

Fieldwork Recordings—Dictionary of American Regional English
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**Transcript of DARE Interview (1966): Bozeman, Montana; Primary Informant
MT002 (Tape 0916-S1)**

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English tape zero nine one six, side one.

5 FIELDWORKER: This is a recording of Chan [beep] made at Bozeman, Montana, on October twenty-fifth by, nineteen sixty-six by [beep]. Well, when you first went to work down there at the treasurer's office, what were you doing?

10 INFORMANT: Oh just ge-, uh, general, the general work in the office. Keeping the books. Plus, uh, you see, uh, over that period of time was quite a development in that office. Because when I first went there, all we had real estate and personal property tax. And then, the uhm, state, uh, the legislature I should say, passed a law for, uh, auto, auto-licensing in the county treasurer's office. And then following that, uh, we, I first sent the applications to Deer Lodge, where the
15 plates were made. And then, uh, they'd be mailed direct to whoever got them. And, uh, then on the, uh, they come along (over here) and they ship the plates to the county. We had, uh, that to look after. Then, uh, they come along a little la-, later and, uh, they didn't think they were getting enough money out of all these trucks running through the state. So then they put a gross vehicle weight law in. And we had to collect the gross vehicle weights from these, uh, uh, trucks and
20 truckers.

FIELDWORKER: Each county had to do that?

25 INFORMANT: Each county, that's right. And then, uhm, going back to the original, of course, uh, the uh, taxes, uh, in this, uh, state, are uh, on real estate and that is, uh, collectable in the month of November. Notices are sent out the first of November and they're due on or before the last day of November. Then, if they're not, um, paid, they become delinquent, and uhm, we add a two percent penalty and interest at the rate of eight percent a year. Or, they can have a choice of paying it all in November, or they can pay, uh, half in November, and a half six [cough] six months later, or the end of May. Personal property tax is on household goods and you have the
30 automobiles mixed up in it, the taxation end of it, uh, right along until they, uh, pardon me, until the, um, legislature separated, the cars from the general personal properties, see that is like tru-, like, um, oh, uh, household goods and cattle and stuff like that if you're, if you're a renter and,

uh, on, on a farm. And then, uh, personal property tax, uh, after the notice is sent out by the, the
assessor makes the assessment, and after the notice is sent out by the county treasurer, they're
30 due on or before the end of, uh, thirty days. And then, if they're not payed, the law provides that
the county treasurer should seize and sell them for, for the property tax. For the personal
property tax. And, uh, that, uh, now going back to the real estate, uh, if a piece of property isn't
paid, fo-, uh, at the period of three years, we take what is known as a tax sale certificate, which
is a lean against the property, for the taxes. Then, the people are notified and, uh, uh, if they, uh,
35 don't come in, and, um, pay them up, then the county takes the tax deed to the property and
that goes to the county clerk who is a clerk to the board of county commissioners. And he works
it up and, uh, turns it over to the county commissioners, who publish the list, notifying that they
have this stuff for sale. And then, uh, after it's, uh, sold, uh, the money comes back, and then the
money is prorated back to the taxes of the years involved, that is all of the funds that participated
40 in, uh, uh, thi-, in the uh, tax on that pie-, particular piece. And uh, then, if uh, if it's not um, if
they get uh, you see they, you-, they've got to put a value on it and offer for sale. Then they sell
it at a public auction. And if they get more than what the taxes were, that is a surplus which goes
to the general fund. The, um, the other is prorated to, back to all of the funds that participated
originally. And that's some of the duties of a county treasurer.

45 FIELDWORKER: Keep you pretty busy, uh?

INFORMANT: Well, eh, I'll tell you, one thing about it, uh, when I first went there, it wasn't so
much. And it just gradually kept, one treasurer said, "That's all the legislature knows, they got a
bill up there headed: 'It shall be the duty of the treasurer.'"

FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

50 INFORMANT: And, uh, so it is, and there, uh, there's the collection of licenses of various types,
like, uh, uh, one time we uh, uh, we collected cigarette licenses and then we fi-, uh, uh, fig-, uh,
we, uh, collected the uh, the um, cigarette license. And, uh, and then, uh, billiard tables and
pocket billiards and, uh, well uh, s-, and shows, carnivals. See that's all your, all go through—now
that money that you get on those licenses, there's so many different angles to it. Uh, on, on that
55 um, on the shows, and on carnivals and that type of stuff. County general fin-, fund gets fifty
percent, and the, uh, state general gets forty-five, and the livestock sanitary board gets five. See
it makes hundred percent. And that I suppose, the reason for that, that sanitary board is because
they have a lot of animals don't you see that they bring in for these shows.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

60 INFORMANT: And, uh, what else do I want to say? But that's, uh, that's the general duties of, of
a county treasurer. Oh yes, he's got also, he, he, uh, has the control of all the school districts in
the county. He kep-, he keeps their money.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

65 INFORMANT: And, uh, course when I first went up there, I think there was about uh, sixty-five or
seventy districts in the county. We had an account for every one of them. But now they've conso-
, with this, uh, improved roads, they now transport the kids into the larger centers, so you don't
have so many school c-, accounts. Although that was very hard to get a lot of them to give up,
they didn't wanna give up the little red school house, you know? And, uh, but now, uh, they,
70 some of them didn't wanna send the small children so far. That's some of the, the excuses or
some of the reasons that they had. But now it's cut down, I think they've only got about twenty
districts in the county now. And, uh, so, uh, that also, uh, if he, how much money (he) has on
hand the county treasurer is liable, it all stands in his name in the bank.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

75 INFORMANT: And, uh, when I first went up there, I think that possibly the total during that year
was about a hundred thousand. Now it's up to about two, two and a half million now. With all
these buildings we built, you see. Then he, he has to handle the bonding of the schools for this
money to put up these buildings. And he also has got to have collateral to protect that money.
Used to be, they used to get private citizens to, to sign as o-, uh, uh, uh, obligate themselves to
80 protect the money. Well they find out, found out that wasn't so hot. So, uh, the legislature
changed it, and now you, the, the bank, uh, gives you bonds, or gives you a good collateral and
you have to watch it that your bank balance is under the amount of collateral that you got. And
if you've got, uh, you get more money, then you got to get more collateral to protect it.

FIELDWORKER: What {(would)—

INFORMANT: Well he}, it's a, eh, it's a responsible job, you know.

85 FIELDWORKER: It really sounds like it.

INFORMANT: Oh yes.

FIELDWORKER: What kind of collateral would you have?

90 INFORMANT: Well, they used to, they used to take, uhm, we used to have a regular, uh, bond
book. Uh, get the market values, you see. And they might put up, uh, Cudahy or Swift or, or
various kinds, you see, but now, since the government has gone into this stuff, government bonds
are mostly what you get nowadays. Although, I did get, before I left, I got, uh, some, of a new
bank that started at Three Forks. And they put up, part of it was, um, uh, from the Federal, uh,
Land Bank, bonds, the Federal Land Bank issued bonds, and they put some of those that they had
purchased up as collateral.

95 FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: Well I don't, I think it was (xx) in a general way.

FIELDWORKER: Well, uh, what else would you like to tell me about? What was Bozeman like in,
say, nineteen ten?

100 INFORMANT: Well, you go back that far, we had wooden sidewalks mostly down Main Street
and we didn't have any paving, and, uh, whenever, uh, it rained g-, real good, uh, the taxi cabs
would get sunk down in the mire on Main Street. And, uh, I remember then they had, uh, started
quite a logging camp up the Gallatin, and they had uh, they had quite a few, uh, loggers, and uh,
uh, they'd come down on Saturday, I think it was, and they'd put holes in that wooden walks, you
know, with those, with those spikes on the bottom of their shoes, and uh, we never could keep,
105 in this drugstore where I was, we never could keep enough snoose on hand or, or Copenhagen
snoose.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: And, uh, also, uh, we, as I said once before, we had, uh, back in those days we had
for two three years we had a sweet pea carnival that had quite a, quite a uh, wide, the town
110 knew, was known by, as the sweet pea carnival town. And then the women also, they used to
take bouquets of flowers down to the trains when they went through, gave them to people,
sweet pea-, bouquets of sweet peas advertising Bozeman.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

