

Bud Evans and April Donahoe Oral History Interview

July 27, 2013

This interview was conducted by Debo Powers and Tom Edwards.

Debo: My name is Debo Powers, and I'm here with Tom Edwards. Today is July 27, 2013. We are interviewing for the first time Henry Frank Evans III, better known as Bud Evans. And we are also interviewing April Evans Donahoe. This interview is taking place at the Panorama Ranch in Polebridge, Montana. This interview is sponsored by the North Fork Landowners Association and is part of the North Fork History Project.

Let's start off by asking both of you what's your early background. Where were you born and what was your early life like?

April: I was born in Spokane, Washington and brought to the North Fork my first winter. I spent my first winter up here.

Debo: As a baby?

April: As a baby. We learned what hot was on a wood stove, and my mother would hand-wash my diapers, so I've been up here...

Debo: Since the very beginning.

April: Since the very beginning, and then we would spend winters in Coeur d'Alene and summers on the North Fork.

Bud: I was born and raised in Coeur d'Alene and spent every summer up here of my life until I was probably about 16, when I had to work in Coeur d'Alene to make some money. But I have come up here every summer since then.

Tom: Have you ever missed a year?

Bud: I may have missed one or two years, but that would be it.

Tom: How about you, April?

April: It was about every two years we came up, and I come up when Bud invites me.

Tom: It's nice to have a big brother.

April: I know. I know.

Debo: Tell us about your parents. What year did they come to the North Fork and what brought them here? How did they discover this place?

Bud: My dad came out here from Carbondale, Illinois, as a botanist for Glacier Park. He was a naturalist and took people on hikes and stuff and worked for the Park Service. Then at some point in time he decided that he wanted to have a hiking concession, and he started that, I think, out of Hamilton.

April: In the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Bud: Yes. That grew a little bit. I'm a little uncertain of the exact history there, but at one point he would go back out to the Midwest and recruit clients, and he mentioned at one of his talks that he needed a nurse. My mom was in the audience and heard this handsome, dashing young guy talk about this and said, "Hey, I would like to do that. I would like to be a nurse." So, she came out and worked for him. I'm not sure exactly what happened there, but they fell in love and got married.

April: In fact, when they got married somebody gave them a black bear as a wedding gift. We have pictures of Mom and Dad with this cub of a bear that was given to them. I don't know what ever happened to that bear.

Tom: You're talking about a real live bear.

April: A real live bear.

Bud: Back then they had real practical wedding gifts for folks. [Laughs]

April: Another thing is, when they lived in Hamilton, Montana, my mother's best friend in Hamilton was Floyd's mother [Floyd Luke, their adopted brother].

Bud: Yes, yes.

April: So that was mother's connection to our eventual brother and sister.

Debo: Tell us about Floyd.

April: Well, Floyd and Sue came to live with us when I was a sophomore in high school.

Bud: Floyd and Sharon.

April: Yes, I'm sorry. Sue is his wife. Floyd and Sharon came to live with us, I think it was in 1961 or 1962. Their parents were killed in a drunk driving accident at Liberty Lake. Floyd was unhurt, but Sharon had a broken arm and a collapsed lung and was hospitalized for a while. Mom flew out and picked them up. They just brought them here to get them away. Then at the end of October everybody came to our house, all of their relatives, because one of Floyd's aunts had proposed to take the kids and nobody wanted her to have them. So, they asked Mom and Dad if they would be their guardians. I remember the judge taking Floyd and Sharon out for coffee, not for coffee but Coke at the Brunswick Buffet, and he asked if he wanted to go live with his Aunt Stella. He said, "If I can't live with my Uncle Buddy, I want to go live where my mom and dad are." That was the answer, and they were our brother and sister from that point on, right.

Bud: Yes.

April: And Floyd comes up here a lot. He was very, very close with my father. He helped Ruth Sondreson and did a whole bunch of stuff up here, spent a lot of time, and met his current and only wife up here. She was up here with Rachael Sweet.

Bud: Getting back to the history, when our folks started this, at some point they found this piece of property, this homestead, and bought it from the Adairs, Bill Adair who was the second owner. Chance Beebe had homesteaded this, so they bought it. Bill Adair said, "The cabin needs new sill logs, and stuff like that," so at some point they did that. So anyway, this was their only home in the winter of, I think it was...

April: 1946.

Bud: 1946, 1947. It was right after the war. In fact, they started the trail trips before the war and then stopped. Dad went in the service for a while, and they picked it back up after the war. So, this was kind of headquarters for the Wilderness Trail Trips in Glacier National Park, and they kind of ran things out of here for a number of years until 1953. That was the last year.

Tom: Was it all hiking, or did they have horses?

Bud: They had horses to pack stuff, but it was a hiking concession. Unless you were blistered or sunburned your feet you were hiking. I think they ended up having to put a couple of people on horseback because they got an injury.

Tom: How big is this homestead, if they had horses here?

Bud: It was 160 acres.

Tom: How big is it today?

Bud: It's the same size, but 20 of the acres are sold off [to Mid Connelly].

Debo: And is this the original homestead cabin?

Bud: It is, yes.

April: No, it burned down, and this was one of those cases where everybody came and built this cabin.

Bud: I didn't know that.

April: Yes.

Bud: Where was the original one?

April: I have no idea. I assume it was right here, but the original homestead cabin burned.

Bud: I didn't know that.

April: When they bought the cabin there were outlines of skins and stuff that they had dried on the wall. Did you know that?

Bud: No. I thought those were your diapers.

April: Those weren't my diapers. [Laughs]

Tom: Interesting point, the current location of the Panorama Ranch cabin is in proximity to a spring. That's what you guys always used for domestic water and actually for a refrigerator at one point.

April: And livestock.

Bud: Livestock, yes.

April: And irrigation of mother's large strawberry beds and our worm gardens.

