

## HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH ARTHUR JOHN “DUKE” HOILAND

- Lois: I'm talking today with Arthur John “Duke” Hoiland, at his and Naomi's cabin at 450 Trail Creek Road. Today is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, 2017. This is Lois Walker on behalf of the North Fork History Project. Give me a little background information.
- Duke: Well, the first question, when and where was I born. I was born on August 13, 1933, so I'm 84 years old now.
- Lois: Where were you born?
- Duke: Close to Cataldo, Idaho, which was our mailing address. I was born at home, and I was the last of the eight kids to be born at home. We have two more, younger than I was, that were born in hospitals.
- Lois: Your poor mother. [Laughs] All boys?
- Duke: And my crib was one of those little wicker clothes baskets.
- Lois: How big was your house to have ten children in it?
- Duke: Eight children. We would have had nine children, but my oldest brother died when he was 2½ years old. Only my oldest sister knew him. He was run over by a car when there were very few cars in the country.
- Lois: That took some doing.
- Duke: My parents' names were Ethel and Tom Hoiland.
- Lois: How did they come to be in Idaho, or had the family been in Idaho for generations?
- Duke: That's a good question. My dad came from Norway as an immigrant in 1900. In 1910, he homesteaded in eastern Montana. Then in the periods of the droughts in the early 1920s they gave up the ranch and moved to north Idaho, and he changed from being a rancher to a lumberman. He became a night foreman in a big Idaho sawmill. Then when that sawmill closed down he built his own little sawmill in Fourth of July Canyon, and that's where all of us kids were born, in Fourth of July Canyon.
- Lois: Did they homestead in Idaho, too?
- Duke: Now, the 40 acres there was a homestead, in my mother's name, because all of my dad's papers were burnt in a bank fire in Kellogg [Idaho], so he had no more proof of being a legal citizen or anything.
- Lois: Was your mother from Norway, too, or was she American?
- Duke: No, she was from Chicago originally, but they met in eastern Montana and married there, and they came out to Idaho in 1923.
- Lois: It's amazing how people manage to find each other. So, you had how many brothers and how many sisters?

Duke: I have four brothers, two older and two younger. I was the middle one. I have three sisters, all older than I am. My oldest brother has passed.

Lois: That was just fairly recently wasn't it?



**Duke with his brothers and sisters**

Duke: Yes, two years ago. Yes, my dad ran a steam sawmill out there in north Idaho. It was not a big business, but it was a living. We sold lumber mostly to the Coeur d'Alene mines, which were big in those days. So our main product was mine lagging, heavy boards, three-inch boards to crib up mines.

Lois: What kind of mines?

Duke: They were lead and silver, a little bit of gold. Bunker Hill, you know, was mostly lead mines.

Lois: Did any of your brothers ever go work in the mines?

Duke: Nobody ever worked in the mines. My oldest brother's son worked in the mines, and that's the only one I know of.

Lois: So, they came to Idaho in 1923, and he established his own mill about when?

Duke: In 1934. He eventually sold that when he got too old. But we went through the Depression years fairly good because we had a big old house, and we had big gardens, and we had cows and pigs. We survived like everybody else did in those days. Actually, we lived better than most, but we were poor. That doesn't say we had money.

Lois: Well, about everybody was back then. The big move into the cities hadn't really started.

Duke: Most people don't realize about Naomi and I, but we lived from month to month our entire teaching careers. You don't make a lot of money teaching.

Lois: No, you don't.

Duke: The best lifestyle we've had is since we've retired, because we didn't have a mortgage in building this house. We've had a good lifestyle in retirement so far, and we've been retired for 28 years.

Lois: Wow. That's a long time.

Duke: Two more years and I will have been retired as many years as I taught school, 30.

Lois: Hard to believe, isn't it?

Duke: And she taught more than 30.

Lois: What kind of schooling did you have over there?

Duke: Well, you asked if I went to a one-room schoolhouse. No, I went to a two-room schoolhouse. We had a big wall and a chimney in the middle, with a big wood stove on both sides, grades 1 through 4 on one side and 5 through 8 on the other side, and I went through all 8 grades there.

Lois: One teacher or two teachers?

Duke: One teacher on each side, and it was a very interesting education. I had mostly men teachers in the upper side and women teachers on the lower side.

Lois: Fairly common. But you went to college, so obviously they prepared you pretty well.

Duke: Well, that's interesting. I would have never gotten to college if it wasn't for my high school teachers. They insisted that I get to college, and they helped me get an athletic scholarship to Pacific University at Forest Grove, Oregon. So I went there, and just like in high school I played every sport in season. I played football, I played basketball, and I played baseball. [Laughs]

Lois: Where did you go to high school?

Duke: Rose Lake High School. We had about ten kids per class, so to get up a football team, you know, you had to use freshmen, too, so I was playing football as a freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. [Chuckles]

Lois: It was just part of school then, you know. You just did it

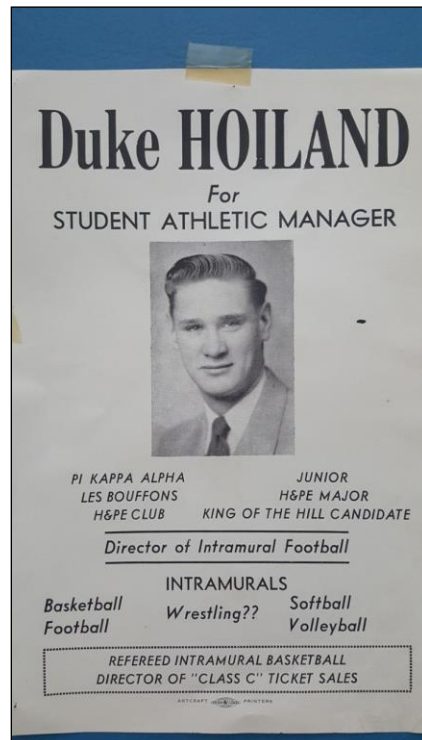
Duke: Yes. Now, I would have never gotten to college if it wasn't for those high school teachers. And I had a very successful football career at Forest Grove, and they were very disappointed that I didn't come back. But my oldest brother and three of his friends had graduated from Coeur d'Alene Community College, and they decided to go to Montana State, because Montana State was ranked high in engineering and he was an engineering student. And they talked me into going with them, peer pressure.

Lois: Montana State was in Bozeman in those days?

Duke: Yes. But it turned out to be great, because that's where I met Naomi. All but my oldest brothers went to college. Three of us graduated from college. Two of my three sisters went to college, but one of them graduated from college and one had a two-year teaching certificate. My next youngest brother graduated from the University of Idaho with an electrical engineering degree. My youngest brother graduated in education like I did, but he didn't stay with education. He was like my next oldest brother. He went back to logging. That was in their blood.

Lois: Yes.

Duke: They became contracting loggers and made a good living until they retired.



**Duke graduated from Montana State University in Bozeman in 1955. Naomi graduated in 1956.**

Lois: I know you were in the military at one point. Out of all your brothers, did your older brothers end up serving during World War II?

Duke: Nobody ended up in war. My oldest brother—I can't remember why, but he did not pass the physical. My next oldest brother was the same as I, he had an S2 deferment when he was in college, and when he graduated—no, he quit—he was drafted. I was drafted after graduating, but it turned out to be a very lucky experience.

Lois: What year did you graduate?

Duke: I graduated from Montana State in 1955. In 1956, I was in the Army at Fort Ord, California.

Lois: So, you missed Korea. That was good.

Duke: Yes. And you know, I didn't even realize what I was missing until after college and I had become friends with some of the people who had fought in South Korea. One of my good friends at Montana State had a Purple Heart from Korea.

Lois: At least being from Idaho the cold wouldn't have bothered you, but that was a rough war.

Duke: Especially the first years of it, because we were not prepared. We weren't trained, and we weren't equipped for the early years of the Korean War. Anyway, you ask here how did I manage to get into education. It's the only thing I was exposed to really. We were living on a homestead with a lot of kids and went through school, and my high school teachers were my only influence. They worked very hard to get me a sports scholarship, and I felt obligated to them. Before I got back from Germany the man that was my principal in high school was now a superintendent, and he came to visit my mother and told my mother that when I got back from Germany to let him know because he had a teaching job waiting for me. So you see, I was tied to education and really had no other exposure.

Lois: But I think you have a lot of intellectual curiosity about things, in general. I imagine you made a very good teacher.

Duke: I was very fortunate in the Army because after basic training I got into the combat engineers. About 80 percent of what we covered I was already familiar with, being raised by my father and in a steam-powered sawmill and logging and sawmilling and all that sort of thing. The combat engineers use everything from a hammer to a bulldozer, and everything in between.

Lois: In Germany in those days the country was still rebuilding. They had to re-establish runways and buildings and bridges and all those things.

Duke: That's one of the reasons why we were very busy in Germany, because we spent a lot of time rebuilding roads, rebuilding small bridges in the country—countryside bridges, and we were close to the East German border, and there were roads up there that went in and out of the present border.