INFORMANT: And, uh, I was one day I was, um, fixing a window in the store, and, uh, I saw the
115 sheriff go by, and had a Chinaman with him. And I knew right away that, uh, something was
wrong. Course I was just a kid, punk kid, nineteen, twenty years old. Come to find out, uh, there
was Chinese restaurant down quite a little ways from where we, where the store was. And, uh,
this Chinaman had taken a cleaver and split the skull of another one. So he was in jail, and had a
trial, and they, uh, they hung him and there was always a lot of talk about it. It was Tong War,
120 that he'd been followed, and oh I don't know what all that kind of stuff. But, uh, anyhow, uh, in
those days it was the old courthouse, not the one that stands there now. It stands on the same
ground. But there's an old brick building, and uh, they had, uh, a, uh, brick wall, went around, out
along where the sheriff's office is now, that's that red brick building next to the courthouse. And,
uh, they had this, uh, high wall, and they had broken glass on the top of it. And, uh, so when I,
125 after I went up there to work, there was some ventilator or something down in the basement
when the wind blew, it made a peculiar noise and they said, "Oh, that's just the Chinaman." They
hung him, out there in that, uh, in that enclosure. Oh let's see, what else, what else we gonna
think of? Not very much I don't think.

FIELDWORKER: Your father ran a blacksmith shop in town here then.

130 INFORMANT: Yes, yeah.

FIELDWORKER: Did you hang around down there when you were a {{growing up)?

INFORMANT: Oh, not too much.} Not too much. You know I was never very mechanically minded.
I cou-, I was never good, very good with my hands. My brother became a dentist. He could take
a watch apart, (he could) do anything. He just had that natural ability for doing it. But I couldn't.
135 I couldn't saw a board straight.

FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

INFORMANT: Just the difference in people. Well, I'm trying to think of something else that uh—

FIELDWORKER: Well what were the major occupations around here in, in the early days?

140 INFORMANT: Well, uh, the major, major occupations were farming and farm labor, and cattle and help, you know, help, farm, uh, labor. And then, uh, the sewers in the town. Uh, but the, uh, there wasn't anything much e-, b-, until the school came. And that, that's a land-grant college. And, uh, it started to be quite a thing in, in the community.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

145 INFORMANT: We tried to get the capital when the, when they wanted the capital, and, uh, there was three towns, Helena and uh, Anaconda and Bozeman, run for the capital. And, uh, Helena won out, and as things have gone on, I, I-I'm just tickled to death that Bozeman got this school. Because it's um, been quite a thing to the town. And, uh, I don't know, the deal with the capital isn't so hot. They come and go, you know, and it's a different, a different—

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

150 INFORMANT: —(different class of people). But, um, but that's uh, about it, it's like, like one person said one day, "Well, if they took the college away from us, you, all we'd have is a cow path (now) down Main Street" [laugh].

FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

155 INFORMANT: [laugh] And, uh, oh yes we, uh, at one time we supported a pretty fair semi-, semi-pro, uh, baseball team. And they played baseball quite a bit in all these towns around here. Then we had what was known as Northwest League.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

160 INFORMANT: And that had uh, in it uh was Butte, Helena, uh, Tacoma, Spokane, and Seattle, I think those were about the ones that composed this league. Course I, in those days, uh, people didn't have, uh, automobiles and all so-, you know, things were different. And, uh, we had [cough], pardon me, [cough]. There's a town up, up here called Chestnut, that's a mining town, and, uh, it's, course it's, uh, not in existence now, they, they, um, and also we had coke ovens up there. For the ACM, that's the Anaconda Copper Company.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

165 INFORMANT: Uh, but now they've gone to gas (xx) and everything is changed, but in those years when I was a kid, uh, they had, and I used to go down and watch these fellows. They were all, uh, well I think there was one or two local boys playing, the rest of them were working up at this camp up here. And, uh, the pitcher and the, uh, and the catcher went to the Texas State League when this broke up here. And they won the championship that year in the Texas League, and

170 that, they played pretty fast ball down there. And they um, the catcher had the toes all off of his, off of one foot. Cut off, he was ge-, he was getting a ride on a train and slipped and his foot went under and cut the toes off.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

