

Mary Murphy's Butte oral history project, 1980-1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Murphy, Mary 1953-
Title	Mary Murphy's Butte oral history project
Dates	1980-1981 (inclusive) 1980 1981
Quantity	24 interviews
Collection Number	OH 098
Summary	From 1980-1981, Mary Murphy, working with Helen Bresler, conducted a series of labor history oral history interviews with a variety of Butte, Montana, working-class residents. The interviewees ranged from miners, grocers, waitresses, boarding house keepers to a blacksmith, union agent and nurse.
Repository	University of Montana, Mansfield Library, Archives and Special Collections Archives and Special Collections Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library University of Montana 32 Campus Dr. #9936 59812-9936 Missoula, MT Telephone: 406-243-2053 Fax: 406-243-4067 library.archives@umontana.edu
Access Restrictions	Researchers must use collection in accordance with the policies of Archives and Special Collections, the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, and The University of Montana-Missoula.
Languages	English.

Biographical Note

Born in 1953, Mary Murphy received her B.A. from University of Massachusetts at Boston in 1977 and her M.A. and PhD from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1983 and 1990 respectively. She joined the Montana State University's Department of History and Philosophy in 1990.

Murphy's most recent book, *Hope in Hard Times: New Deal Photographs of Montana, 1936-1942*, received the Montana Book Award for 2003. The book, drawing on more than 140 Farm Security Administration photographs, looks at Montana during the Great Depression. Murphy also wrote, *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41*, published in 1997. She co-edited *Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People, and Place*, published in 2002, as well as dozens of book chapters, peer-reviewed articles and book reviews. She has lectured across the country on Western mining

history, women in the West and history of the Great Depression. She has served as historical advisor on numerous films and museum exhibits.

Murphy teaches courses in American history, women in the West, the American West, social and cultural history and a variety of upper-level seminars at Montana State University in Bozeman.

Content Description

From 1980-1981, in a grant project funded by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Mary Murphy, working with Helen Bresler, conducted forty-seven oral history interviews with twenty-four Butte, Montana, working-class residents. The interviewees ranged from miners, grocers, waitresses, and boarding house keepers to a blacksmith, union agent and nurse. A few highlights within the topics are Montana and the Anaconda Company, mining, unions, recreation, and ethnic variety in Butte. At the time of the interview project, Mary Murphy was a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C. and any other applicable statutes. Copyright transferred to the University of Montana-Missoula.

Preferred Citation

[Name of document or photograph number], Mary Murphy's Butte Oral History Project, Archives and Special Collections, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Most interviews were recorded by Mary Murphy or Helen Bresler before deposit in Archives & Special Collections.

Acquisition Information

The interviews were deposited at the Archives as a group by Mary Murphy upon completion of the project.

Processing Note

A few interviews were transcribed before deposit, but the bulk of the interviews were transcribed by Archives & Special Collections personnel.

Related Materials

The Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives in Butte, Montana, also holds audio cassette copies of these interviews.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Description	Dates
<p>OH 098-1 and 2: Interview with Donald A. Calder Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 19 leaves Donald A. Calder describes his family's life in Butte, Montana. His father, a tailor from Scotland, moved to Butte in 1894. Calder explains his own WPA work until 1942 and his early years in the blacksmith trade. He discusses the blacksmith's union workings and its eventual early 1960s merger with the boilermakers. Calder discusses some ethnic divisions in Butte.</p>	19 June 1980
<p>OH 098-3, 4, 5, and 6: Interview with Raymond F. Calkins Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 43 leaves Raymond Calkins discusses his experiences living and working in Montana and some of the neighboring states. A graduate of the University of Montana-Missoula he describes his employment with the Forest Service and in logging. After that he moved to Butte, Montana, where he worked as a mine draftsman for the Anaconda Company. He recounts the 1946 miners strike and surrounding events from his perspective as non-Union worker. He recounts many anecdotes of life and culture in Butte, Missoula, and Montana, and in the woods.</p>	14 May 1980
<p>OH 098-7 and 8: Interview with Elizabeth Christy Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 26 leaves Born in Missoula, Montana, Elizabeth Christy moved to Butte, Montana, as a young child and recalls growing up there. She talks about mining, the Depression, Butte nightlife, the old Columbia Gardens, parades, and the Ringling Brothers circus coming to town. In 1923 she married Matt Christy and together they owned and ran a grocery store on the corner of Granite and Crystal streets in Butte. She also discusses her adult social life, describing parties and changing fashions. She ends by talking about her grandfather, who helped build the Greenough House in Missoula, and her grandmother who was a Reorganized Latter-Day Saint.</p>	13 May 1980
<p>OH 098-9 and 10: Interview with Matt Christy Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 30 leaves Matt Christy (original Christovitch) describes his life and work in the grocery store business from his start as a clerk to his ownership of multiple stores in Butte, Montana. He recounts various aspects life in Butte including the mines, business, economics, relationships amongst ethnic groups, prostitution,</p>	13 March 1980

