

**Summary for H87-82-25**

**Annabeth Hanlon is interviewed by Gayle Maloy in Fairbanks, Alaska on 9/20/85**

SIDE 1

Gayle Maloy interviews Annabeth Hanlon in Fairbanks, AK on 9/20/85. She's best known as a teacher in the Fairbanks school system. Clyde Lawson, the "Carrot King," grows very sweet carrots, and sent some along with Hanlon for Maloy.

On November 2, 1902, Hanlon was born in the Indian Territory now known as Oklahoma. She's nearly 83, and looks beautiful, says Maloy. Hanlon's father came from Canada; he graduated from Toronto University in law. He came down to OK to help his brother herd cattle. He was so entranced with the country, he became admitted to the bar there. He was postmaster in one town, and judge in another town. One time he was defending a case and the other lawyer pointed out that he wasn't a U.S. citizen. The judge asked him if he wanted to become a citizen; he said yes, and he got his citizenship right then and there.

He was quite a pioneer--that's why he didn't object when Hanlon went to AK. Hanlon's maiden name was Annabeth Elizabeth Rennie (Scotch). She had 8 siblings. All her sisters became teachers. She was quite a tomboy, and says she was sent to women's college to become a lady. She washed dishes there for 7 years, to work her way through, and says she didn't become a lady.

Hanlon has been a music teacher. She played the bass fiddle in the orchestra at college. She also tried the piano. Her master's degree was in voice and public school music. She always wanted to be a teacher. She got a BA in music and a BS in botany, and fellowship to OK University. She got a master's in zoology. She also attended Chicago University, for pre-med studies, and Northwestern University as well.

A superintendent was coming from the Philippines up to work in AK, and was recruiting teachers. Hanlon was teaching science at the U of OK, but she said she'd just as soon got to AK, and she'd just as soon teach music. She arrived in Seattle 2 weeks later, in 1927, after she and her mother gathered all the wool and long johns from the attic to pack with her. She says she never wore the long johns until she began to dog race.

Hanlon landed here on September 6, 1927. She was on a leave-of-absence of 1 year from the U of OK. At the end of that time, though, she didn't have enough money to go anywhere. When she arrived, she knew nothing about AK. She soon found out the people here were pretty sharp. Some had come here because they had asthma, and this was a good country for it, says Hanlon.

She didn't know everyone in town came out to meet the new teachers. She saw a vehicle that said Nordale Hotel when she arrived, so she went over and got in it. Some people were laughing, but she didn't think anything of it. It was actually just the hack for the luggage, she found out later. Tony Nordale was at the hotel. She said she didn't have any money, and he said no one ever did. She got a room for \$35/month. Her salary was \$200/month.

At the hotel, she signed the register, adding U.S.A. at the end. A man walked over and saw this and said, "She doesn't even know we're in the United States." She replied, "So what?" That was the end of the conversation. Afterwards Mr. Nordale told her that was the president of the university, Judge Bunnell.

The next morning, Hanlon went to the Model Café. Bernie Carr was at the register, Lil Ackerman waitressed, Martin Pinska baked, and Joe Rates cooked. Another woman, from Texas, and Hanlon ordered blueberries. They came with the stems still on. The women removed the stems from the whole bowl, and when they were done they were blue to the wrist. Every body in town had had a look at them by the time they were through.

She says teachers were put on a pedestal even before they arrived. She loved those days. She thinks she looked starved, though, because Bernie and Lil would give her things to eat when she looked like she wasn't getting enough. One thing they called a Teacher's Delight: It was a big piece of apple pie, floating in Carnation milk, with nutmeg and sugar sprinkled on top. Canned milk was good, says Hanlon, but shocked her because her mother wouldn't allow a can in the house.

Hanlon started teaching in the old red Main Schoolhouse that burned in 1932. Edna Lawson's father was the custodian; a coal-burning furnace heated the building. He was a great guy and very caring. The nighttime sub, however, once stoked the fire and went downtown, and the soft coal smoldered. Fred and Carl Parker saw the smoke and reported the fire.

Hanlon taught music appreciation throughout the grades, as well as the Glee Club, and a chorus. She'd also start the orchestra until a person could be employed; Mr. Jacobs was good for this. Pop Weiner also helped out when he could. The groups would perform at the Empress Theater, where Don Adler played the organ for accompaniment. John Dunn couldn't get the pitch from the organ, so he just "talked it through."

Mr. Yule, of a certain church, gave Hanlon a portable organ. She'd bring it to the music appreciation classes. They sang, she taught the older ones theory, and she'd play music and have them identify it.

Some of her students were Eddie Stroker, little sis Stroker, Charlotte Weiner Ames, Alaska, Stewart Earlings, the Funds, John Harper, the Rusts, the Hutchisons, and the Barrys. Hanlon taught generations—parents and then their children. Devaux was the superintendent one year, and there were 52 kids in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

Hanlon taught biology at the high school level. She couldn't keep Steve Agbaba in line—he loved to put Limburger cheese on the radiator. During study hall once, Alaska had written a note to her boyfriend, Edison (?) Moody. Jimmy Moody grabbed it and sent a copy to Hanlon, in which Alaska Linck called her names. Hanlon says she'd made her eat them since, and that Alaska was a good student.

Con Frank was one of the smartest girls Hanlon knew. Her brother became an eminent radiologist. He used to sleep during class, until Hanlon said something wrong, at which point he'd rear up and tell the class she was wrong. He always got 100% on his tests.

Hanlon had her family send her things from home to help her in her work. The school board replaced them when they were lost in the fire. They also replaced the home economics teacher's materials. This teacher was Laura Lee, who later married Bernie Carr. She was a fine person.