175 INFORMANT: He had to have somebody else run for him, but oh boy, he was a catcher (xx). And, uh, the pitcher was a very, very good one. Well it went along, and we did everything with, beat everything around here in the, local stuff. And, um, oh I might tell you, he only died here a short time ago. They had one fellow that came here, he was a graduate of, uh, Notre Dame. He'd had, he'd had offers to play professional ball, but he didn't, he came out here, married a local girl [laugh], so he was one of the slickest third basemen that I ever saw operate. He never, he, uh, 180 when the ball went out his way and he got it, he never got up to throw it, he threw it underhanded right from where he got it, right to the first baseman.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

185 INFORMANT: And, uh, then we had, uh, a shortstop. I can't remember the names of all these fellas now, but was very, very good, but they, they'd all played, uh, pretty, in fast company at some time. And, so, they challenged this Butte [laugh] Northwest, they were head of the, ahead of the Northwest League at that time, and they brought them over here, to play them. And we beat, they beat them six to four.

FIELDWORKER: Hm. [laugh]

190 INFORMANT: Pretty good, they were pretty good bunch of, pretty good bunch of, uh, ball players. And I used to go down every time I had a chance to watch them practice. The captain of the team, uh, he used to, uh, he, he, Fourth of July or celebrations, anything like that you know, he'd always go out and, and put on track shoes and run, eh, for, for money. And, uh, come to find out [laugh], he lost out, he was using this way to go through University of Michigan. He was getting this money, and, uh, and he was captain of their team during that period of time. But, of 195 course when they found out that he'd been doing this, why he got boosted, he couldn't p-play in collegiate ball anymore. But he was fast on his feet, I'm telling you, he was a racer. Well, that's some of my recollections as a kid.

FIELDWORKER: Yeah, well, you wanna read now?

INFORMANT: Yeah, any time now.

200 FIELDWORKER: (xx)

INFORMANT: The Story of Arthur the Rat.

Once upon a time there was a young rat who couldn't make up his mind. Whether the, whenever the other rats asked him if he would like to come out hunting with them, he would answer in a

205 hoarse voice, "I don't know." And then they said, "Would you rather stay inside?" he wouldn't say yes, or no either. He'd always shirk making a choice.

One fine day his aunt Josephine said to him, "Now look here! No one will ever care for you if you carry on like, uh, this. You have no more mind of your own than a greasy old blade of grass!"

The young rat coughed and looked wise, as usual, but said nothing.

210 "Don't you think so?" said his aunt stamping her foot on the floor, for she [cough] couldn't bear to see the young rat so cold-blooded.

"I don't know," was all he ever answered, and then he'd walk off to think for an hour or more, whether he should stay in his hole in the ground or go out into the l-, into the loft.

215 One night the rats heard a loud noise in the loft. It was a very dreary old place. The roof let the rain come in, come washing in, and the beams and rafters had all rotted through, so that the whole thing was quite unsafe.

At last one of the joists gave way, and the beams fell with one edge on the floor. The walls shook, and the cupola fell off, and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror.

"This won't do," said their leader. "We can't stay cooped up here any longer." So they sent out scouts to search for a new home.

220 A little later on that evening the scouts came back and said they had found an old-fashioned horse-barn where there would be room and board for all of them.

The leader gave the order at once, "Company fall in!" and the rats crawled out of their holes right away and stood on the floor in a long line.

225 Just then the old rat caught sight of the young Ar-, of the young Arthur—that was the name of the shirker. He wasn't in the line, and he wasn't exactly outside, he w-, outside it, I guess I didn't catch that. He stood just by it.

"Come on, get in line!" growled the old rat, uh, coarsely. "Of course you're coming too?"

"I don't know," said Arthur calmly.

"Why, the idea of it! You don't think it's safe here anymore, do you?"

230 "I'm not certain," said Arthur undaunted. "The roof may not fall down yet."

"Well," said the old rat, "we can't wait for you to join us." Then he turned to the others and shouted, "Right about face! March!" and the long line marched out of the barn while the young rat watched them.

235 "I think I'll go tomorrow," he said to himself, "but then again, perhaps I won't—it's so nice and snug here. I guess I'll go back to my hole under the log for a while just to make up my mind."

But during the night there was a big crash. Down came the beams, rafters, joists—and the whole business.

240 Next morning—it was a foggy day—some men came to look over the damage. It seemed odd to them that the old building was not haunted by rats. But at last one of them happened to move a board, and he caught sight of a young rat, quite dead, half in and half out of his hole.

Thus the shirker got his due, and there was no mourning for him.