butte isn't now, and probably won't be in the future, a mining town, at least in a major economic sense. Do you think you've lost some of your identity because of that?

D: I don't see it that way. These families, they pass on the traits that you had to acquire in order to survive as a miner, they pass it on to their children. Even when I see faces that I know aren't my contemporaries, they belong to another generation, but they have the same look.

C: But most of them, they don't even want to talk about their ancestors, their fathers being miners. They just don't want to admit it. It seems that they want to be just like they are--well, office workers, upward mobile I guess you call it.

Talks about C's son in law--he works for the Power company, doesn't like to talk about the old days. His father Paneek--he was pure Irish, had several sisters who were nuns, a brother a priest. There were more bachelors and spinsters among the Irish--D calls it "endemic celibacy." Why? They both say it was the "mother thing." Also, D ads, the church was so strict, it was such a good thing to go into the church. D went to the sisters' school for awhile, and they had a very morbid attitude toward sex, flesh, and the devil.

Talk about Our Lady of the Rockies. C says that she doesn't understand, if they were going to do it, why they put a Jewish woman up there or any other nationality. If they were going to do it, they should have put an Indian woman.

Tape 2, Side B

D thinks that there is money to be made in it, which he doesn't like. He has a friend who wanted to cast little silver medals with her image, but he was told that Joe Roberts has the patent. D likes the enthusiasm that made the project possible, like the guys who literally risked their lives in the cold to get her put up. The donated time and money is good.

D: But the idea, the feeling people put into it. What is it, Clara? People's need for a miracle, I guess. And those guys praying that they'd get it done up there. But Roberts--you know his story, Teresa? Joe Roberts? He had the franchise to furnish the big trucks to the Berkeley pit which must have been rich--a big operation in those days. But he went bankrupt--you might have heard that. And I don't know--I can't think anybody would be so cynical as to want to recoup their losses with a religious

thing like that. A lot of people invested a lot of feeling--religious people.

C: He was pretty fast to jump on the bandwagon.

D: He sure was. That's what I'm afraid of. He's a pied Piper that led a lot of childish--not childish, but innocent, good people. People put money into it too.

Q: What do you think we will see with Washington Corp coming in?

C thinks it will be just a kind of fringe, a little bit of money. D thinks it will be more than that. There is lots of molybedenum left, and that could be good. The Moly is down 4,000 feet, and he may encounter big copper and silver veins as well. The comopany didn't get it all.

Q: What about concessions?

Clara thinks it is good for the company. She is not enthusiastic. D thinks that it may mean more jobs. And the decrease in taxes is conditoned on starting up mining within three years, which may help.

Columbia Gardens--a very beautiful place--the Garden Spot for the children of Butte. There wasn't much in Butte in way of trees and garens. People could go there--everything was free. And green. You could pick pansies. There was a wonderful dance floor. C: I don't see why they took it out. D: Well, they had to make room for the molybedenum--it lies under the Gardens, that's where the moly is. C: But then they could have located it someplace else. D: Oh, they could have gone around it, I think. C: But they just abandoned it. After they made the money [mining].

Q: C. Van Woodward talks about the south after the war--he says that tragedy happened there, and history. Does that apply to Butte?

D: In a general sense, it does. The Butte experience was a great experience. And it was kind of like war in a way. You opposed a lot of--well, nervous energy. You know how Milton was. I didn't work steady, I don't claim to have done that. But the guys that worked steady there--what it reminded me, being in the mines, I never knew what it reminded me of until I went in the Army and we were on a rifle firing range, a whole bunch of guys, and all that gunfire, it created a sort of excitement. And that's somehow the way I nearly always felt when I got on the cage in the mines. They are almost always in a hurry when its cold, and they drop that cage so fast that your feet will sometimes leave the bottom of the cage. And that starts the adrenalin flowing. As intelligent and educated a man as Milton was, he <u>liked</u> mining, he told me so.

C: I know he did. He <u>liked</u> it. A lot of the men, expecially

the contract miners, they liked it. They'd rather work--well, he had a government job down in Texas, he'd rather work in the mines.

D: He was the most independently minded person I've ever seen.

Q: With your sons, what was his feeling about their going to work for the mines?

C: Well, no, he didn't want them to. He wanted them to get educated. My oldest son was a musician.

D: Yeah, he made a very good musician of him, and insisted that he go to college, and worked hard, with his hands--got him, I guess he was in a fraternity. In other words, he gave them things that usually professional people gave their kids. He just worked hard and got it. 'Course he made good money. 'Course he couldn't do anything with Joe.

C: No, Joe got out of high school, we told him to go up to the School of Mines, anyway. He went up there, he didn't want it. He was too independant of mind, that boy.

Q: From what you said, Milton liked the mining so much--and yet, he didn't want his kids to do that.

C: No. But other work he had done, he preferred the mining to it, because more independance of spirit, I guess. Course, when you think of the danger--I guess he forgot about it down underground because he said it was interesting, you know, it was more creative. The contract miner, they worked for themselves. No boss tells them what to do. And at their own pace. Anyway, he didn't want the boys to work--because of the danger.

D: He didn't want them in the mines at all. My father didn't want his sons in the mines.

C: And he thought to have a farm and to be independant of everybody--but it don't always work out that way.

Q: A lof people see Butte in transition now. What do you see about Butte that hinders it in making that transition?

C: There isn't much in other industries that could be around here. The only thing I see is service work--which is like taking in each others' laundry. When there is no industry behind it, there is no pay for it.

D: What can you do with a town like Butte? This isn't farming country, not much.

C: There are a lot of retired people here now.

D: Yeah, but we're everywhere.

C: All the young people have to leave, there is nothing for them.

D: Butte has such a spirit, such a strong identity, such a strong, a certain force of character to the people here, that I believe will prevail, and Butte will persist--on it's reputation I guess (laughs).

C: Can't live on that all the time.

D: ...but Butte was unique. some of the well known people who came here.

Talks about old Smitty, a locksmith from Vermont.
Talks about the old Silver Dollar saloon--a club for Blacks and Indians. Talks about how night was like day in old Butte, the sidewalks were fammed on holidays. Fights.

Q: Is it hard for you to see Butte quiet and sleepy?

C: Yes, it's really weird.

D: It is to me, too.

C: It was so busy and rousing.

D: You had so many people and nobody lacked for a job that could work, wanted to work. Everybody had money and was cheerful.

Q: I sense there was a certain generosity.

D: Yeah, they weren't a penny pinching peole. They were adventurous types from around the world, guys, more than one, guys off sailing ships that had been everywhere in the sailing ships, good drinkers, and generous of course. Charlie Russell was here, and he used to say that his idea of a good time was being in Butte on a Saturday night, payday night.

Talks about how they don't think he did any paintings of Butte or Butte people. He was more into cowboys and Indians.