Description	Dates
<p>entertainment, holidays, and religion. He describes cultural and attitude shifts he witnessed amongst the local population during his life. An immigrant from Yugoslavia as a boy, he describes a return trip there and compares that and other global locations that he visited to each other and to Butte and America.</p>	
<p>OH 098-11 and 12: Interview with Blanche Averett Copenhaver Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 28 leaves Copenhaver describes life working as a waitress through the West, her move to Butte, Montana in 1937, her discovery of the benefits of unions, a 1948 strike and her appointment to Executive Board of the union. While she was initially a member of the Women's Protective Union, it merged with the AFL, prior to that union's merger with the CIO. She describes her involvement on various union boards, Status of Women Committee, her term as president of the union, and the role of women in unions and the labor force.</p>	13 March 1980
<p>OH 098-13: Interview with Agnes (Mattson) Cramer Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Cramer describes growing up in boarding houses where her mother worked in Butte, Montana, and later meeting her husband in a boarding house in 1929. She continued to work in boarding houses after marriage up until 1945 when boarding houses were disappearing. Also describes childhood in Butte, going to Columbia Gardens (amusement park) and Lake Avoca.</p>	28 March 1980
<p>OH 098-14 and 15: Interview with Margaret Cunningham Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Cunningham tells stories about growing up in Butte, Montana, working as a clerk, the Depression, WPA projects, and social life. She describes areas in Butte including Walkerville, Centerville, String Town, and Butcher Town.</p>	24 April 1980
<p>OH 098-16: Interview with James Curtin Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 21 leaves Curtin first describes the unique in-home style wake for his uncle who was a secretary of the Wobblies. He tells about working in Butte, Montana, mines including the work itself, the dangers, and the conflict between mining laborers and the hegemonic power of the Anaconda Company. He also describes his large family, and family life and the problems they faced during the Depression.</p>	8 April 1980
<p>OH 098-17 and 18: Interview with Perdita E. Duncan Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process :Duncan describes growing up African-American in Butte, Montana, and discrimination against adult blacks in employment and social activities in high school. She mentions her father, a podiatrist, treating many white patients. She describes attending Oberlin College, the first college to admit African-</p>	18 March 1980