Lois: Yes.

Duke: Well, we connected the roads in West Germany so they didn't have to go into East Germany in terrible places. And in doing that we also had to replace bombed out concrete country bridges.

Lois: Did you come across unexploded ordnance?

Duke: No, we never did, but we had a few exciting times with ordnances on shooting ranges.

Lois: I mean, they are still finding bombs in Europe.

Duke: Yes, they are. But we had a great experience in the combat engineers in Germany. We had two firsts that had never been done before. Our company was the C Company of the 41<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion, which was part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. First of all, it was right after World War II, and now we had the bombs dropped in Japan, and so

now all basic infantry training had to involve the possibility of a nuclear explosion. One of our first jobs that no one had never done before was to build simulated atomic bombs. We dug big holes in the ground and filled them full of napalm and gasoline and crude oil and Primacords in and out and up on the top and Primacords all around, TNT all around the top, shape chargers turned upside down so they would go up instead of down. And when we would explode that it would have a huge cloud that would turn into a mushroom.

Lois: I had never heard that.

Duke: While this was happening, of course, the infantry was in their training maneuvers, and so seeing this cloud they all had to don their special equipment.

Lois: Oh, for heaven's sake. Where was this? Where did they do that?

Duke: This was in Germany close to the East German border.

Lois: Near what town?

Duke: Well, we were stationed at Bad Kissingen. I don't know if you've heard of that.

Lois: Yes, I have.

Duke: It's close to the town of Schweinfurt, which you've probably heard of, because Schweinfurt was leveled in World War II because it was a ball bearing factory. They were supplying ball bearings to all aspects of Hitler's military, and so that town was flattened. That was one of the buildings close to where we were located. It still wasn't totally rebuilt, but Germany as a whole in 1957 was pretty well rebuilt. But when you went to other places like France, oh, those people were lazy.

Lois: I was there not too long after the wall came down, and when you went into Berlin it was just a sea of cranes, because they were working on building up East Berlin. When they build, they build. What's curious is that they often build it to look just like it did originally. You know, some of the buildings you see today had been destroyed how many times in war? They put them right back the way they were.

Duke: Well, I was interested in how they built them. They took all that rubble and built the new buildings with the rubble, and then when they got that built they plastered it over to make it look like new. But the old rubble was all inside that building.

Lois: Perfectly good building material.

Duke: Yes.

Lois: That's what they rebuilt the runways with, too.

Duke: Some of the bigger parts they had to break in two so they could handle it. I witnessed two or three buildings that were in the process of being rebuilt that way. I had good exposure to the German countryside, because once a month I drove the company commander's jeep from our company to battalion headquarters in Würzburg. That was 100,000 people. It was big. That's where our battalion headquarters was located.

Lois: I've been there.

Duke: Driving that countryside between those two places was very interesting. You didn't dare hit a chicken. [Laughs] And the old "honey wagons" were in your way most of the time in most of the little villages, but it was very good exposure to the German countryside. I was very lucky in the Army, in that after getting through training and going to Germany, the second day I was in C Company I was called to the company commander's office. What the heck did I do already? Anyway, he read over the records of all the people there and the new people, and he wanted me to be his driver.

Lois: Of all things.

Duke: I became the company commander's driver the second day I was on post, and that was a great experience, because you were involved with all the officers instead of all the non-coms.

Lois: You heard a lot, I'm sure.

Duke: Also, being his driver, I had to go to radio school and complete the radio course in International Morse Code, in order to be his driver and radio operator. We had a great big radio in the back seat of the commander's jeep. That reminds me, the other thing that we did first as a company in Germany was our new method of putting a floating bridge across a river. We put lots of floating bridges, foot bridges and tank bridges, across smaller rivers, but one time we built a bridge across the Main River. That's the main tributary of the Rhine, you probably know. When the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Commander heard about what we were doing he had to come up and see it. As we were going down the Autobahn stretched out for two miles with our company, we got a call from command headquarters. That was a very spooky thing, because I had to send and receive Morse Code with a clamp on my knee as I was driving the jeep. When I realized who I was talking to, 7<sup>th</sup> Army Headquarters, I asked the commander if I could pull over. We pulled over to the side to finish the call, because I had to take everything in five digits, and then he had to translate that into words, because we were too close to East Germany to broadcast in voice. We did that within the company on small maneuvers, but not when we were dealing with high command.

Lois: Right.

Duke: It was a challenge for me, because I was new at that. I had to ask for a repeat two or three times in order to get the numbers right.

Lois: So, was this related to Cold War tensions?

Duke: We were right in the middle of the Cold War. You see, the reason we went to Germany was in response to the invasion when the Soviets moved into Hungary.

Lois: 1956, yes.

Duke: Our deployment was initiated by that.

Lois: Makes sense.

Duke: So, our little company did two things as firsts in Germany. Simulated atomic bombs and the floating bridge. Normally, you would put some pontoons out there and blow them up and then put treads on them and push them out. But first you had to have a line across the river, and this was a very large river. Our method of getting across the river was a personnel carrier, actually two personnel carriers, that would cross the river. They are so heavy, you know, and they carry a squad of about seven men, and when they go into the river they submerge and then slowly come to the surface. The exhaust pipe went “bubble bubble bubble” in the meantime. [Laughs] It’s a very spooky thing, because being the company commander’s jeep driver I got the privilege of going across. You took the bridle line across that was going to keep this bridge from floating downstream. But we had to take two of them across, because one of them was left there as an anchor, and then we came back in the other one.

Lois: Yes, I remember the longest bridge they laid during the war, at Remagen, was like 1,800 feet long. I mean, those were long bridges that they put across those big rivers.

Duke: Yes, and you know when a tank went across it they pushed them clear down into the water about three or four feet.

Lois: Oh, no, I didn’t know that.

Duke: But the company commander’s jeep was always the first one across. But we had to have a special tread for jeeps and small trucks in between the two big treads because we couldn’t fit the treads for a tank. But anyway, the new part of this bridge is that we would assemble a complete set of pontoons and treads in a forested, covered area that couldn’t be seen, instead of being close to the riverbank. And then we would come out and with a crane put it in the river and then go back and get another one. It was a lot faster than the old method of doing everything right on the riverbank.

Lois: Can you imagine doing that in wartime, under fire?

Duke: Yes, and being fired upon. That’s why there were combat engineers, because they were required to work in combat conditions, and they had to be armed and all that.

Lois: So how did your mom feel about all this, you being over in Germany?

Duke: I was just talking to Naomi about that. Communication wasn’t the same in the 1950s as it is now. I had absolutely no communication with my parents from the time I left the States until the time I got back.

Lois: Really?

Duke: Yes, and that was common. Nobody talked to home in those days. They just waited for you to come home. If you came home that was good; if you didn’t some officer came to the door. [Laughs]

Lois: Yes, you didn’t want to see that, or the telegram guy. When did you and Naomi get married?

Duke: Well, we met in Bozeman, of course, at Montana State. I was a junior and she was a sophomore. I will have to tell you the rest with Naomi’s involvement.



Lois: So how many years were you in the Army total?

Duke: I was only in active service two years. That's what is required when you're drafted.

Lois: Well, you packed a lot into two years.

Duke: Yes, I packed a lot into two years and a lot of memories.

Lois: But Naomi was with you? You got married before you went, obviously.

Duke: I was in Germany for a year and a half. She was there with me for a year. I was there by myself for...

Lois: The first six months?

Duke: Yes, and she was teaching here in the States.



**Duke and Naomi married on December 20, 1955.**

Lois: So you graduated in what year?

Duke: I graduated in 1955. Naomi graduated in 1956. We got married before she graduated and after I graduated, at Christmas break. We got married in Whitefish, because that's where her pastor was that she went to as a child here in the Flathead. And there was no honeymoon. We went right back to Bozeman and back to school. It's interesting, though. While she was putting in her last year I did a variety of jobs. I had a three-month history teaching job at Bozeman High School, because a history teacher got sick. They called the college, and my education professors recommended me.

Lois: You were barely older than they were.

Duke: But before that—I don't know how this happened—but there was a logger who was looking for a guy to fall trees for his horse-skidding job. I was doing nothing, and I was born with a chainsaw in my hand almost, so I offered to fall trees for him. I felled them and limbed them and topped them, and he skidded them out tree-length for the horse. [Laughs]

Lois: So, did you like Bozeman?

Duke: Yes, Bozeman is a nice place. You can't look in any direction without seeing a snow-capped peak year-round.

Lois: Yes, it's a nice area, and you're close to so much there.

Duke: Anyway, we were married, and after Naomi graduated we came back and she met my family for the first time. Then, with all my brothers and friends being lumberjacks I had no trouble getting a part-time job logging, but I knew I was going to be drafted. But I had a job in the meantime in the woods.

Lois: You were drafted as an enlisted man. You weren't an officer?

Duke: No, a private. I made sergeant in a year and a half, though.

