

Norma Jordet Hoyt
Topic: Early Fairbanks schools,
Mount McKinley Park summers

Interview by N. Jacobs
Anchorage
Sept., 1974

1 hour reel and five minutes on #2

Norma Hoyt has lived in Anchorage since 1934 and is generally associated with that area by those who know her throughout Alaska; she is a world traveler and speaks regularly to clubs about her travels; she is a member of the Board of Regents of Sheldon Jackson College at Sitka; and active in other affairs of the Presbyterian Church in Alaska. She owns the Wolhoy Apartments in Anchorage and was married to Harry Hoytt who owned Hoytt Motors and has other interests in business and property in Anchorage--thus is well known for many activities in that area. It came as a surprise then, when this interview focussed on the Interior region of Alaska, as an outgrowth of the story of her early years in Alaska.

Norma came from North Dakota to Fairbanks to teach school in 1931. In 1927, however, she made her first trip north with a tour group. She describes this 1927 tour by ship; the group stopped at many small Southeastern port towns.

The Fairbanks school system hired Norma in 1931, and she tells about this trip north on the ship to Valdez thence overland on the Richardson Highway. On her arrival in Fairbanks, the school superintendent took Norma and several other new teachers on another trip to Circle City and Central.

Norma first taught at "Old Main," but it burned during her tenure. She tells how a makeshift school was set up in the Moose Hall. She describes school life under the temporary arrangement and describes various school activities and festivals during this period.

In the summer school vacation periods, Norma worked at Mount McKinley Park. She describes experiences while working at the park and various people who operated businesses both at McKinley Station and at Kantishna, the mining town on the far side of the park.

In 1934, Norma married Harry Hoyt, at that time a mechanic employed by the Alaska Road Commission. The Hoyts moved to Anchorage where they acquired properties and the motor company.

The Hoyts were divorced in 1960s; they have a son Harold, an Air Force Officer stationed in Okinawa at the time of the interview.

Norma mentions that Harry's father founded the town of Gulkana.

Mrs. Hoyt is noted for an unusually large collection of Alaskan--she has over 1600 volumes of Alaskan books and boxes of artifacts and trade beads. Some of these items are mentioned in the interview.

Summary: The highlights of the interview focus on her three summers at McKinley Park which provide insight into the types of people who lived and worked there in the early 1930's, and of course the teaching period after "Old Main" burned.

Reel Number Two: this tape was not erased because while only containing about five minutes they might have value should her album come into the archives. The tape runs while she is describing pictures in the album collected during her teaching period in 1931-32. The photos are not labeled and the tape could be a key to explanation at some future date. Mrs. Hoyt noticed the recorder was running, and seemed distressed by it, so I shut it off at this point.