Bud: And at one time we had a swimming pool that my dad built over a period of three summers, made out of just river stone and concrete, then we would run water through a pipe. It's still in the ground, I'm sure, a swimming pool that's right out there. The water was, I think, 36 degrees.

Debo: Ooh. [Laughs]

April: In fact, at one point it had trout in it.

Bud: That's right, it did.

April: And then there was a greenhouse out near the swimming pool.

Tom: So, it took all summer for the pool to heat up.

Bud: Yes.

Debo: Did you ever swim in it?

Bud: Oh, yes.

April: Everybody came down and swam in it.

Bud: It would warm up. There was probably a sweet spot between the time it got just barely warm enough to swim in and then the grasshoppers and stuff that fell in there, you know, would grow fuzz and it got pretty disgusting. We put chlorine in it and stuff, but there was no filtration system or anything like that.

April: We used a strainer.

Debo: So, both of you were kids up here in the North Fork. What are some of your best memories, your earliest memories?

Bud: Oh, gosh. With Tom's younger brothers, Gary and Westie Edwards, we would build railroad trestles out of gravel and sticks and would shoot firecrackers off and learn how to swear, and just all kinds of fun stuff, really.

April: I remember going to all the picnics that the Maas's and the Edwards and us had and everybody coming over and swimming in the pool. And then the jeep rides with the two Lawson girls. They would get in their old war surplus jeep, and we would go all around the North Fork. You missed out on some of that.

Tom: I wasn't here for a lot of the fun times.

April: Yes, because you were too far down the road.

Bud: I remember two or three it would take to run those jeeps. One person would step on the gas, one person would steer, and one person would shift, as the story went. If you came to a bridge and there was another car coming, you would just go down into the creek and cross. I never saw that, but those were the stories.

April: Yes, and we used to ride our bicycles over to the ranger station and spend the day with the Maas girls. And we always rode around the loop on our bikes.

Tom: What is the loop? It's not there now.

April: No. It used to go from our house to the store, around the Stonestreet cabins, and then you went west. Anyway, you could get to Hensen's that way, and Rat Haven and what-not, but then it kept coming around and you would get to the North Fork Road just above Lawsons, and then back here.

Bud: It was a great place where we all learned to drive back in the day.

April: I learned to drive at the McFarland's.

Tom: They had a jeep, also.

April: They did, but I learned in the panel truck.

Tom: I see.

Debo: Were there lots of square dances and stuff at the McFarland's?

April: Every Saturday.

Bud: Yes, and sometimes there would be one at the McFarland's and one at the Community Hall, so you would have to make a decision.

Debo: At the same time?

Bud: Yes.

April: Really? I don't remember that.

Debo: There was that much going on?

Tom: There was some competition early on, and then they decided to alternate so that everybody was happy, and the dudes were happy, and all of the kids were happy. And there were practice sessions during the week for a short period of time, on Wednesdays if I'm not mistaken.

April: I just remember the picnics on Wednesdays.

Bud: Yes.

April: And Maxine's western baked beans.

Bud: Yes.

April: Every Wednesday.

Bud: Everybody had their favorite thing that they would make or bring. I think Mom used to bring Chop Suey, didn't she?

April: No.

Bud: Well if you ever came over for dinner that's what she made, Chop Suey.

Tom: She didn't know how to make spaghetti?

Bud: No. Dorothy Walter made spaghetti with chocolate in it, or cinnamon. I'm not sure, maybe it's both.

April: Cinnamon. And your dad used to cook, Tom.

Tom: He did. He was a breakfast...he was an all-around cook.

Bud: I remember the pancakes.

Tom: Well, you missed one story here, a childhood story that I remember and was thrown up to me all the time I was growing up, how to be productive, and that's the worm story. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

April: We sold fine fresh fat friendly worms.

Bud: 25-cents a dozen, 15 in a dozen.

April: Our sign said 'Let us worm you.'

Bud: We still have that sign. I don't know where the other signs are.

Tom: Who did you sell them to?

Bud: Fishermen. Folks would come up, and we would go out in the garden and dig worms. We put them in the big washtub out there, and we would feed them. Those were the best fed worms probably on the planet.

April: Yes.

Bud: We would put all of our scraps out there, compost. We would go around and pick up cow pies.

April: Put them in the field and flood it.

Bud: Yes, we would put them in what used to be the old garden and then flood it, keep it nice and moist, coffee grounds, all that stuff. Then we would go out and dig up the worms. That was the chore that we hated the most. I mean, you've got to find those things. We would dig them up and put them in an old can and transport them over to the washtub and dump them in there, and then they were ready when somebody came and wanted worms. The typical thing was that they would want two-dozen worms, 30 worms, so you would go out and dig up 30 worms in a can for 50-cents. As I remember, typically we averaged about \$80 a summer in terms of worm earnings.

Debo: That's pretty good for back then.

April: After we dug worms then we would have to take a plastic garbage bag out and pick up all of our cattle pies and put them in the worm garden so they could replenish. Then we were free to go someplace and do things. The Edwards kids or the Maas kids would come help us sometimes.

Bud: Yes.

April: So we could be free sooner.

Tom: After your chores were done.

April: Yes. And then when we were gone we always had to have at least half a dozen cans of worms up here, with the honor system, and people paid for them.

Bud: Yes.

Debo: Did either of you know some of the actual homesteaders that were here?

April: Oh, Lena and Harry Holcomb and Frank and Ella Wurtz. I still have a lamp that Frank Wurtz made me. It's a little pump lamp.

Bud: It turns it on and off, yeah.

April: I think Bud has the pillow made out of hides that Ella Wurtz made for Mom.

Bud: It's basically a leather quilt.

April: Pillow.

Bud: Pillow or pad, you know, and it's got all the different kinds of leather on there written, so we've got goat and bear and moose etc., etc., and we'd buy gloves from her made out of bear skin.