Lois: Well, the opportunities were there, back then.

Duke: The opportunities were there. It seemed like we went to a training place called Grafenwöhr.

Lois: Yes, I know it, too.

Duke: You've been to Grafenwöhr?

Lois: The big range there, yes.

Duke: Well, every time we went there it seemed like I got a promotion. And, of course, being the company commander's driver, but that wasn't all there was to it. When I was in Grafenwöhr one time I got a phone call, the only phone call I got while I was in Germany in two years. I thought, "Oh my God, something has happened to my family back in the States." I went to the phone, and it was the superintendent from the school at our base camp in Bad Kissingen. She had to have my permission for Naomi to teach school.

Lois: This was in the DODSS system, the Department of Defense School System?

Duke: This was in the Army school system, and they couldn't hire her without my permission. But, of course, there were a lot of things involved, because you never knew where I was going to be and whether she was going to be there, probably.

Lois: Well, at least you weren't deploying to other places. Nowadays, if you go to Germany they will suck you up, and you will end up going to Operation NORTHERN WATCH, SOUTHERN WATCH, all those deployments. It was to Bosnia for years, and then it was after the Gulf War. Being in Germany, all that meant was you were going, especially if you were at Würzburg.

Duke: Yes, we had a good time in Germany. At that time there were four Deutsche Marks to the dollar, so we were wealthy. Naomi was there teaching school, making a second lieutenant's salary, and I had my little salary, but the allotment that you had to send home to your wife we didn't have to do anymore, because she was there, too, so we had spending money. As a matter of fact, shortly after we decided that we were wealthy [laughs], a guy had to go back to the States on a medical discharge. He had ordered a Volkswagen from the assembly line in Wolfsburg, and I was able to take over his order. In a month's time I had a brand new Volkswagen. I paid cash for it over the counter, 4,700 Deutsche Marks, \$1,100. For a brand new Volkswagen, a 1958 model in 1957. That was the first year that the Volkswagens had a big window in the back. Before that it was a little oval window. Remember that?

Lois: Yes, I do. My uncle came back from Germany; he married a German girl when he was there and came back with a Karmann Ghia. We just thought that was the coolest thing.

Duke: Oh yes, I saw lots of those over there. Matter of fact, my youngest brother ended up buying one of those.

Lois: What year did you come home from Germany?

Duke: I came home in 1958. I was there part of 1956, all of 1957, and part of 1958.

Lois: Did Naomi enjoy her teaching job over there?

Duke: She did, very much.

Lois: You get kids from all over in that school system.

Duke: But wouldn't you know, there was another coincidence. The company commander's oldest boy was in first grade in Naomi's class. [Laughs]

Lois: How nice.

Duke: That sure made it easy to get a weekend pass. Well, after getting the Volkswagen and having all our leave time accumulate over there, we were able to travel to 13 foreign countries with that car.

Lois: Wow. Where all did you go?

Duke: Well, we went to France...

Lois: Belgium.

Duke: Monaco, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Germany, and then the rest of them are small countries like Morocco and Luxembourg.

Lois: Liechtenstein.

Duke: But we went to Paris, and we went to Rome. We went to Pisa and held up the Leaning Tower while somebody took a picture of me. [Laughs]

Lois: Well, that was an education in itself.

Duke: The military was an education in itself.

Lois: It was. Yes, there's no substitute for the exposure you get.

Duke: I didn't even know until I got home that my old principal, now a superintendent, had a teaching job waiting for me. I got home in May, and that fall I was teaching school.

Lois: At what level?

Duke: I started out as 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade; that's what I taught most of my years. I taught some high school here and there, but I liked the 8<sup>th</sup> grade probably best of all.

Lois: History mostly, or history and social studies?

Duke: History, social studies, and that's the majority, coaching. Over the years I mixed in a lot of things because it was a small school and you had to juggle the classes around to get them all.

Lois: What city were you in? What school district?

Duke: I started in North Idaho, because that's where I was born and raised, and I went to teaching school at Rathdrum, Lakeland School district, north of Coeur d'Alene. I taught there three years, and I moved to eastern Washington.

Lois: This is in the Spokane area?

Duke: Naomi was already teaching in eastern Washington, because we were living in Spokane Valley, and again I didn't have to look for a job. This other superintendent came to me. Of course, I had to take it because it was a huge jump in salary going from north Idaho to eastern Washington.



**Duke and Naomi with their children Juli, John, and Tom.**

Lois: When were your kids born?

Duke: Well, our kids were born the second year I was teaching at Rathdrum. Juli was born in 1959. Two years later John was born. And then we were thinking about that being

enough kids, because we were so busy both teaching, and I was coaching, I figured at that time that I was making 11 cents an hour, because I was coaching junior varsity in high school as well as all the junior high sports.

Lois: That's crazy. We are talking again football, basketball?

Duke: Football, basketball, and either track or baseball in the spring.

Lois: So, Tom was born when?

Duke: [Calling] Naomi, come here. I can't remember the exact dates that Tom and John were born. Julie was in 1959.

Naomi: 1962 was John.

Duke: Anyway, I was saying that we thought two kids were enough right then, but then we had a little accident five years later and had Tom, and we're sure glad we did. Tom's a jewel.

Lois: So when was the first time that you ever came to the North Fork with Naomi?

Duke: Well, that's interesting. We met in Bozeman in—I can't remember if it was 1952 or 1953—but anyway, we were going steady in 1954, and I came with her to meet her parents, which included her grandfather. He and her grandmother owned the property that Doug Barnes has now on the river.

Lois: That was the Coans, right?

Duke: That was the Coans, Bert and Ruth Coan. I came up the North Fork with Naomi, and Bert and Ruth in 1954, the first time. And I actually knew about the [Kootenai] Indian trail from that point.



**The first time Duke came to the North Fork was in 1954 with Naomi's grandmother Ruth Coan and her husband Bert. Ruth is pictured here with her two daughters, Naomi's mother Florence (right) and sister Helen.**

Lois: Really?

Duke: Yes, because when I got back to Montana State I was very well acquainted with the history professors, because my minor was history. I actually ended up with a major in physical education and history. The head of the History Department, Merrill Burlingame asked me, when I told him I was up on Trail Creek, "What do you know about that military trail?" That military trail. [Laughs] I said, "Well, Naomi's grandmother's property is on Trail Creek, and an Indian trail goes right through it, and you're saying it's a military trail?" Well, come to find out a detachment of military people went across that trail in order to negotiate a treaty with the North Kootenais. And one trip on there with military made it a military trail. Isn't that the way things go? [Laughs]

Lois: Well, yes. "It's ours now," huh?

Duke: But anyway, I was exposed to the Indian trail very early on. And, of course, it came right through our yard here. You could actually see parts of it then, to start with, but since the homesteader [Austin Weikert] had a team of horses here, with trails going down into the meadow and so forth, it was hard to tell what was an Indian trail and what was a homesteader trail, so we didn't really try to distinguish. But down at the far end of the property there is definitely a place where you can see the Indian trail.

Lois: What was your first impression of the North Fork? What time of year was it, and what was it like?

Duke: It was summertime. For many, many years my only exposure to the North Fork was summertime. After we were married we would come up here on an irregular basis in the late 1960s, on a more regular basis in the 1970s. We were up here almost all the time we could get up here in the 1980s.

Lois: When you came up in 1954 where did you stay?

Duke: We stayed at Bert and Ruth Coan's cabin. The homestead cabin here, the windows and doors were out, and it was a shelter for range cattle. There was quite a bit of work to be done to make that livable again, but that's where we lived once we got it cleaned out and windows back in. All the time we came up here we would stay in the homestead cabin.

Lois: There's a cabin on the Gaffaney property, too?

Duke: In 1975, in the height of the mountain pine beetle epidemic, when all the lodgepole were turning yellow, Naomi's folks wanted a cabin. I figured well, we already had plans to build our own cabin somewhere around here, so we figured the best thing to do was to build their cabin first. So, Larry and I built their cabin in 1975.

Lois: Well, good experience.

Duke: And it was a good experience. Of course, I had been working with logs all my adult life, and it was not anything new to me.

Lois: When were you guys married?

Duke: We were married in December 20, 1955.

Lois: I wanted to let you know that I did an interview with Mid Connelly [Austin Weiker's daughter] recently and she talked about coming up to visit while you were working on the old homestead. She said, "You know, if those people hadn't taken that property and fixed it up and did all the wonderful things that they've done, that place never would have been as nice as it is now." She said, "They are good people, and I'm glad that they did it."

Duke: [Chuckles] Well, I'm glad to hear that.

Lois: There's actually a letter that she wrote to her kids, and she said, "I went up to see the property and there was this man working on the old cabin. His name was Duke Hoiland, and he's doing such a good job, and you should see it." She said, "There are many things that are different. There's a lot more trees over in what used to be the meadow, and the creek has moved." But she said, "They are doing such a wonderful job. I'm just really happy." Just so you know.