Description	Dates
<p>American women, a long career in the law department of the New York City Department of Social Services, and writing reviews as a music critic for a New York newspaper. She returned to Butte to care for her mother in 1969.</p>	
<p>OH 098-19: Interview with Marjorie Dunstan Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Dunstan describes growing up in Butte, Montana, the Columbia Gardens, being part of the Norwegian community and preserving that Scandinavian heritage. She discusses unions and her viewpoint that unions ruined Butte.</p>	23 April 1980
<p>OH 098-20 and 21: Interview with Aili Maki Goldberg Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Goldberg describes growing up in the Finnish community in Butte, Montana, where her mother worked as a cook in boarding houses to support her three children. Goldberg explains how boarding houses operated, changes from the 1920s up to the 1950s when they nearly disappeared and the different kinds of foods offered and cooked. She describes other kinds of women's work and unions in Butte.</p>	22 March 1980
<p>OH 098-22, 23, and 24: Interview with Clarence Goldberg Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 51 leaves Goldberg begins by describing how his parents emigrated from Sweden to the United States and finally to Butte, Montana. Goldberg details his work history; but he especially provides insight into the life and work of a miner, along with information on the development of Butte's mining industry, health and safety conditions, and organized labor. Goldberg's anecdotes place the life of the miner in the broader cultural context of Butte as it existed in the first half of the 20th century. He recalls stories pertaining to a wide variety of aspects of life in Butte, including bootlegging, prostitution, and local business.</p>	22 March 1980
<p>OH 098-25: Interview with Richard P. Grace Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Richards talks about the different sports teams in Butte and watching them play. He also talks about how the Butte mine workers participated in these sports teams. He discusses the Anaconda Company's role in Butte and its influence in the Montana Legislature.</p>	1980
<p>OH 098-27 and 28: Interview with Chester Kinsey Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Chester Kinsey describes coming to Montana as a teenager and living mostly in the Havre and Great Falls area. Kinsey explains his lifelong belief in socialism, is a self-declared communist, and a full union supporter. He describes his work in the Farmer's Union, Mine-Mill, and Progressive party.</p>	14 April 1980

Description	Dates
Kinsey explains the workings of the Farmer's Union, the ethnic divisions, and internal problems.	
OH 098-29 and 30: Interview with Margaret Lemm Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Lemm describes growing up in the McQueen section of Butte, Montana, her father who worked in the mines, and her education in Butte including nurse's training at St. James beginning in 1929. Lemm stopped nursing when she married Robert Lemm in 1930 and resumed special duty nursing in 1942. She also discusses the Montana Nurses Association, the short-lived Butte Nurses Union, and her experiences in different kinds of nursing	9 May 1980
OH 098-31 and 32: Interview with Anna Marinovich Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Marinovich describes her mother's immigration from Yugoslavia to Anaconda, Montana, as a mail-order bride. She discusses her family and living in Butte, Montana, during the early 1900s.	28 May 1980
OH 098-33 and 34: Interview with Helen B. McGregor Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process McGregor describes growing up in Butte, Montana, her experiences helping her father in his veterinary practice, various ethnic groups, the red lights district, miners and strikes, and economic changes in Butte. She also explains her education, being a speech and drama student at the University of Montana in Missoula, teaching speech in Butte, and the importance of speech and teaching in education and later life.	16 April 1980
OH 098-35: Interview with Dorothy Melvin Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process : Melvin describes how her parents met and married after moving to Montana. She talks about going to high school in Butte, Montana, and the ethnic diversity of the town.	16 May 1980
OH 098-36 and 37: Interview with Robert Melvin Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, 25 leaves Melvin describes his Irish parents, growing up in Butte, Montana, and his father's mining and union experience. He explains working in the CCC during Great Depression and later working in a mine. He describes the work, the benefits of the unions, the organization of The Company (Anaconda Company), and the mining accident that took his leg and the side of his face	17 April 1980
OH 098-38 and 39: Interview with Maurice (Sonny) Powers	17 April 1980

Description	Dates
<p>Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Powers describes growing up in Butte, Montana, and having to work at age nine after his father passed away. He provides anecdotes about his family and about life in Butte.</p>	
<p>OH 098-40 and 41: Interview with Stephen Reardon Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Reardon describes his father's work through the years from serving as a soldier during World War II to working as a mechanic for Butte, Montana, mine motor generators, and as a troubleshooter in the Butte mines.</p>	April 1980
<p>OH 098-42, 43, and 44: Interview with Henry Stanley Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Stanley discusses Butte, Montana, labor history.</p>	11 August 1981
<p>OH 098-45 and 46: Interview with Alice Smith Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Smith describes some of the buildings in Butte, Montana, that her father, an architect, designed. She discusses growing up in Butte during the 1920s and 1930s.</p>	11 August 1981
<p>OH 098-47: Interview with Val Webster Sound Recording, audio cassette, analog Transcript, in process Webster describes growing up in a real union family in Butte, Montana. She recalls her experiences as waitress, waiting on the miners, and joining the Women's Protective Union in 1929. She was the recording secretary in 1936 and then its business agent for 16 years. She describes her experiences as a union agent negotiating with restaurants, hotels and chains.</p>	8 May 1980