April: I remember Madge and Ollie Terrian.

Bud: And Charlie Wise.

April: Walt and Hazel Hammer. And Dave and Dorothy Walter, but they weren't homesteaders.

Tom: George Walter was the dad. Dave and Peter were the kids.

Debo: Do you know any good stories about those homesteaders?

Bud: Well, I know Charlie Wise. Dad would go up and visit him. I think he might have had a little side job babysitting the Border. He lived in this little shack up there, and we would go up. I think his secret to a long life was either a shot of whiskey or a little bit of vinegar. I think he took both of those things, but not at the same time. I don't really know very much about him. And Ben Rover was another one. I think he might have been a homesteader. I remember going to see him. He was an old bachelor forever, and he would have coffee and usually had a pie there. I always liked to go visit with my dad, because I would usually get a piece of pie. And then when I started drinking coffee, he had the worst coffee. It was just burnt.

April: I remember going up to the Holcombs. Their house was always wretchedly hot, because Lena was always baking.

Bud: Yes.

April: But always good bakes.

Bud: Yes. She would have these wonderful cinnamon rolls or raisin rolls, I guess. They would have raisins in them and Harry would always say, "You want one of these rolls with the flies in them?" [Laughs]

April: But I just remember every time we stopped there, because I think she used a wood stove to bake.

Bud: Probably.

April: You know, it would be cooler outside than it was in her cabin, but oh goodness it was worth going in. And then there was Dorothy Walter's rosettes.

Bud: Crepe suzettes.

April: No, they were called rosettes, but anyway, whatever they are, the things you deep-fry that are real thin.

Bud: Crunchy and yummy. There's a famous story on Harry Holcomb, who shot a bear in his living room. I'm sure you've heard that.

Debo: Why don't you tell us your version of it?

Bud: Well, I don't know, I wasn't there. But the story was this bear was starting to come in the house and coming through the screen door, so Harry went and grabbed his gun and then he said, "Lena where's the shell?" She was hiding under the bed according to him. [Laughs] So, he finally dug around and got a shell and shot the bear right there when it came into the living room.

Debo: Wow. Was it a black bear or a grizzly?

Bud: I think it was a black bear.

April: I remember the time when we were up here, Dad was in Yellow Bay doing his work on his Master's, I think. Bud and I had done our chores, dug our worms, and were about to go over to the Maas's over at the bridge. You know, Mother was never one to baby us or anything like that. Well, it was in the middle of the afternoon and here comes Mom. She says, "We need to put the bicycles in the car; I came to get you." Bud and I were sitting there still playing and, "No, you've got to come home because I shot a bear in the back that was coming after the garbage can," or something she said, "with a .22, and I'm afraid it's wounded and you might encounter it on the way home." [Laughs] So, she loaded our bicycles in the car and we came home; never saw the bear. It probably wasn't even hit.

Bud: No, she said it laid across the creek for a while and then got up and walked off. My dad was not happy that she had wounded a bear, but . . .

Debo: But you never saw the bear again or had any trouble from the bear?

Bud: No. But we did see bear around. Remember, there was a tent frame across the creek, across the spring where we would put a tent up every summer, a big one.

April: There was a wood floor.

Bud: A wood floor and everything. Somehow Floyd and I were here one day and a bear, a cinnamon-colored bear, had gotten inside through the wood door on that tent and then it closed behind him, so that bear was kind of stuck in there. We couldn't decide who was going to go open the door for the bear, so we threw a couple of firecrackers out there and got the bear panicked a little bit. It would try to jump up over the top, because there was a flap above the door, so it tried to get out that way, and of course that's the wrong way to get out of a tent. Finally, it jumped over the side and through the canvas and ran away. But that was kind of scary to see that bear trying to jump out through the top.

April: I remember that one friend of mine that came up here, and we stayed out in the tent and a black bear walked by the tent. She was so scared she was running ahead of the bear instead of watching it, and it kept coming to the cabin. And then you can tell Sue's story about the bear, Sue being our brother Floyd's wife when they came up here with their children.

Bud: Yes, why don't you tell that story?

April: I wasn't here.

Bud: Well, you see that outhouse right there? She was sitting in that outhouse; it doesn't have a door.

April: It did have a door, though.

Bud: Oh, all right. So, they were staying in the barn apartment and their little, at that time probably a 4-year-old, was walking to the cabin and Sue was sitting in there watching her walk down here and all of a sudden there was a bear right behind her.

April: The story has gotten a little exaggerated over the years.

Bud: Yes. So anyways, the story goes she gets up and yells, "Claire! Claire!"

April: Pulling her pants up the whole way.

Bud: Going after, chasing the bear away.

Debo: [Laughs] And it worked huh? The bear ran?

Bud: Yes, except Claire was always "Claire-bear" after that. [Laughs]

April: Some of my happiest memories in later years were when Floyd and Sue and their three girls and Bud and Diane and their two kids would come up, and we would be up here. I think Sharon was probably grown up at that point.

Bud: Yes.

April: I don't remember her being here. Maybe a couple of times she was, and they would put on all these plays for us and songs, and they were so much fun.

Bud: Yes.

April: They sold rocks that they would put in water and show people coming up how pretty they were out here on the roadside and flowers. Somebody came along who was walking and wanted to pay for a drink of a water from their flowers. [Laughs] They were so thirsty.

Tom: Did they do as well with their enterprise as the worm enterprise?

Bud: I think they made more money being cute out there selling rocks that nobody needed than we did selling worms.

April: Bud has a video clip of I think Maggie and Taylor and Ben who were out there at the time; I don't think Claire and Olivia were part of it, and they were selling something and one of the TV stations was up and they were filming them. So, Ben was all excited and was running back to tell his mom they were going to be on TV and then all of a sudden he realized we don't have a TV to get to see it. [Laughs] "We're going to be on TV tonight." "Oh, but we don't have a TV up here." It's so cute.