Duke: Well, she was a little snooty to start with, because she wanted the place herself, but she didn't know how she could get it. I mean, it was all done legally. Naomi's grandmother bought it from the County [for taxes], and it was all said and done, but Mid really wanted it back.

Lois: After Ruth bought it, did the Weikerts come up and get all their stuff out? Austin had so many tools and things, or was there stuff left in the buildings?

Duke: I don't think there was anything in the building.

Lois: Furnishings?

Duke: Because when we first started coming here this was open range and there were cows up here.

Lois: Whose cows were they? Ladenburg's?

Duke: Ladenburg. [More likely they were either Marie Price Peterson's or Madge Terrian's]

Lois: You're kidding! All the way up here?

Duke: Yes, the whole valley was open range.

Lois: I've heard people talk about his cows and trying to keep his cows out, like Frank Evans, I guess they used to wander up there pretty often. [Laughs]

Duke: Yes. And since the door was knocked down and the windows open in the homestead cabin the cattle would go inside to get out of the weather.

Lois: Yes.

Duke: So, we had quite a job cleaning that up.

Lois: I bet.

Duke: It still was never a good place to live. I mean it was messy, rats . . .

Lois: Well, I will ask her. Her mother wrote so many stories about when she was a young girl when she first came out here, and there are descriptions of Austin building the cabin and then putting an addition on it when the Vaughts would come out. She said, “We put on an addition, so you’ve got a place to stay. We’ve got the little cabin and the big cabin.” She kind of describes what was there. You might like to have that.

Duke: Yes. Well, he did awful nice work in building cabins around the North Fork. He was the log carpenter at Foreman’s.

Lois: I’m astounded. What I did first was go to the Park archives and got what they had. And then I read all the things that Ruth wrote over the years about Austin and his projects and the things that he did.

Naomi: Ruth Weikert?

Lois: Yes. I was just telling Duke that I interviewed Mid, and she had a letter that Mid had written to her family after she came up for a visit when Duke was first working on the old cabin cleaning it out. And she said, “I went up and I met the man who is working on it. His name is Duke Hoiland. He’s the nicest guy, and if they weren’t fixing that place up and doing all that—I’m glad that they did because that property would not be anything like it is now if they hadn’t taken it over and done all that work on it,” and she was happy.

Naomi: That’s not what Mid told us, but . . .

Lois: She even said to me the other day when I was there, “We were sad, but I’m glad they did because they really fixed it up.”

Duke: Yes, she brought family members up. Mid did. That’s who she is talking about, several times over the summers.

Lois: So, when Ruth bought the property what buildings were on the property at that point?

Duke: The homestead cabin was the only one standing.

Naomi: And pieces of the old barn.

Duke: They had a barn over here that only had some walls standing yet.

Naomi: And they still are.

Duke: And still are. He had a team of horses, Weikert did.

Lois: What structures have you added to the property?

Duke: Well, the first thing we built was an outhouse, because the other one was tipping over. [Chuckles] The second thing we built was the cabin that Larry and I built for them over there.



Naomi: Then you started on our house.

Duke: And that was 1975 and 1976. It was enclosed in 1975. They started using it in 1976. And then in 1979 I started building this house; I started peeling logs for it.

Lois: And this is built entirely from logs on the property?



**Duke helped Larry and Florence Gaffaney build a summer cabin on the Hoiland property in 1975.**

Duke: This is all bug-killed lodgepole pine. We call it sometimes the bug house, because every log in here had been killed by a mountain pine beetle. But it was already dry. It was standing and had been standing for several years already, so it was well cured. So I didn't have to allow near as much room over the windows and doors and things, because this house wasn't going to settle much.

Lois: Did you have any problems with bugs or eggs or flies or anything in the wood?

Duke: No, no. But I used the old-fashioned way of scribing, where not only are they fit on the corners, but every top log is fit to the log below it, too. There's a V cut out there, and we sawed a strip of insulation off a big roll of insulation with a handsaw and stapled in a roll of insulation when the log was put in place. And so it was bug-proof and mosquito-proof.

Naomi: That was Tom's job. Thomas was a little kid. He was born five years later.

Duke: Our kids had a big role. Each one of them had a specific job like that.

Lois: How did you design the house?

Duke: Well, it's interesting how we got this two-pitched roof like this. For years, when we were teaching school in our later years we were talking about the kind of house we wanted. And she wanted a Dutch colonial house.

Lois: Okay. Yes, those are cute.

Duke: We had a picture of one we just loved. We never did get a Dutch colonial house in civilization, but we built a log house up here with that kind of roof. [Laughs]

Lois: I wonder how many people appreciate that. They probably don't even notice.

Naomi: No, probably not.

Duke: But it's interesting, this cabin—no blueprints. The only plan on paper was one I drew, a picture of what it would like on that end, and then I made a scale drawing of my picture. Then I had a scale drawing of the floor plan, and that's the only plans we had. The plans were all in my head. It's interesting; every time I came to a different phase in the cabin I thought to myself, "Well, I've done this before somewhere."

Lois: You had.

Duke: The only thing I did before was visualize visualize visualize. [Laughs] I would lay in bed at nights.

Lois: Did it turn out as planned, or did it sort of take on a life of its own?

Duke: No, it pretty well went as planned, but it was a lot slower than planned.

Lois: You started in 1979?

Duke: Yes, and we moved in in 1986. That's seven years.

Naomi: We only had summers.

Lois: As the North Fork goes, that's not unusual.

Duke: But you see, we were only up here in summer months and not all the summer months, because our boys were always in summer sports.

Lois: Of course.

Duke: So, August was the only free month we had in the summer. I was up here more, but the whole family wasn't.

Lois: You needed them, too. That's young manpower.

Duke: I did have some friends that had enough interest in helping.

Naomi: Get the book behind you.

Duke: Well, we haven't got time for that. She can look at that when we're done.

Lois: He showed it to me once.

Duke: I think you've seen this.

Naomi: It's got the big pole. What do you call it?

Duke: Well that's just a tripod, but that's a block and tackle. We couldn't lift those logs, but they were all lined up with a transit.

Lois: You didn't have somebody come in with a crane and lift them?

Duke: No.

Naomi: He built his own. With the carry-all. What do you call that?

Duke: We had a mast in the ground over here, and then we had a boom off from the mast and a bull block on the boom. It would stay right where the ridge pole eventually would be, above it. A cable went from down there and was attached to the truck over here, and you have to roll the logs up. You can't skid them up.

Lois: Sounds scary to me.

Naomi: And I would drive the carry-all. Duke and John would roll it up, the log. Juli would give me the high sign, when to go and when to stop.

Duke: Now we're just in the ground. This is what was done in 1979. And we had three temporary roofs on this thing. Look here, about 200 logs were skidded into the site by a horse that I hired from a guy over at Trego.

Lois: But you had to come down. Did you come down the hill over here? You couldn't bring it down that driveway.

Duke: A lot of the house logs came from the same level of the houses, and I also skidded house logs with my Suburban. And this is my Mickey Mouse Sawmill. I bought all this machinery from Belsaw Company in Kansas City, Missouri, wasn't it?

Naomi: Yes, in the early 1970s.

Duke: It came in a big freight truck to Spokane. I set up this mill in my vacant lot in Spokane, and then I took it apart because the track is made in three sections. See that section there?

Lois: Right.

Duke: And then I took it apart and hauled it up here. But the first board was cut in Spokane behind my house, and one of the teachers I taught with had a property in the hills. We went up there and got a log to bring down.

Lois: To try it on?

Duke: The neighbors they were afraid to come and ask what was going on, but they were wondering what that crazy Duke Hoiland was up to now. They were watching me with field glasses.

Lois: Oh, I can see. Good land!

Duke: See, this is a mast. [Looking at photos]

Lois: Yes. Is that a person up there?

Duke: Well, it could be. You had to go up there first to get it rigged up. There's a person up there, but the mast had steps up to it. They went up there to rig it up. But see this is a better picture. There's the mast, and there's the boom. The boom would be eventually

be over where the ridge pole would be. Actually, as it progressed we had to get a longer boom because the one we were using was too short.

Lois: But you had to work the logs and scribe them while they were on the ground before you put them up.

Duke: No, they were put up there first and rolled in place, and then they were scribed where they were going to be. And then they were rolled out, and when they were upside down they did the notching. We used the chainsaw to cut out that V.

Lois: That's incredible.

Duke: Here's the insulation going into that V that was cut out. Here I am cutting that V out with the chainsaw.

Lois: You guys are brave. [Laughs] Wow.

Naomi: I don't know if you would call it that. It might be kind of bull-headed.

Lois: Well, I mean, it's an adventure. It's a challenge.

Duke: Here's the first temporary roof. It was just a shed over the log wall.

Lois: Because you were gone in the winter.

Duke: And the next year this was the temporary roof.

Naomi: And they charged us taxes from the very beginning.

Lois: You're kidding?

Duke: When we did this they started charging us taxes.