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Speech--Study and teaching-- Montana--Missoula
 Immigrants--Montana--Butte--Interviews
 African American families--Montana--Butte
 African American women--Montana--Butte--Interviews
 Amusement parks--Montana--Butte
 Amusements--Montana--Butte
 Architects--Montana--Butte
 Architecture--Montana--Butte
 Blacklisting, Labor--Montana--Butte

Blacksmithing--Montana--Butte
Blacksmiths--Labor unions--Montana--Butte
Blacksmiths--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Boardinghouses--Montana--Butte
Boardinghouses--Montana--Butte--Employees--Interviews
Business agents (Labor union officials)--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Business enterprises--Montana--Butte
Child labor--Montana--Butte
Children--Montana--Butte
Children--Montana--Butte
Circus--Montana--Butte
Communists--Montana--Interviews
Community life--Montana--Butte
Cooking--Montana--Butte
Copper miners--Montana--Butte
Corporations--Political activity-- Montana
Depressions--1929--Montana--Butte
Discrimination in employment--Montana--Butte
Drafters--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Dwellings--Montana--Missoula
Ethnic groups-- Montana-- Butte
Families--Montana--Butte
Farmers--Labor unions--Montana
Farmers--Montana--Interviews
Farmers--Political activity--Montana
Finnish American women--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Finnish Americans--Montana--Butte
Grocers--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Grocery trade--Montana
High schools--Montana--Butte
Holidays--Montana--Butte
Immigrants--Montana
Industrial relations--Montana--Butte
Irish American copper miners--Montana--Butte
Irish Americans--Montana--Butte
Labor union members--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Labor union members--Montana--Interviews
Labor unions--Montana--Butte--Officials and employees--Interviews
Labor movement--Montana--Butte--History
Labor unions--Montana--Butte
Labor unions--Montana--Butte--Public opinion
Logging--Montana
Mail order brides-- Montana-- Anaconda
Mechanics (Persons)--Montana--Butte
Milkmen--Montana--Butte
Mine accidents--Montana--Butte
Miners--Labor unions--Montana--Butte
Miners--Labor unions--Organizing--Montana--Butte
Miners--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Miners--Recreation--Montana--Butte
Mines and mineral resources--Montana--Butte

Mining corporations--Montana--Butte
Mining machinery--Montana--Butte
Musical criticism--New York (State)
New Deal, 1933-1939--Montana
Norwegian American women--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Norwegian Americans--Montana--Butte
Nurses-- Montana-- Butte
Nurses--Labor unions-- Montana-- Butte
Nursing-- Montana-- Butte
Nursing-- Montana--Societies, etc.
Nursing--Study and teaching--Montana--Butte
Outdoor life--Montana--Anecdotes
Parades--Montana--Butte
Podiatrists--Montana--Butte
Prostitution--Montana--Butte
Public works--Montana
Recreation--Montana--Butte
Red-light districts--Montana--Butte
Retired teachers--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Scottish Americans--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Socialism
Speech--Study and teaching--Montana--Butte
Sports teams--Montana--Butte
Strikes and lockouts--Miners--Montana--Butte
Swedish Americans--Montana--Butte
Swedish Americans--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Tailors--Montana--Butte
Veterans--Montana--Butte
Veterinarians--Montana--Butte
Veterinary medicine-- Montana--Butte
Waitresses--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Waitresses--West (U.S.)--Interviews
Wake services--Montana--Butte
Women clerks (Retail trade)--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Women employees--Labor unions--Montana--Butte
Women labor union members--Montana--Butte--Interviews
Women music critics--New York (State)--Interviews
Women teachers-- Montana-- Butte
Women cooks--Montana--Butte
Women--Employment--Montana--Butte
Women--Montana--Butte--Interviews
World War, 1939-1945--Veterans--Montana--Butte
Yugoslav Americans-- Montana