Tom: So, did you play games as kids a lot? No TV.

April: I don't remember playing that many games. We were working. We were busy straightening nails.

Bud: Canasta.

Tom: Straightening nails?

April: Yes. That was a favorite pastime of my father's, get the kids to straighten out the nails that I've taken out of something.

Bud: Yeah, we never used new nails when we built anything.

April: We were recyclers from the time we were born.

Debo: So you were up here as kids and you would spend part of your year here and part of your year in Coeur d'Alene.

Bud: Right.

Debo: How was it different up here? How was it different then from when you would go back to civilization?

Bud: Well the big thing was the dirt road and dust. We didn't really have running water at that time; we had a pump and then no electricity. If you were going to take a bath you had to haul water out of the creek, put it in the boiler. Light the boiler.

April: Build a fire under the boiler.

Bud: Yeah, build a fire under the boiler and get that water real hot, and then you would take a bucket of hot, a bucket of cold, put it in the tub out there in the bath house, because we had a bath house out there. And every spring the bath house would flood, so there was always mud in the bath house, so it was pretty hard to get your feet clean. You would try to dry off. So, that was sure different than living in Coeur d'Alene, and it was cooler because it was hot in Coeur d'Alene. I mean this is about as hot as it ever gets right now, and then it cools off at night up here, really nice of course. But this was just home every summer.

April: It was more work.

Debo: A lot more work here then.

April: Hauling wood.

Bud: The only thing I didn't like about it was I couldn't play baseball. I never really got to be on a baseball team up here, but Dad says, "Well I'll get you a baseball," so he got me a baseball and a mitt, but he forgot the team, I guess. [Laughs]

Debo: Well, there were kids up here though. You hung out with the Edwards, the Maases. Were there other kids up here?

April: But it was a long ways to go to get to Logging Creek.

Debo: That's right.

Tom: Yes, it was.

Debo: Because the Edwards family was at Logging.

Tom: And it was eight miles from here.

Bud: Yeah.

April: It was an hour.

Debo: Because of the road being bad?

April: The closest people were the Maases and the Lawsons.

Debo: The Maases were at the Polebridge Ranger Station.

Tom: Yes.

April: And Sharon and Kate Lawson were at Square Peg Ranch.

Tom: Did you know the people that ran the store? Were they friendly or friends, or did you hang out at the store?

April: I worked for Ted Ross at the store.

Tom: What did you do?

April: I marked things with a grease pen when he came home from town, and then I would ring things up on an old register. That was fun.

Bud: He had a nice selection of candy. I remember we would go over...

April: I think we hayed for it. Didn't I help you hay out there?

Tom: Yes.

April: I think that's when I got allergies, to grass and weeds.

Tom: And boys.

April: Oh, that was the only thing that kept me going.

Tom: Oh. [Laughs]

April: There's no way I would have sneezed like that for nothing. [Laughs]

Tom: So, do you remember any other owners of the store? Was Ted Ross the primary one during your time?

April: When we were growing up Ben Rover ran it; I remember that, then Ted Ross and then Karen Feather. But Karen Feather was more after I was married and came back here with my husband and daughter.

Bud: Yes, and then there was somebody else after that and I can't remember the name [Chrys Landrigan].

Tom: How often did you go to town?

April: Not often enough.

Bud: Yes, and that was always a big fun thing because we would always go to what was that place for lunch?

April: The Hut.

Bud: Yeah, and would get a hamburger.

April: They served them on a platter, a big wood thing.

Tom: What town was that in?

April: Kalispell.

Bud: And the buns they would always butter and toast them.

April: Oh, it was so good.

Bud: Crunchy stuff. That was a big treat, you know, to go to town.

Debo: How was the road in those days compared to now?

Bud: Oh, it was terrible. It was about like from here the store right now. It's just full of rocks and dust and stuff like that. We would always get in the panel, the 1952 Chevy suburban.

April: Dust just rolled in the back, and Dad liked to go purpling in the evenings.

Tom: Explain purpling.

April: Purpling is when the mountains...when the sunset and the mountains, everything turns purple. We would go out and look for wildlife and go purpling. And when we would be in Coeur d'Alene and he would want to go on a Sunday drive on some God-forsaken road like this, if we were really, really good and didn't get too carsick we would stop at the Dairy Queen and have a soft ice cream cone, but we didn't have any rewards up here.

Bud: To town, I don't know, we would maybe go twice a month or once a month, about once a month, and it was really great. My dad loved it when we would go and it was raining, because then he wouldn't miss a day of working here, because he would always have a project he was working on. My dad was a little bit ADD [attention deficit disorder] about his projects. He's a great starter of projects but...

April: A lot of follow-up didn't happen.

Bud: Not a great finisher. So, we would be out working on the fence and then it would be time to eat dinner and he would always say, "Pick up everything, take it back, because we're not going to leave it here because we may not be back tomorrow to be working on this," and sure enough we would be on some other project or something like that. But anyway, we built a lot of fence, jackleg fence with...

April: Lodgepole pine.

Bud: Yes, lodgepole pine and then a couple of strands of barbed wire, and if the fence was in really good shape it would keep the cows out, because we had issues with free range up here.

April: We always had cattle in the yard, always.

Bud: Yes. So, to try to keep them out—I don't really know, but we tried to keep them out.

April: It just made getting the cow pies a lot easier when we were kids.

Bud: You didn't have to go very far, but you had to wait until those dried out a little bit.

April: They have to dry. We used to get a cat every time we would come up here, every summer, a cat, a little kitten for mice, and then at the end of every summer we had to give it away.

Tom: Traumatic.

Bud: I don't remember that.