Naomi: We said, "But there is no door. There is no floor. There are no windows." They said, "But it's livable. You will pay taxes and shut-up or..."

Lois: We had the same experience. You know they brought the two halves of our home up. They craned them into place and then put like a seal between the two halves and pushed them together and then they put the ridge cap on. Bill was up on the roof working. He looks down and there's this pudgy little man standing in the front yard." He said, "Excuse me. I'm from the Tax Assessor's office." [Laughs]

Duke: In my building years, they showed up about every other year just to see if I had something new.

Lois: But you weren't living in it.

Naomi: No, you couldn't live in it. There was no stove, nothing.

Duke: We were still living in the homestead cabin.

Naomi: They said, "It's habitable. You could live in it."

Duke: It was still three or four years before we moved in.

Lois: I would have challenged that.

Naomi: We did. We went in there yelling.

Duke: We really did.

Naomi: They told us to mind our own business and pay up.

Duke: We are spiking this log to the one below it, but you have to drill a big hole and then drill a small hole, because the head of this spike has to be set in, just in case the house settles, because if it settled and the head of the spike was flush with the log it would hold the next log up in the air, so the spikes always had to be countersunk to make sure that they didn't stick up and separate the logs.

Lois: I remember talking to Lynn and Bonny about when they bought the old lodge building down at Kintla Ranch and took it apart and brought the logs up to build Larry's porch. Old Ross Wilson had spiked those things with harvesting tines. They had a heck of a time getting those logs separated. He never intended for them to be taken apart.

Duke: See here, that's a log dog. You roll it a half a turn out to do the notching, and you dog it so it stays in place while you work on it.

Lois: Incredible. So you moved in in 1986, but when did you retire?

Duke: The most popular beer ad at the time was Miller, Miller beer. Do you remember that ad "It's Miller time"?

Lois: Yes.

Duke: This is Miller time. I'm drinking a Miller beer there, and I'm standing on the ridge pole, this pole right here.

Lois: It looks like you're really to roll it.

Duke: See, the roll block is right above me there so we could set it in place.

Lois: Wow. That's impressive. Yes, I can make out the roof line. There it is.

Duke: Dutch colonial. [Laughs]

Lois: Well, as close as you're going to get up here.

Duke: These are all Polaroid pictures. Well, it quit working at this stage. [Laughs] I do have colored slides of all this stuff, though, too.

Lois: Mid Connelly talked about how you had built a balcony. "They've built a balcony so they can look out and see the mountains," she said. "When we lived there, of course, we could see everything because it was all cleared," the meadow. Now you have to be on a balcony.

What year did you retire from teaching?

Duke: I retired in 1988.

Lois: And when did you move here full-time?



**The North Fork cabin with its Dutch colonial roofline.**

Duke: After she retired in 1993. In the meantime, I spent a lot of time up here working by myself. But when she retired, we had no idea that we would ever sell out in Spokane.

Naomi: We had a beautiful home there.

Duke: She was always the head of the social committee for her teachers. [Laughs] She was a very social person, and she didn't think she would ever move up here. But when she retired we were already living in this house then, and she said she wanted to go up here and stay until . . .

Naomi: Until I felt like coming back. And I never did.

Lois: Yes, you were pretty well vested in that community. Sports-wise, too, with Gonzaga University and everything else. Well, you know, it's the magic of the North Fork.

Naomi: It's history. [Chuckles]

Duke: Well, it fit right in with me, too, because I had two careers, teaching school and lumberjacking. I spent 18 years in logging camps. Some of them were camps, and some of them were commuting from home. I started when I was in high school. When I was in college I got through college by logging.



**Duke and his tools, many of them historic.**

Lois: In the summers you were logging?

Duke: Yes. Our parents had no college funds for any of us.

Lois: I can imagine. So, when your kids were younger would you bring them up here, before they had sport activities? When were your kids first exposed to the North Fork and what kinds of things did they like to do? How have you managed to instill a love of the North Fork in your kids?

Duke: Well, they were into working with their hands and with old tools, just like I was, and they were always wanting to make something when they were up here. That's the way our grandson Bridger is, too. He always wants to come up here and make something.

Naomi: And Trevor and Tanor. They made guns. They made all kinds of stuff, trucks.

Lois: Used their imagination, in other words. But you float the river, right?

Duke: We didn't float the river that much. In the early years we weren't part of the community at all. We spent all our time here working, and we commuted through Eureka to Spokane. I became part of the community, you might say, because of her folks. Her folks knew all the old-timers up here, and we used to go with her folks to have dinner at these old-folks' places.

Lois: They never lived up here full-time though, did they?

Duke: No, only summer time. But most of the old-timers were summer people, too.

Lois: By then, that's true.

Naomi: Yes, by then, because they were pretty old.

Lois: I could see reading the minutes of the organization [North Fork Improvement Association] how it kind of changed. When it first started in 1947, you had some old homesteaders, but not a lot. Then you had all the new people coming in, during the



war and just post-war, and then it just continued to morph as we lost more and more of the original people.

Duke: We were good friends with the Sondresons. We were even better friends with Frank and Ethel Newton. I loved him. He was my favorite North Forker until he died and I got to know Lee Downes, and then he became my favorite North Forker.

Lois: When did Sondreson stop running his mill up here?

Duke: Well, it was health reasons why he gave up a lot of stuff. He had lupus, and it was all over his face. He would bring Ruth to the Community Hall and sit out in the pick-up.

Naomi: He would just be miserable.

Duke: One of the ways I got to know him pretty well was I would go out there and visit with him while he sat in the pick-up while Ruth was in the Hall.

Lois: The Mathison kids said they worked for him for years, and they said at one point he had like 60 employees here. He was the largest employer in the North Fork with that sawmill.

Duke: And sawing logs in the woods.



**Duke with his good friends Gary McDonough, Lee Downes, Larry Wilson, and Jan Caldwell.**

Lois: Johnny Mathison had gone to Germany in the service (Army). This was during Vietnam. He was in for a two-year hitch, but they had a program where if you had a promised job back home you could get early release. He says he came home from Germany three months early because Loyd wrote a letter, and then the Forest Service



wrote a letter saying they really needed this kid back to operate machinery, so they let him out early. When you came up with Ruth and Bert, Naomi, they were members of the NFIA?

Naomi: Yes, they were some of the first, although Nana wasn't here to be on the roll of the first meeting because she had to go teach school.

Lois: They were both members, and then her son by her first marriage, Willy Nordgren, was also a member. I see his name on the rosters. Did you ever go to meetings with them? Do you remember, as a teenager or whatever, going to the dances?

Naomi: We went to dances, but they were at Kintla Ranch and . . .

Lois: Out at the Quarter Circle MC Ranch, the McFarland place?

Naomi: Yes, the McFarland's, we went there. We also had parties at the old school house.

Lois: This was before the Rockwells [George and Ruby] moved in?

Naomi: Yes, way before then. And I knew a Block lady.

Lois: Ethel?

Naomi: No.

Lois: Gerane?

Naomi: Yes, Gerane. She used to sit in the swing and talk to us. I was just in love with her.

Lois: She is still living, to my knowledge. I think she is the last original NFIA member still living. I've asked Larry to get in touch with her. She's down in Dillon. If she's still with us it would be interesting to go down and talk with her.

Naomi: It really would. She was a lovely lady.

Lois: Because the first meeting of the organization was in Walter Block's house, and until they built the Hall meetings rotated among the peoples' homes.

Duke: Yes, I was going through the North Fork cookbook, in the old folks' section, about the only ones we didn't know was Matt Brill and his wife. All the others we had contact with.

Lois: After 1947 they were pretty much gone.

Duke: Not a whole lot, but we used to trade dinners and stuff with those folks.

Lois: Well it's interesting that Austin Weikert homesteaded in 1920. That's when he first filed, then he proved up. He didn't meet Ruth until she came out here to teach in late 1927 or early 1928. They met at a Christmas dance, which was "at the border," which I think must have been the Brill's.

Naomi: No. There was an old, old border patrol house.

Lois: Really?

Naomi: Yes.

Lois: Well, all they remember is that it was “at the border,” so that’s where she and Austin met. He was 12 or 13 years older than she was. She taught at the Ford Schoolhouse, but the term only went until February. It was a short term. She was going to go back to Indiana and go back to the University of Indiana at Bloomington. I guess he took a fancy to her and he said, “Well you know, you don’t have to go back.” She said, “Well, I have to eat.” And he said, “You could stay here,” [chuckles] so then they got married. As soon as that term was over they married, on February 25, 1929, and she moved in here with him. And, of course, she was a lot younger than he was, but she talks about how they were building the cabin and when they put the addition on and when they did this and that and the other. I’m going to ask Mid if she minds if I give you guys a copy of that, the early days of the homestead.

Naomi: Yes.

Lois: But then they were gone all summer, because he would have contracts with the Park Service to build cabins and that kind of stuff, and she would go with him. But she wrote to the Vaughnts and said, “You all come on, and you can stay in our cabin because we won’t be here. You can spend the summer here if you want and you can go over to Kintla Lake. We’re going to break a path over to Kintla, so you can just go straight across without having to go down and come up.”

