

Interview with Helen Bryce

Q What is your name?

HB Helen Cairns Bryce

Q What is your address?

HB 2191 North Linder Road, Meridian Idaho

Q What is your date of birth?

HB April 30, 1914

Q Where were you born?

HB Meridian Idaho at family farm on Linder Road

Q What year did your parents come to Idaho?

HB My father came in 1898 and my mother in 1904.

Q Where did they come from?

HB My father came from Wisconsin. My mother came from South Dakota to Washington and then to Idaho.

Q What was the first place your father lived in Idaho?

HB Boise Valley

Q What was their mode of travel to get here?

HB My father came on the train. I suppose my mother came in a buckboard.

My father came out as a young man, when he was about 24 years old. His parents didn't come.
He came with his brother.

Q What was the route of travel?

HB The way the train came.

Q What is your spouse's name?

HB J. Frank Bryce

Q When and where were you married?

HB We were married in Meridian on October 7, 1937.

Q Do you have brothers or sisters?

HB I have no sisters. I had a brother Donald, two years younger than me and a brother Arnold.

Arnold lives in Mountain Home and my brother Don was killed at age 18 in an accident.

Q What was your father's name?

HB Charles A. Cairns. He was born on July 8, 1877. I hesitate to say this. He said he was born in 1878 but the family Bible said 1877. He was born in Mt Hope Wisconsin. He died November 9, 1943

in Valley County.

Q What was his ancestral homeland?

HB Scotland.

Q What was his occupation?

HB He was a rancher, farmer, fruit grower and sheep rancher.

Q What was your mother's name?

HB Susie Monlux. She was born on May 27, 1885 in Spencer South Dakota. She died February 12, 1975 in Boise Idaho.

Q When were they married?

HB They were married May 8, 1912 in Boise Idaho

Q What was her ancestral homeland?

HB Ireland.

Q What did she do?

HB She was a housewife. She worked on the kitchen crew of Morrison/Knudsen when they were digging the New York Canal before she was married. She knew both Morrison and Knudsen.

Q What years did she work there?

HB It would have to be before 1912 when she was married.

Q Tell me about your children.

HB We have two children, James D. Bryce, who was born August 27, 1939 in Boise Idaho.

A daughter Carol Ann born June 21, 1941 in Boise Idaho

Q What was your career?

HB I was a housewife for 46 years. I was a teacher for 37 years. I taught in schools all in Ada County Victory School, Blue Valley, Lower Fairview, Star and Meridian Elementary

Q What schools did you attend?

HB I went to Victory School, Meridian High School, Lewiston State Normal School and College of Idaho.

Q What are your interests?

HB Traveling, crafts, reading, volunteering, life in general.

Q What organizations are you in?

HB Idaho Education Association, National Education Association, Alpha Delta Kappa teacher's sorority, United Methodist Church, Locust Grove Grange, Meridian Historical Society
I volunteer at St Alphonsus Hospital in Boise, Red Cross,. I have never been as busy.

Q Talk about what you remember about going to school—grade school, high school, programs.

HB We walked 2 miles to school—winter or bad weather. Sometimes if it was horrible weather, mother would take us in horse and buggy. One or two times I rode on a horse with a friend and I got bucked off—so that was it. I'm not very "horsey".

We had Christmas programs. The week before would string popcorn and cranberries, We always had Christmas programs. Say verses, sing songs, It was always a big deal. It was a two room school. I was in the little room for two years.. I skipped a couple grades and went to the "big" room, I felt really young which I was. At noon, we would take our lunch boxes—I should say buckets and sit somewhere on the ground to eat. Play on the merry go round because the big kids would push us little kids. Went to Meridian High for four years. I played basketball. We watched football games. About 3:00 we would stand around the football field and cheer "Rah, rah". Every years there was an operetta or play. I remember "The Whole Town's Talking" was one of them. Not sure if that was a play or operetta.

Q What kind of facilities were there in the schools when you were attending?

HB When I was a child, there was an old furnace in the basement. The teacher would send some of the big fellows down and they were about as big as she was—to put coal in. In the winter they would take several scoops of snow down and put in snow with the coal and make smoke and steam and then they would have to cancel school. I can remember a couple of the kids that did it.

When I taught there in 1934, there were 2 big pot bellied stoves. We did our own janitor work. I remember the oily floors and the smell of the floors. Victory was on Ustick and Ten Mile Road. We didn't have telephones. I was teaching with Doris. Her sister was expecting baby..Doris couldn't wait to hear. Mrs. Hendrix that was as neighbor of the school got word from the hospital. 1 flag was a boy, 2 flags a girl. Doris looked mid morning and saw one flag. We knew that David McFadden had been born.

Then I was married. I stayed home a couple years and started our family. Then during the war. I went back to teaching at Blue Valley for 9 years.. Then when the reorganization was stirring, I went to Star for 6 years. The principal, Don Critchlow was moving to Meridian Elementary and asked me to go too. I am glad that I did since it seemed like home.

Q What about church as a child? Did you help in the snack shop at the sales yard?

HB Oh yes, I went with my mother to help serve. We always went to Sunday School. I can still see the steps to the east that went down to the basement of the church. After you got down, you had to walk a plank—well a walkway into the main part. And then it was a big deal when the building was built out and the concrete steps were built down. I can remember the old parsonage. Special days had programs.

I remember going to a Sunday School picnic at the Kurtz park in Nampa. The Kurtz -park was by NNC (Northwest Nazarene College)on Amity and go out on 16th but it has changed.

Q Do you remember Santa Claus at church or at school?

HB I don't remember Santa Claus at church or at Victory. We always had Santa at Blue Valley. One year the big kids thought they would give Santa a run and chased him down the road. Some of the big kids that weren't in school any more.

Q What about Halloween?

Hb I don't remember much about Halloween. Sometimes the day after, the toilets that had been tipped over would have to be put back up.

Q Lady we talked to last week—Bessie Shook —said she remembered one year in church for the Christmas program not having a tree but decorating a ladder.

HB I don't remember that

Q What do you remember about businesses around town?

HB I remember Beams Bakery. It was a favorite place and it always smelled so good in there. We always used to get a vanilla cone—that was always a high light

That is about it. Oh, I remember one more thing.

When I was in High school, we would have a Pep Rally. We thought it was a big deal. The whole student body would all take hold of hands and go through the pool hall. Pool halls were a real “no-no”. We got a chance to see the inside of the pool halls. My family thought it was a :”den of iniquity”.