April: It was. I do. I think the last cat we had was when I cut their hair with the paper scissors and they had trouble placing it. [Laughs] It had an altered appearance.

Debo: Were you up here during any of the major fires?

Bud: No. Well yes, let's see, there was a fire on Huckleberry Ridge I think in...

April: 1966 or 1967.

Bud: Yes. We drove up to Alaska that year. Floyd, Dad, and I and took the panel, right up through Calgary, and the fuel pump went out and stuff like that. We drove clear up to Fairbanks and back, so we were gone better than a month probably. When we got back they were kind of cleaning that fire up. I remember seeing the remnants of it. The Red Bench Fire that actually came through here, we weren't here during that. When they were mopping stuff up I brought my mom up here to see what had happened, because at that time my dad had already passed away and we were up here to see what was going on. That was just an amazing mess.

April: We watched our cabin on the Tacoma news. We weren't sure it had made it, because they said they had a firestorm at Polebridge. We were watching the 10:00 o'clock news, and here was this cabin all foamed with the lean-to bathroom on it, so we knew that it had made it. That was when we had the Border cabin here, and the logs were actually singed.

Bud: Yes, they did an amazing job, the firefighters did.

April: They did a wonderful job.

Bud: Saving our cabins. We're forever grateful about that.

April: Yes, very grateful. I think the only thing we lost on our property was the little cabin that Marie Peterson had put up.

Bud: That was kind of over in the woods.

April: In the woods, and nobody knew it was even there.

Tom: When you say in the woods could you describe where that was?

April: It was between here and the store on the left-hand side, going down toward the store in kind of a bunch of trees in there. She had been very discreet when she put it up. But it was just a little one-room cabin, probably not much bigger than a little shed.

Tom: The size of your first cabin.

April: And she had a little stove in there and a pot, and that's about all it had room for. That was another homesteader we had doings with, a lot of things, with Marie Price Peterson.

Bud: Marie and her husband Tom.

April: When she moved to town after Tom died, Dad said she could put up a little thing so she could get up here and breathe the North Fork air which is full of dust. [Laughs]

Tom: We didn't cover the name where the Panorama Ranch came from. Do you know?

April: We used to have a view of the mountains.

Tom: Where did it go?

April: Well, the lodgepole have taken it away.

Bud: The trees have kind of grown up and put a little bit of a damper on that. I don't know, my dad was kind of a wordsmith and he enjoyed alliteration, so Panorama Ranch and Wilderness Trail Trips and stuff like that. But when that came to mind I don't know.

April: But I do know that for years we did have a beautiful view of the mountains, but we don't now. Probably if we took a lodgepole lawnmower we would.

Bud: Yes, chainsaw some of those trees down over there and we could see better.

April: Does the land go across that way?

Bud: It does, clear to the store on both sides of the road.

April: And to the Lawsons, up that way [north].

Debo: Well, people know you dad's name, you know. Even though he's been gone a while everybody knows something about Frank Evans.

April: Well, he wrote for the paper.

Debo: Yes, he had a column in the *Hungry Horse News*.

April: He was a controversial stinker at times.

Tom: April, April, April.

April: Well, he was.

Debo: Tell us more about him.

April: He was a character. He didn't mince words. If he didn't agree with you he told you. Wouldn't you say?

Tom: I agree.

Bud: Yes, he was a little bit opinionated about stuff.

April: Extremely so.

Bud: And didn't change his mind. Once he made it up, that was it.

April: Oh God, no.

Bud: He was always full of stories, and being a college professor I think he was kind of used to lecturing you on stuff. So, not a great listener but a good storyteller. And had a good sense of humor. He enjoyed his martinis at night.

April: His attitude adjustment hour.

Bud: His attitude adjustment hour, right. [Laughs]

April: And usually it needed adjusting.

Bud: Yes, and it worked for him. A little alcohol worked really well for him, just kind of relaxed him. I don't think he went overboard. Then he made some good wine and some bad wine.

Debo: Did he use berries and things from around here?

April: Everything. Rose petals.

Tom: There you go. That was his best vintage, Rose Petal Wine.

Bud: Rose petal and rhubarb wine.

Debo: Rhubarb wine?

April: Yes.

Tom: Rose petal was sweeter.

Bud: Yes, it was. Rhubarb had a kick to it, although that you couldn't get any way else. [Laughs] And back in the day he made cantaloupe wine and beet wine.

April: Potato wine.

Debo: It was really red like beets?

Bud: Yes.

Tom: Did he ever brew root beer?

Bud: He did.

Tom: Did he ever make anything else?

Bud: Ice cream.

April: Buttermilk sherbet.

Bud: With cabbage he made sauerkraut.

April: He was a gardener, but everything he had to measure. You know, he got X-number pounds of this or X-number pounds of that.

Bud: Yes.

Debo: He had a big garden up here?

April: Oh yes.

Bud: He taught school for 26 years, I believe, at North Idaho Junior College. Then got into a little bit of a disagreement with the administration. They were going to... He had a heart attack. It was in 1969.

April: Up here.

Bud: Yes. He brought his students up here. They always came up and did some kind of ecology deal, and then they would sometimes plant a garden and then go back. But anyway, he had a heart attack, so that kind of put him out of commission for most of the summer. Then he decided that he would take a sabbatical and write a paper on grizzlies and how the Park had, in his opinion, mishandled the grizzly problem. So, then the administration decided that he would no longer be chairman of the Biology Department at North Idaho College. He would just be a professor and one of his old students would be chairman of the department, but they knew that he didn't want to do that, so he said, "I quit." He took an early retirement at 56, maybe.

April: He was 55 when he had the heart attack, so about 56 or 57.

Bud: About the same time my folks got divorced, then he came up and lived here and this was his home full-time for 14 years after that.

Debo: So, he was here summer and winter then?

Bud: Summer and winter, yes. He finally learned to get out of here for a little while in the winter, but he logged to augment his retirement income.