Naomi: Yes, that’s what we used to do is go across.

Duke: There was a little cable car.

Lois: You rode on the cable car? Did you really?

Naomi: Yes, I did. It was fun.

Lois: I bet.

Duke: Where are we on the list [of questions] here? We talked about the old folks. We were members, you say there’s evidence that we were members in 1984.

Naomi: Do you have when Ruth Coan was a teacher?

Lois: A little, but not much. Hardly anything.

Naomi: Well, she taught and I went to school with her. We didn’t go the whole year. I figured that out.

Lois: Were you like a first grader?

Naomi: Yes, I started when I was five years old, first grade.

Lois: Do you remember roughly how many kids were there?

Naomi: It seemed like there were eight. Nonie Day was one of them, and she was the oldest. She was an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, and I suppose Johnny Mathison was an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, too, but I'm not sure.

Lois: The Holcomb boy was, too, the one who was later killed [Fred]. Nonie said she was starting in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but there were only two of them, and the district said it couldn't keep the school open.

Naomi: As I keep trying to remember, somebody had quite a few kids. He got ill, and they had to move and that's why. It was around sometime in the fall, so we only went about half a year. Then I remember starting school in Columbia Falls. It must have been after Christmas, because Nana was living there, of course, in the house because she lost her teaching job.

Lois: What do you remember about the inside of the schoolhouse?

Naomi: I can remember the organ so well. I love music, and I think Nonie played the organ and our songs. I also remember the old chimney. One time all these people came and there was all this noise and hubbub. Nana went out to look, and there was a chimney fire in the schoolhouse. They had a line of people from the river passing buckets, but it was a long ways away.

Lois: Yes, in those days the river was further away.

Naomi: They put it out. I remember that.

Lois: Was there a lot of smoke damage? It didn't come into the building?

Naomi: No, it didn't do too bad, because we kept going to school.

Duke: Kept throwing water on the roof, I guess, and that's all they needed to do it.

Lois: I've seen a picture of the inside of the school. There was a blackboard or blackboards on one wall anyway.

Naomi: Yes, a blackboard.

Lois: Did you have individual desks that you sat at?

Naomi: Yes, like I have upstairs, the old school desk

Duke: Screwed down to the boards all in a row?

Naomi: Yes.

Duke: They're not individuals. They're all attached to each other.

Naomi: Yes.

Duke: We've got a bunch of those old desks up here. Where did we ever get those?

Naomi: I can't remember. They're not from this schoolhouse.

Duke: No, they're not from this school.

Naomi: I think they are from the old Rockford school.

Duke: That's the kind of desk I had in grade school. The kind that are screwed down to 1" x 4"s. The seat of one desk is attached to the top of the next one.

Lois: And then the thing lifted up so you could put your stuff inside?

Naomi: No. They were older than that.

Duke: No, they were old. You just slid things in. The desk was had a top, but there was a little cubbyhole you slid your books into.

Lois: Where was the outhouse?

Duke: Outside.

Lois: Somebody said that it was on the other side of the road, but that doesn't make sense.

Naomi: I keep trying to remember that, and Nonie said that, but that doesn't make sense to me. I don't know. I thought it was just back behind.

Lois: Was it a one-seater or a two-seater?

Naomi: I thought it was just a one, but I could be thinking of ours.

Duke: Anyway, we're on the next to the last page I think, about in the middle. You've got a record here of us being NFIA members in 1984?

Lois: There's a ledger that existed for years. Every year they would make a list of all the members and that was the first year your name showed up in there.

Duke: When we were building up here that was our first priority, and we weren't very active down there. But we got active after we moved here permanently, because we were living in the house then, and that was in 1993. After that we were pretty well permanent members.

Lois: You were president at one time.

Duke: I was president, yes. I can't remember if it was 1995-1996 or 1996-1997, but it was two terms. I'm glad you put in that question there about what other work I've done to help maintain and improve the Hall. [Laughs] Did you have any idea?

Lois: I have a feeling it's fairly significant, yes. [Laughs] I have pictures of you building the woodshed.

Duke: That was a late thing, years later.

Lois: There's somebody standing beside you. I don't remember who it was.



**Duke and friend building a new woodshed at Sondreson hall**

Duke: It was my friend from eastern Washington who came over and visited every summer a little bit. He was a guy that was just a friend; he came up, and he was interested in the place. Of course, we were pretty much done by then. He wasn't involved. He helped around the shop in several places, but he was just a friend. He liked building, and he had some building skills of his own.

Lois: Are you saying from the time the Hall was built in 1953 until you guys came, there maybe had not been a lot of maintenance done on it?

Naomi: I think not. A little bit, but not much.

Duke: You probably don't remember, but the building was put together with tar between the logs, and over all these hot summers that tar would run out and was running down the log below it. Every one had tar running down. We wanted to Perma-Chink it, but it was impossible to Perma-Chink it without getting rid of that tar. Well, when I was president I took on the job of getting rid of the tar. I worked there for weeks by myself.

Naomi: Lynn Ogle and Lee Downes.

Duke: As a matter of fact, I invented my own tool to do it with. I had an old D-handle from a shovel that was broke off, and I attached an angle iron to it and then ground the angle iron sharp into a tizzle type thing, and with the big D-handle, and I used that to take the tar off of that building.

Lois: Did you put any sort of solvent or you just scraped it off?

Duke: No, it came off better without making it gooey, because that just made it more a mess. Anyway, I worked for weeks to get rid of the tar, and when we got rid of the tar then I had help from others in sandblasting it. We sandblasted the whole house then.

Lois: Wow.

Duke: After it was sandblasted...

Naomi: And cleaned up that mess.

Duke: We Perma-Chinked. I did all the Perma-Chinking, because I had already Perma-Chinked this house and I was pretty well practiced up. It's hard to do without practice, the Perma-Chink.

Naomi: It takes a skill.

Duke: It's hard to get that flow going. And then you spray it with half water and half alcohol before you spread it with a cake decorator spreader. If you don't spray it with that alcohol and water mix then it sticks to the thing and it's no good, so there's a method, and if you do it right it's a pretty easy job. But I Perma-Chinked the whole house, and then after we did that we oiled it. Other people oiled it, because I was working inside by that time. All the insulation in the roof was put in when I was president, and I had help from Lynn Ogle and I can't remember a few people.

Naomi: Mike Eddy.

Duke: Mike Eddy and I replaced the windows. And Mike Eddy and I replaced the back door. But the first thing I ever did before any of this was replace a rotten sill log in the northwest corner, on the backside. That's the only place where the logs were in contact with the ground. Of course, I milled the logs on the Mickey Mouse Sawmill to replace them with. And then we insulated the whole building.

Lois: When did they build that little attic addition up there?

Naomi: That was always there.

Duke: That was always there, but we put on a new ceiling. There were just loose boards up there and there was always kind of dirt falling down in the kitchen area.

Lois: I found someplace in the minutes where it might have been Ron Wilhelm was involved in getting the cabinets and the new counter and all that kind of stuff.

Duke: Yes, that was all before my time. That was all done.

Lois: It's in pretty good shape now, especially since they redid the floor.

Duke: Yes, it's very good shape. And you know the outside is still holding up pretty well. I think it was oiled one more time after the original.

Lois: And then they did some oiling on the inside, too.

Duke: The chinking is pretty permanent.

Lois: And the generator house, when was the generator house built?

Duke: Well, that was there and that's the next thing that should be built is a new generator house, in my opinion. Anyway, I figured I did my share in that.

Lois: It sure sounds like it, yes.

Duke: That tar was something nobody else wanted to do, and I was, you know, a guy who was logging every winter and I was used to hard work.

Lois: Did you find Harry Holcomb's pajamas in there?

Duke: Oh yes, but most of those were poked back in place.

Lois: Or rags or whatever they had?

Naomi: That's funny.

Lois: Yes, it is.

Duke: But it was a good thing, because the Perma-Chinking went a lot further because we didn't have so much volume to fill. When you build a new house sometimes they put in what they call a backer rod to take up some of the space, so you don't need so much chinking. But Holcomb's pajamas already served that purpose.

Lois: [Laughs] Were you involved when they set up the North Fork Patrol?

Duke: No, I wasn't originally, but that's how I first became acquainted with Lee, as a patrol member. When we started coming up here in the summers he would be the only one who had been here over the winter, and usually just once. That's how I got to know Lee, and it probably was because of that that I became a patrol member. Also, you know he was a member of the Hall down there, and after knowing Lee I was a more regular member. I probably would never have become president if . . .

Lois: You got sucked in, didn't you?

Duke: I got sucked in and did my job.

Naomi: He also was the one responsible for getting you into the tree farm program.

Duke: Yes, I organized the first forestry stewardship workshop there at the Hall when I was president, and they've had several since then.

Lois: Right. And you got to be pretty good friends with Marietta, right?