After the fire, they taught all over town. Hanlon taught at the Masonic Temple, the Moose Hall, and would stop at Miss Hunter's for a cup of coffee, what is now the cancer clinic on 4<sup>th</sup>.

[Side 1 ends on the circulating copy about 2/3 through the side; tape should be turned over with out fast forwarding to end to hear Side 2.]

## SIDE 2

Hanlon also taught at the American Legion Hall, and the Eagle Hall. They partitioned the room for different classes. Once in a while someone would throw a preserved frog over the wall. Mr. Moore thought it was Hanlon. Someone called attention to the fact that she was better qualified to teach biology than he was. She hadn't told anyone she had a master's, because she wasn't using it. She was the only teacher on the faculty with a master's. She didn't get paid more for it, though.

Hanlon continued to take leave-of-absences from the University of OK since she didn't have enough money to go back. She worked at McKinley Park for a month in the summer of 1928, before Bob Sheldon fired her. That was the summer Mary Louise Bueller and she walked to Circle and back, and they got on so well, they walked to Valdez and back—they got a few rides along the way. For the trip to Circle they had nice weather. On the way to Valdez clear up to Black Rapids Glacier it sometimes rained. They'd get rides with the AK Road Commission boys, though.

They didn't have sleeping bags. They'd just lie down and roll up in their coats. It was light out all night and they only had to worry about bear, which they could see coming from a mile off. Hanlon saw lots of caribou. It looked like the whole hill was moving when the herds migrated. That was this side of 12-mile Summit, especially. She also saw many moose.

On the way back from Valdez, they had rides. Johnny Johnson, once married to Dannie Waterude (mother Mary Brown; sister Grace Butrovich) was one who gave them a ride. They stopped at Paxson's Lodge and Old Man Whitehead was very good to them. He let them stay a day or 2, washing dishes, etc.

Bueller taught for 2 years. Hanlon taught for 3, before she went back to OK. Then she came back C.O.D. George West, at the bank, said she could overdraw on her account for her return fare.

The PTA was the teachers' friend. They had spats but they always ironed them out. She says if they got Mrs. Ringstad and Mrs. Rust going on different sides, then they'd have a "goodie." The women were friends, though. Mrs. Herring used to have all the teachers over for lunch on Wednesdays. Mrs. Stegger and Mrs. Miscovich used to have Hanlon over, too.

Hanlon couldn't afford galoshes her first year here. She slipped in her high heels in front of the jail, by the Federal Building. Pete Peterson and some of the inmates came out and brought her in and laid her on a bench. When she came around, she went out the door just as everybody was going to work. She never could prove she hadn't slept there all night.

One time she was called down to the hotel lobby—Mr. Nordale said there was a group of women down there waiting for her. They were led by Ruth Barrick, "who wanted to keep the town clean," and two or three others. They said they knew she went into the Fairbanks Cigar Store. She said, "Sure I do. That's the only place in town that has ice cream. I go in, Jim Mulrooney sells it to me, and out I go." The women grinned,

and said someone had overheard her say, "I always get my pint from the Fairbanks Cigar Store."

In her cantatas she had Louise and Charlotte Weiner, who had beautiful voices. Alaska was a good singer, too. She'd had 6 of the Miscovichs at one time in the chorus, as well as Chris O'Dell, and Lila, June, and Cora Rust. Now they're her friends.

Hanlon married in 1945 to Jim Hanlon. She tried to avoid him but she couldn't because he had red hair and brown eyes. He came into the Model Café and kept flirting with her. She worked as a cashier there at night during the war. He once gave her \$20 for a \$4 steak. She counted his change back in silver dollars, because that's all they used. He said, "Well, I don't want those." She said, "Well, I do," and put them in her pocket. She never did give him his change. She says he was "just super, super, that man." They had a wonderful life together.

Hanlon went Outside for a while, but came back in 1956. She did dog mushing in 1942. She had the dogs earlier, but ran a women's dog race in 1942. She used to be let out of school to make the run. The race was during the Ice Carnival. She had 5 dogs of her own, and an Indian boy let her have 2 of his dogs. She won the women's race (14 miles). Steve Agbaba has all her pictures.

Hanlon directed the choir at the Presbyterian Church for 18 years. They always had Christmas and Easter Cantatas. Mrs. Fund played the flute. Her husband was with the F.E. Co. Mrs. Reinsith was the accompanist. Her husband was with Standard Oil. Hutchison was her tenor. Griemann was also in the group. Alaska was in her young choir. She once played a joke on those in the front row. She's a marvelous woman now.

Hanlon was always very blunt about what she expected of students. Boys didn't enter her classroom without combed hair and tucked-in shirts. Frank Sams was a timid fellow who took her threats very seriously. They say she couldn't teach now. She thinks the biggest problem she'd have would be the parents, as in "I don't want my child's personality crushed." She thinks parents are a big drawback to the school system. She expected a lot from her students and she got it. Billy Bob used to pinch the girls' butts when they bent over the microscopes, but Hanlon didn't blame him much. She says he'll kill her for saying this.

Hanlon's idea of being a pioneer is  
"One who's been fine when life's been rotten.  
One whose ideals you've not forgotten.  
One who's given more than he has gotten."

It takes more than being here 30 years. The only thing she doesn't expect people to stand is heat.

She says she was scared to death to do this interview, but she'd glad she came and wants to come back next summer. She really appreciates AK. The people in Central and Fairbanks and the condo were so good to her last summer and this summer, and she loves them.