April: With horses.

Bud: Yes.

Debo: And I heard he had like a root cellar full of canned goods.

April: Oh God, yes.

Debo: He canned and preserved food.

April: He even had seawater.

Bud: Yes. His philosophy was to eat what you can and can what you can't. So, he would have canned leftovers. It was bad, but he canned everything. So, he had a root cellar that was insulated with sawdust. When we kind of cleaned things out after he died it was full of, like canned leftovers. Serious, like he would make a big bunch of soup. He couldn't eat it all, so he would can it. And lots of sauerkraut.

Debo: And it had been in there for years and years, right?

Bud: Yes.

April: I remember he came over to the coast to our house and brought 51 gooey ducks, of which all the water that they spit out he canned because he thought that was going to be clam juice; however, it wasn't. It was salty water.

Bud: It was sand.

April: I mean, he canned the whole thing and took them home in jars, and I think they were still here. Some of them were here when he died.

Bud: Probably.

April: But yes, he was very resourceful.

Tom: But you neglected the story about when he met your wife's relatives.

Bud: Well, Dad and Floyd drove out. Our wedding was in Early, Iowa, Diane and I. He had never met her folks, so he and my brother drove out in the middle of winter. Our wedding was December 29th, in the middle of winter. So, he pulls up in front of their house, and these are like retired farmers. They live in a little, you know, house in town.

Tom: What was he driving then?

Bud: The Volkswagen bus with his dog Pandora in there. And so he knocks on the door and here's this guy with...

April: Shoulder-length hair.

Bud: And he had a beard, and my brother had really long hair and a beard, and my dad had a pot. He knocked on the door and says, "Who wants some bear stew?!" That was his greeting.
[Laughs]

Tom: He never came empty-handed, never. He always showed up with something and included a story.

Bud: Sure.

Debo: So, what did they think of him?

Bud: Well, I never really got a report, but I do know they were very accepting. I mean, they're a pretty tight little Catholic family, and one of the brothers is a priest. So, here's this family that's going to marry into their family. I had a couple of Jewish people in my wedding party, and my brother, so they were very accepting and thought my dad was interesting.

Debo: An interesting character.

Bud: Yes.

April: He came over to our house one spring. It was early, and he came to the door and said, "Shannon, I brought you something." He had a box that said Banquet Fried Chicken on it. He set it down in the middle of my living room and out runs a banty hen and all of her little babies. He had babies and his banty over in the barn, and he couldn't leave her because it was too cold. So, I had to get a playpen from a friend of mine, and I chicken-sat while they went to Seattle. I had them in my living room [laughs] in this playpen, and the cat would sit on top of a piece of plywood we had watching the chickens, and the dogs would bark at them as they moved. Then Shannon had a friend over to play, and her mother was one of those that you need silver service to serve coffee, and her daughter Melanie says, "Mommy, mommy come see what Shannon has." She comes into our living room and there's chickens in the playpen. [Laughs] You never knew what was coming when he came.

Bud: No. Being a biologist he always loved his animals, so we would have pet chipmunks, pet squirrels. One year we came here and boy, it stunk in here, like kind of skunky. But, "No, that's not skunk—it's a weasel." How do you know it's a weasel? "I just know." Anyway, so this weasel mother had built a nest in the casement above the window in the kitchen, so Dad took that casement apart and here are brand new weasel babies. He took the weasel babies, put them in a trap, caught the mother and put the mother and the babies in a cage and raised these weasel babies. Well, weasels are pretty resourceful, and that night that weasel mother had unlocked the cage and had carted all the babies out to a new location, except she was coming back for the last one when he got up and discovered that. So, we had one little baby weasel.

April: No hair.

Bud: Yes, eyes closed, like a day old, so we raised that weasel, kept it on the pilot light on the stove to keep it warm.

April: We fed it condensed milk and scrapings from liver, liver juice.

Bud: Yes, blood basically, beef blood.

April: And her name was Josephine. She turned white in the winter and she was a neat pet.

Debo: So, you had her for a while.

April: Oh yes.

Bud: Well until...not a year.

April: No. It was in the middle of winter. Somebody went in and left the seat up on the toilet, and she fell in and drowned.

Debo: Oh.

April: But she was a neat little thing, and she would wither out and she would run around the house and go under things and bring dust bunnies out with her whiskers, but if somebody new came she would run right into her cage. That was her home. She was neat. We also raised a robin, Martin Luther because of its diet of worms, and it lived on a hanger in here with newspaper underneath it. I remember leaving it one time in the cabin after we had lunch. We came home and we had left the jello out, and it had picked all the fruit cocktail out of the jello. It had red jello all over its beak.

Bud: We would dig worms for it and feed him, and then it came back the next year.

April: Yes. We trapped chipmunks one year for the trap in Spokane and had them attract a mother who had babies. They actually have stripes on their back when they're born, before they have fur.

Bud: I never knew that.

April: I didn't either. They are about the size of a nickel when they are born.

Tom: So, you had all kinds of adventures.

April: Yes. When I was growing up I would come home from a date or something, and you would go to get something out of the refrigerator and you might find a baby beaver or something that somebody had delivered to him, all kinds of fun stuff in your refrigerator.

Debo: [Laughs] So, he liked animals.

April: He did.

Debo: Did you call him an environmentalist or a conservationist or anything like that?

April: Yes.

Bud: Yes, really early on, yes.

April: Before it was popular.

Bud: Yes.

April: When it was more controversial.

Tom: I remember I got spoiled by Frank because we would go into the woods to see a piece of property or just for a walk, and he was like a living textbook. He would talk about the mushrooms. He would talk about the whitefish spawning under the bridge, and he knew every tree, its name, just like my dad did. I was spoiled by him, because I didn't have to learn things, because he was always there as an open textbook. So, from the standpoint of a good friend he was fun to be around. I wish I had paid better attention.