Naomi: Yes.

Lois: I remember hearing on the radio, "6, Base 6."

Duke: I've met several people over my life that were almost instant friends, like Jake Keltner and like Chub Davis. Well, Lee Downes is in that category. When I first met Lee he and I just had so much in common that we hit it off, and we've been good friends and gotten to be better friends ever since.

Lois: He's a jewel. He's a real jewel.

Naomi: He is.

Duke: No one I would rather be good friends with.

Lois: Yes, because with Ladenburg you never knew what he was up to.

Duke: Ladenburg called me "The Trail Creek Kid," and I was already 55 years old when he got to know me.

Lois: What about the Sonnenbergs, Gus and Elsie?

Naomi: We didn't know them very well. Didn't he have a bad back?

Duke: We knew of him because of your dad.

Naomi: Yes.

Lois: He lived where Stan Stahr is now, right? That was his place?

Naomi: That was Roy Cooper's place.

Lois: I thought Roy Cooper lived there in a trailer.

Naomi: Yes.

Lois: But it was actually Sonnenberg's property. I don't know that for sure.

Naomi: Oh, I don't know either. I thought it was Roy's.

Lois: So many things. We haven't touched on everything, but tell me about the Wedge Canyon Fire, fighting that and protecting your property.

Duke: Well, way back we had already formed a group when we had a fire over here called the Kopsi Fire, ten years before the Wedge Canyon fire.

Naomi: Before the Moose fire.

Duke: Yes, before our fire. Anyway, every afternoon it would blow up—the cloud would come up and it would come right up over our cabin. That's when we started...

Naomi: Lynn Ogle was responsible for getting everybody together and getting the Trail Creek Irregulars going. And Sonny Diorio was here, and we all got together and got our own fire group together.

Duke: We had a fire truck—the white one that's now down at Polebridge used to be ours up here.

Lois: Oh, I didn't know that.

Duke: It was stationed at my place.

Lois: Did Lynn have experience in firefighting?



Naomi: Well, he had experience in law enforcement and he did all kinds of things.

Duke: And he was associated with the County, and this was all done through the County. It was a bona fide organization with County support.

Naomi: Well, he got us all together on that fire and said, "We'd better do something serious."

Duke: Kopsi is a tributary of Blue Sky Creek.

Naomi: Anyway, he got us together, and he got us to make plywood for the windows and the vents and all that stuff.

Lois: Tanks and hoses.

Naomi: Larry [Crane] and Duke made the hydrant out there.

Duke: The fire hydrant I put up. I mounted it in concrete during that fire, a long time before Wedge Canyon. I had a hydrant here with a two-inch pump in the creek.

Lois: Going down to the Creek, okay.

Duke: When Wedge Canyon occurred, because I had already experienced a fire with Lee Downes, the Moose Fire. That's another way we bonded, because when he was evacuated during the Moose Fire he was good enough friends by then that he came and lived with us.

Naomi: He brought all these guns. [Laughs]

Lois: That was in 2003, too, wasn't it?

Duke: 2001. For nine days I went with him to his place on the Moose Fire.

Lois: I have a picture that Larry took of you and Lynn and Lee in your yellow shirts.



**Duke, Lee Downes, and Lynn Ogle during the 2001 Moose Fire**

Duke: So, I had a lot of experience in fighting fires and studying them with the Moose Fire. Lee would spend almost every day up on the hill with his CAT, making dozer lines to

protect his timber up there. In the meantime, I was down on the bottom putting out spot fires and keeping ground fires from coming toward his cabin. I had the Pulaski in my hand and a piss pump on my back. [Laughs]

Lois: Yes, because he had a lot of trees around his place.

Naomi: Oh gosh, yes.

Duke: I put out a lot of spot fires with fires that were coming on the ground toward his cabin. We went there for nine days, and the Forest Service didn't want to let us do that, because in order to do that we had to go through uncontrolled fire line to get in there and uncontrolled fire line to get out. But the County, knowing Lee Downes and knowing the property over there, gave us permission to go, but with certain conditions. We had to have radio contact once every hour, and boy when we didn't we got in trouble. [Chuckles] One time Lee went up there, and he lost track of time. I didn't want to repeatedly call him, because my calling him was being monitored by those guys at the camp, and I didn't want to give them the impression that something was wrong. So I ended up walking up there to get him. It was a long ways up there, too. I took my piss pump and the Pulaski with me, because I was putting fires out on the way up. [Laughs]

Lois: That's scary stuff.

Duke: Anyway, we bonded pretty well in those nine days of working over there. Another thing, Lee and I with our experience in logging had a bonding element, you know. [Laughs] He knows all the same kind of stuff and lingo.

Lois: He does. He had a lot of experience. He started young on the South Fork before he even came up here.

Duke: But anyway, I think I first met him was when he was patrolling up here. And then probably the reason why I became a patrol member is working with him when he was patrolling up here, especially after the Giefer grizzly and then after the Pilsner grizzly. They all broke into cabins up here.

Lois: And it seems like there were more vandalism incidents, too. Having the patrol did make a difference.

Duke: I think the thing was that there was so little activity up here that anybody who came up here thought that they were totally in the wilderness by themselves and they had more freedom to do what they wanted.

Lois: There were break-ins. I mean you see them in the paper.

Duke: Yes, there were a lot of break-ins, but now with more population and more control of everything there's fewer.

Lois: Well, just a lot more people up here, that's for sure.

Duke: But anyway, getting back to the Wedge Canyon Fire, we were involved every day in that thing. I had a Type 6 tank in the back of my pick-up, so I was fighting fire out of that, and for part of the time I had Joe Franchini working with me.

Naomi: And Mike Eddy.

Duke: No, Mike Eddy had his own firetruck and he was pretty well fighting on his own, but we were fighting in the same area most of the time.

Naomi: He had his own firetruck, but you all were in tandem.

Duke: We kept the fire from crossing the road between the mailboxes and Kintla Ranch Road, and we fought fire and kept the fire south of the Kintla Road.

Lois: It stayed mostly south of Trail Creek or was there some north of Trail Creek?

Duke: No. The first time it crossed Trail Creek was right down here below the Gaffaney cabin, until later in the fire here it jumped Trail Creek up here and burned up 500 acres. We had a major threat you know because we thought it was going to come down Trail Creek a second time. But it died down and they got a hand line around it during the night. That's the only time they worked at night during that fire was building a hand line around that fire when it fell down that night.

Lois: Were there any structures lost on Trail Creek at all?

Duke: There were some structures, some summer homes. About six weren't there? On Tepee Flats.

Naomi: On Tepee Flats. When it crossed from Kinsolvings and went across there, that really scared us. And the other thing that scared us was we thought we were just done when it started up over and crossed the road.

Lois: I just can't imagine, after all the work you put into building the place, to think about losing it would just be...

Duke: The thing of it is, that Wedge Canyon Fire drug out so long. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> of September until the last of it upwind from us was put out.

Naomi: And watching that Grasshopper fill up in the creek here...

Duke: The big sky cranes with the big snout, and a snorkel coming down underneath.

Naomi: They almost lost Annemarie's [Harrod], and they almost lost the Block place, the lower one. But then it crossed and it just wiped out Tepee Flats, except for the Coles [Jon and Pat], because they had circled their place with gravel.

Duke: Yes, and there wasn't enough heavy timber to create a crown fire there, so the Coles were saved. But it was interesting the way communication was, wasn't it? Cole was telling me about that.

Lois: But Shermans—the old Brayton cabin—it survived, didn't it?



**Duke and Naomi with firefighters during the 2003 Wedge Canyon Fire.**

Duke: It survived. It probably had a firetruck around it. Kinsolving's [Larry and Ruth] survived because they had about three firetrucks up there, and they sprayed like hell until the fire got right to the house, then they jumped in the house for just a minute, then [after it passed] they jumped right back out again and started spraying again.

Lois: If they hadn't built that house way up there, gosh. There didn't used to be anything up there.

Duke: But anyway, it burned across the creek here. We lost maybe a half an acre of our property across the creek. That's how close it got to us, and it was only 100 yards from the Gaffaney cabin where it crossed the creek.

Naomi: They wrapped the Gaffaney cabin.

Duke: It was like living in a cave here. We had plywood on all the windows.

Lois: Oh, and the smoke.

Duke: We could hear the trees torching up at night right across the creek from us.

Naomi: That was so sad.

Lois: I would be afraid to go to sleep.

Duke: We had to open the door to see anything, because all the windows were boarded up with plywood.

Lois: And the purpose of that was?

Duke: To keep fire brands from breaking the windows or hitting the windows and starting fires. We had lots of smoking fire brands land in the yard, lots of them.

Lois: Boy, a fire can throw them a good way. I know you guys like to dance. How did you learn to dance so well? When did you start dancing?

Duke: Oh, we started taking lessons in Spokane 30 years ago. And we took lessons a lot, and not only that, when I retired we went on a cruise?

Naomi: Yes.