Personal Names :

Calder, Donald A., 1917-1988--interviewee
(interviewee)
Calkins, Raymond F., 1910-1981--interviewee
(interviewee)
Christy, Elizabeth, 1903-198-- interviewee
(interviewee)
Christy, Matt, 1895-1985--interviewee

(interviewee)
Copenhaver, Blanche Averett, 1900-1995--interviewee
(interviewee)
Cramer, Agnes Mattson, 1910-1995--interviewee
(interviewee)
Cunningham, Margaret E. 1906-2002--interviewee
(interviewee)
Curtin, James Andrew, 1910-2005-- interviewee
(interviewee)
Duncan, Perdita, d. 1985--interviewee
(interviewee)
Dunstan, Marjorie Knoyle, 1924- --interviewee
(interviewee)
Goldberg, Aili Maki, 1916-2007-- interviewee
(interviewee)
Goldberg, Clarence, 1900-1981-- interviewee
(interviewee)
Grace, Richard P., 1911-1996-- interviewee
(interviewee)
Greenough, Thomas L., 1851-1911--Homes and haunts--Montana--Missoula
Kinsey, Chester, 1913-2006--interviewee
(interviewee)
Lemm, Margaret R., 1906-1988--interviewee
(interviewee)
Marinovich, Anna C., 1901-1994--interviewee
(interviewee)
McGregor, Helen B., 1903-1989--interviewee
(interviewee)
Melvin, Dorothy, 1918-1982--interviewee
(interviewee)
Melvin, Robert E., 1914-1989--interviewee
(interviewee)
Powers, Maurice, 1909-1992--interviewee
(interviewee)
Reardon, Stephen--interviewee
(interviewee)
Reardon, Stephen J.(Stephen James)--1888-1968
Smith, Alice, 1924-2009--interviewee
(interviewee)
Stanley, Henry, 1902- --interviewee
(interviewee)
Stefanac, Agnes Rauh
Webster, Val,--1913-1993--interviewee
(interviewee)

Corporate Names :

Anaconda Company
Women's Protective Union (Butte, Mont.)
Anaconda Company--Employees--Interviews
Anaconda Company--Political activity--Montana
Butte Nurses Union
Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S.)

Greenhough House (Missoula, Mont.)
Industrial Workers of the World
International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers
Montana Farmers Union
Montana Nurses' Association
Montana. Legislature
New York (N.Y.). Dept. of Social Services. Officials and employees--Interviews
Oberlin College--Alumni and alumnae--Interviews
Progressive Party (U.S. : 1948)
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Ringling Brothers
St. James Hospital (Butte, Mont.)
United States. Forest Service--Officials and employees--Interviews
United States. Work Projects Administration
University of Montana--Missoula--Alumni and alumnae--Interviews

Family Names :

Goldberg family--Anecdotes
Powers family--Anecdotes

Geographical Names :

Anaconda (Mont.)--History
Avoca, Lake (Mont.)
Butcher Town (Butte, Mont.)
Butte (Mont.)--Anecdotes
Butte (Mont.)--Buildings, structures, etc.
Butte (Mont.)--Economic conditions--20th century
Butte (Mont.)--History--20th century
Butte (Mont.)--Race relations
Butte (Mont.)--Religious life and customs
Butte (Mont.)--Social life and customs--20th century
Centerville (Silver Bow County, Mont.)
Columbia Gardens (Butte, Mont.)
Great Falls (Mont.)--History--20th century
Havre (Mont.)--History--20th century
McQueen (Butte, Mont.)--History
Missoula (Mont.)--Buildings, structures, etc.
Missoula (Mont.)--History--20th century
Montana--History--20th century
Montana--Politics and government--20th century
String Town (Butte, Mont.)
University of Montana--Missoula--Alumni and alumnae--Interviews
Walkerville (Mont.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Interviews--Montana
Oral histories--Montana

Other Creators :

Personal Names :

Bresler, Helen--interviewer
(interviewer)
Murphy, Mary, 1953- --interviewer
(interviewer)

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