April: I remember the first time my husband came up here. We were in Coeur d'Alene and he was there. Mother was up here with the cat, and he needed a ride back up, and he just figured he would catch a ride with us. We had a Mustang, and I was like a sausage in the backseat. All the way up here he educated Roger on the different forests and how the lodgepole pine come up with the fires and the whole thing. All I thought was, oh this is never going to end, and finally it did, but it was brutal. [Laughs] But he knew it all.

Debo: Yes. So, he was one of the characters on the North Fork. Were there other characters up here that you remember?

April: Ollie Terrian, Madge's husband. He was a character.

Tom: I didn't know him well. Tell us about him.

April: He was real wiry—wiry, long-faced, little goatee, as I recall—and ooh his eyes just danced when he would tell stories.

Bud: Yes. He had big eyes.

April: Big, big, big expressive eyes, almost kind of bugged out. Actually, he probably had a thyroid problem or something. I mean they really bugged out, and they just told marvelous stories.

Tom: There's a picture in the hall of him.

Debo: Yes.

Tom: A good description.

April: His eyes, yeah. She was...I felt quiet in comparison to him.

Bud: Yes, I don't remember Madge very well, other than she was very short.

April: Yes, very short.

Bud: A tough lady, and I think Ollie was her third or fourth husband maybe.

April: Who was the one that homesteaded, the Slifers [Bill and Ann]?

Tom: That was in the Park, Slifer's Meadows, and that's all I know about it.

April: And Scottie Beaton. I remember going up to Scottie's. He was an old homesteader. We would cross all the stuff and had to walk half the way. That was where I caught my first fish, in front of his place. I remember asking if it was going to pull me in. I think it was all of about four or five inches long, and it was for a long time pickled in gin here.

Bud: Yes. It was about this big, about three inches long. I remember Dad would always get that down and show people, "This is April's first fish, and it's pickled in gin," and Ollie Terrian said, "Well no wonder he's got his mouth open." [Laughs]

April: By the time I got it in, it was so dead. I had pulled it so excitedly that it was dead, so we kept it.

Tom: Do you remember the location of that cabin, the actual location?

April: Yes, I do. Is it Round Prairie?

Bud: At Akokola Creek?

April: Yes, there used to be in the beginning, when we went up to see Scottie, there was a bridge across way up on the way, and then that washed out after he died. But was it the river? It must have been the creek that went by his cabin, and he had a bunch of log jams and stuff. I remember standing on it fishing. Then I remember going up later and the cabin was still there, but it was all run down and the stream had gone through it. I remember window casings and stuff and a log jam.

Bud: Who was the man that lived up by your place, a Scottish guy or an English guy?

Tom: Tom Reynolds.

Bud: Okay, so I'll tell you a story about Tom Reynolds. Tom Reynolds was a pretty reclusive guy, really didn't like to have a lot of visitors and stuff like that. I remember going up there one time. He knew my dad but he didn't know me, or I think probably Floyd, and he says, "Well, too bad I'm just leaving." It was like I can't visit you right now. But, one time we did go up there and visit and it was with your mom, Thelma. He invited us into his cabin, and he was an artist. He was working on a painting. I guess it was charcoal or whatever, a pastel of a September morn at Kintla Lake. Here was a bare-breasted maiden in Kintla Lake, but he had it covered up, so he pulled it back and showed it and then, you know, he was a little embarrassed about that, but he says, "Here, you've got to cover this back, we don't want to smear the pastels." And my dad said, "I've never heard them called that before." [Laughs]

April: I can remember Maxine and Thelma and Mom going out "kitchen heaping." They would get old homestead maps. Remember that? They would try to figure out where the cabins would be and where the kitchen dumps would be and the old things. They used to go out and get away from us.

Bud: You probably still have tons of bottles somewhere in your family holdings, right?

Tom: Oh, they came and went, antique dealers. Can you tell us about the Evans dump? The garbage dump. Maybe I didn't say that correctly.

Bud: No, I know what you're talking about. It was over by the store, and it was where all the homesteaders that lived here would dump their tin cans and what-not. We would do that also, when it was still fashionable to dump your tin cans into a place. It was, I think, an old creek bed. Then it fell out of fashion to do that, but there was a time when the Volkswagen caught on fire and burned up. The motor was like a puddle of aluminum, and so he hauled it over there and just pushed it over the edge. That's probably the last thing that landed in that dump over there, including the engine.

April: But we rescued that.

Bud: We rescued that.

April: We gave it to Floyd for Christmas.

Bud: We gave it to Floyd for Christmas, with a picture of his burned out Volkswagen. Because he had given that car to my dad. But I don't know what's over there today. I know there was an old engine over there.

Tom: How did you get there?

Bud: Well, there's a little road right across the street from the saloon.

April: It's part of their parking now.

Bud: Yes. You can still access that, I guess. I actually drove by there today and saw the Volkswagen rusted hulk.

Tom: But at the time it originally started it was in the trees.

April: Oh, yes. You couldn't see it.

Bud: There's probably 100-year-old tin cans over there, I would imagine, if you wanted to dig those up.

Tom: Prince Albert worm cans possibly.

Bud: Right, right.

April: We didn't put any cans to speak of in there.

Tom: Did you ever go looking for them over there, to sell your worms?

Bud: No.

April: I don't recall. I think we got cans from various people.

Bud: Yes.

April: I think your mom saved us cans, and I know Maxine saved us her bean cans.

Tom: Oh, so you didn't have just a specific style. You took whatever you could get.

April: We took whatever we could get, because if somebody ordered five dozen worms, you put them in a bigger can.

Bud: Or a coffee can, something like that. Size-specific but everything was recycled. Yes.

April: We asked people to bring the dirt back.

Debo: Was your family involved in any of the organizations up here, and which ones?

April: The North Fork Improvement Association.

Bud: Yes, I think dad helped start that, back in the day.

Debo: Was he friends with the Sondresons?

April: Oh, yes. Several years ago Floyd had the Sweets and Ruth Sondreson over for dinner, and we went over and joined them.

Bud: On the island?

April: Yes.

Bud: Really.

April: Ruth would come up and visit Harold and Rachael Sweet, so when she was in Olympia with Harold and Rachael they would come up to Floyd and Sue's.

Debo: I haven't had anybody on these interviews talk about the Sweets much. What can you tell us about them?

April: Well, they weren't here when I was here. I just know Sue got up here, who is married to my brother Floyd, and I'm grateful to Rachael for being her second mother and getting her into the family, because she's a special lady.

Bud: I think Harold ran a hardware store in Portland or somewhere.

April: Well, they originally were in California.

Bud: Maybe it was in California. Anyway, and then they bought this place up here, and then he would come a little bit, and she would come up with her girls. She was a powerhouse. Boy, oh boy, you know.

April: Go get 'em.

Bud: She was just into everything, a hiker and a naturalist kind of person. I remember bringing some friends up here, and we went to the dance. She made sure everybody was up there dancing, and made it pretty uncomfortable if you weren't. She would just keep harassing you until you had a partner to swing. Geez.

Debo: That's great.

Bud: Yes, a good lady. A mover and a shaker. And Harold was a quiet sort of guy that just kind of went along with it all.

April: I think he just passed away this last year, and she was before that.

Bud: Yes.

Debo: So, you've probably seen a lot of changes in the North Fork since you were children.

April: There are a lot of nice cabins up here now.

Bud: Well, yes, there's a lot that's different and a lot that's the same, too. I mean, this is probably the most stable thing I've seen in my whole life. This cabin is still here. We've got a dirt road still. The creek is still running. These trees that I climbed when I was a kid are still here. They were big then, and they're still big. But there's a lot more people up here. There's a lot more technology up here. We have more technology in our cabin than we did then, actually running water. We have an on-demand hot water heater.

April: It used to flood out in front. There used to be a big pond out there.

Bud: April thinks there's less water in the spring and the creek.

April: Maybe there is, maybe there isn't. I don't know.

Bud: Yes, but it always changed down here where the pond was full and would drain.

April: We used to always have moose, always.

Debo: Yes?

April: There was always a moose out there.

Bud: Yes, not now.

April: More people saw their first moose in our front yard. I can remember being in the swimming pool when a moose came over to take a drink. That was a real interesting feeling, with those long bony legs, leaning down and thinking oh my gosh [laughs], but it just took a drink. It didn't try to get in. I didn't know what I was going to do.

Bud: If it got in?

April: I thought I'll go out and sit in the shallow end and hoped I make it. But I wasn't afraid of it. I didn't know how dangerous they were.

Bud: Yes, we didn't know to be afraid of moose.

April: They were just here.

Tom: So, why do you say now that you should be afraid of moose, if you weren't then?

Bud: Well, because they will attack you, I guess.

April: Because of the news media.

Bud: Yes, there you go.

April: Showing them in attack mode. I think anything will attack when it's cornered.

Bud: One thing that we kind of chuckled about was when they decided that the dust was dangerous. I mean, we've been breathing dust for 60 years, but it's nice not having dust out here.

April: Oh, it's wonderful.

Bud: Dust abatement. They used to put oil on the road. You would get oil on your car, and it would take a year to get it off. Linseed oil was the thing that you would try...oh God that was just so hard. It was a mess. I remember my dad one time got this oil, and he had a strainer, and he oiled it out here. It worked for a little tiny while. Whatever is on there today . . .

Tom: Magnesium chloride is what they're using now. The road from the North Fork Road to the store, where they dust-coated this year, that's actually your property? You're the property owner on either side? Did you participate in that on a cost share basis?

Bud: Not to my knowledge.

April: Are they charging?

Tom: It's a cost share with the county. I don't know the number. It's 50-cents a foot. They pay half. It really does settle the dust down, and the people who have used it say it's very nice.

Debo: Is there anything that we didn't ask you that you want to tell us about?

Bud: Well, this cabin is not on its original foundation. It was failing. The floor was coming apart and falling in and everything. It had been replaced when my dad first bought the cabin. They put a new floor in it years ago. I think marine plywood and stuff like that. They put it on a foundation, but it was not very far off the ground. Over the years it had gotten flooded and gotten wet, got moist and rotted.

April: This was after Dad died.

Bud: Yes. My mom said, "You know, one thing I want to do is make sure this cabin is good. I'm going to have a couple of CDs coming due, and I'm going to take care of it." A friend of mine who is a contractor engineered a bunch of stuff, and they put a new foundation down 50 feet away, and then a house moving outfit out of Kalispell, I think, picked up the house, moved it over 50 feet, and dropped it down on the new foundation. We put a septic system in and a new floor. So, this looks like it's in the same place, but it's actually over about 50 feet away.

April: We lost a big fireplace, a beautiful big fireplace, but that was about the only thing. Well, I'm not sure you can use the kitchen wood stove.

Bud: Well, you can but you would have to hook it up.

April: I wouldn't start a fire in it unless I was really cold.

Bud: Yes, that old stove . . .

April: Came up on a wagon.

Bud: I remember my grandma would bake bread on that thing. It's a pretty neat old stove.

April: And everybody was so envious of our double reservoir. It's got a huge big reservoir for heating water.

Bud: Yes, we used to cook on that thing.

Debo: That's good. Anything else before we close?

April: I can't think of anything.

Debo: Well, thank you so much for this interview. On behalf of the North Fork Landowners Association and the North Fork History Project I would like to thank you.

Bud: You're welcome.

April: You're welcome.

[End of recording]