Duke: We got hooked up with an eastern Caribbean cruise because of our dance instructor. We went on that cruise with 20 or 30 of our dancers, so the entire cruise we got lessons, and there were lots of people on the cruise that wanted to crash our party.  
[Laughs]



**Duke and Naomi dancing at their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary party at Sondreson Hall, 2005.**

Lois: I had friends in Florida who were square dancers and they belonged to whatever the national organization was. They had square danced in all 50 states, and they had square danced on a ship up to Alaska. They had square danced in the Caribbean. They had square danced in the Pentagon. They were big into it. She had the most beautiful dresses, and I inherited three of them from her for Betsy and her two girls. I've told them they have to take lessons first, and once they get good at it then they can wear those dresses and the crinolines.

Duke: Yes, we square danced here at the Hall quite a bit, didn't we?

Naomi: Yes. Didn't like it and didn't do very well. We were western dancers. We weren't square dancers.

Duke: But we square danced here at the Hall quite a bit. Paul Maas was my mentor, you might say, as to square dancing. He always square danced. And whenever he square danced he was upright in a pure dancing position.

Naomi: And he would never smile.

Duke: And his head was always upright like this, not bobbing and not arm-twisting like this. When we went to dancing lessons the first thing they taught us is that you are supposed to try to maintain proper dance form regardless of what else you're doing. Not pumping your arm up and down, but your feet...

Naomi: You're not milking the cow, and you're not pumping water.

Duke: Your feet keeping time with the music, not your arms.

Lois: Maxine Maas danced, too?

Naomi: Oh yes, Maxine was good.

Lois: They must have danced back home when they weren't out here.

Naomi: Yes.

Duke: But Paul Maas always had that form when he was square dancing, and I thought it was nice, because when I started watching square dancing back in Knoxville, Tennessee, the White Horse Saloon or whatever it was, the dancers that I thought were the best dancers on the floor were the ones that held their posture and kept their head upright.

Lois: It's fun to watch, and they aren't looking at their feet.

Duke: One instructor said it was like watching a bull elk run through the woods with a big rack of horns. The feet are going like this, and the brush is flying and the dirt is flying up from their heels. Their antlers are just going like this, like they're floating on water.

Lois: A good analogy.

Duke: That was the form you were supposed to establish to be a dancer.

Lois: Tell me briefly about your interest in the Kootenai Trail and the research that you've done on that over the years.

Naomi: That goes on and on.

Duke: Well, that's a very deep subject for me. I've been interested in it for a long, long time, especially after getting in contact with Dr. Burlingame, head of the History Department of Bozeman. That whetted my appetite more for it. I suppose it was in the late 1970s or early 1980s before I started taking small groups.

Lois: What are the best resources on that, if you want to research?

Naomi: Well, Cecily McNeil has a scrapbook and that was the best source.

Lois: Oh really? I didn't know that.

Duke: She loaned that to me, and now she says she don't want it back, and so I've got her notes and pictures and her literature from the Kootenai Indians.



Naomi: She did a lot of research.

Duke: But Darris Flanagan in his book *Indian Trails of Northern Rockies* has a whole chapter on this trail, and most of the book is about Kootenai Indians in general. For ten years I've been meeting him at the pass with a group of kids, and the kids are the Youth Conservation Corps from Murphy Lake and Rexburg districts. On their last day of work they bring them up to show them the Indian trail. It's usually the middle of August, because they have to go back for football practice. I already knew him before then, because I got to know Darris when he was Tree Farmer of the Year in Montana a few years before that. Anyway, for at least ten years now I've been meeting him and his group and some of the forest people personnel, I always do, up there at the pass and showing them the Indian trail on this side of the mountain.

Lois: That's so neat.



**Duke guiding a tour on the historic Kootenai Indian Trail.**

Duke: And then we would have a little picnic here and they would go home. This is the first year we haven't had it for ten years, because the roads were closed for fire. But Darris says he's going to come over this fall for a visit with adults. Last year he brought some adults after the season for a visit. You see, the parents of all these kids hear from the kids when they get back, and they say, "Well gee, I would like to do that." So Darris every now and then brings a group of adults over.

Lois: How many tours have you given over the years?

Duke: Well, it's hundreds. I sure wish I would have kept track. But you know, the Forest Service has given me a kind of rough time over the years. They didn't encourage me to do this.

Lois: Really?

Duke: Yes, they did. This was all lined out as a wilderness, and they didn't want any of this stuff.

Lois: For heaven's sake.

Duke: When Deb Manley, who is now...

Lois: Mucklow?

Duke: No, she's divorced from him, and she's married somebody else [Starling].

Lois: Oh, that's right.

Duke: I just met him at the tree farm convention, and she was there. He's a tree farmer, and so she's a tree farmer now, so we just had a visit with her this weekend at Thompson Falls. She wants to come on the trail, because when she was ranger here on Glacier View I was giving guided tours. So, that goes back a ways, doesn't it?

Lois: Yes, it does.

Duke: But anyway, she and I were talking back and forth about developing a certain section of the trail—and I had the one picked out below the road—and put up a sign. She was all for that.

Lois: She supported that.

Duke: Yes, but then she left and went to Spotted Bear, and I never hit it off with Jimmy DeHerrera. It started with him putting those letters in the mailboxes without stamps on them, telling all the people to plow road in the winter time they had to have a permit. Everybody that got those letters said, "To hell with you," plain and simple.

Lois: Jammy Ross, or who was the young kid was up here doing some of the plowing.

Naomi: Yes, Mark Ross.

Lois: Mark Ross, yes. Well, Jammy tried, but he didn't do a very good job, I guess. Well, Naomi, you have Native American relatives on the other side, over in Blackfeet country, right?

Naomi: Yes.

Lois: There was some story about brothers from Ireland or something that came.

Naomi: From Ireland, all brothers, nine of them.

Duke: Nine brothers from Ireland.

Naomi: We have the family tree. Nora Lukin's grandfather and my great-grandfather—see, I'm the next generation, so he's my great-grandfather, were brothers.

Lois: Okay.



Duke: It's just through marriage.

Naomi: Her brother married a Blackfoot Indian, and mine was already married when he come over from Ireland to an Irish gal.

Lois: He actually lived on the Blackfeet Reservation, married a woman and stayed there?

Naomi: Nora's great-grandmother? Yes, he stayed there.

Duke: We went to Ireland, and we found the places where they used to live.

Naomi: But there's no record of them.

Lois: I wondered if you had found any family when you went back.

Naomi: Nora had been over there twice and she said there's nothing left. But we went over, and her daughter Mary Lynn went with us, but she was only there two days and her mother got ill, so she flew back and we went on, Juli and Jeff and Duke and I.



Duke and daughter Juli.

Lois: So, just the one brother married a Blackfeet woman?

Naomi: No, all of them. Well, not all. My great-grandfather and one other didn't marry here. He was over in Coram, and he married there.

Duke: But anyway, most of them married Blackfeet women. Because they would go to a spot, and of course they would all go to the same spot.

Lois: What period of time was this?

Naomi: Let's see, my grandmother was born at Fort Benton because of an Indian scare.

Duke: People were out chopping wood for the steamboats and were attacked by the Indians. One of them was killed, wasn't he? And they thought there might be an uprising, so everybody moved to Fort, and that's when Naomi's grandmother was born.

Naomi: They all lived around Fort Benton, but then mostly they were in Cutbank and Browning.

Lois: And the Blackfeet territory used to be a lot larger than it is now, before the reservation system and all that.

Naomi: Yes. I can't remember the year.

Lois: Tell me how your beach party got started. What's the origin of that?

Naomi: That's a funny story.

Duke: Naomi and I would cross country ski, just the two of us, down to the river in the wintertime and roast a wiener.

Lois: Why?

Naomi: Just for fun.

Duke: Just for exercise.

Naomi: I'm not going to tell you everything. [Laughs]

Duke: Then a couple from Spokane, very close friends of ours, were up here, and the four of us did it. And then her sister and brother-in-law . . .



**New Year's Day Beach Party at Abbott's Flats, 2014**

Naomi: Used to come and they had all kinds of stuff.

Duke: They joined the party, and we did it with them. And then one year we were down there roasting wieners with a group of about five of us.

Naomi: On snowmobiles.

Duke: And the Ogles discovered us on snowmobiles. They always had big crowds at their place, you know, so they joined our party, and it grew rapidly ever since then. And it became known as the [New Year's Day] Beach Party. Now we go down with about

30 people. We line out three different bonfires so we can cook on one and stand around and talk on the others. [Laughs]

Lois: It's a North Fork tradition, or an upper North Fork tradition, anyway.

Duke: I was in pretty tough shape last year, Mark [Heaphy] helped me a lot, but we did it.

Naomi: He did most everything.

Duke: I usually pull the wood down there on a sled behind the snowcat.

Lois: What have your goals been with the tree farm movement here on your property? What was kind of your master plan?

Duke: In 1993, when we became full-time residents up here, it just so happened that that year they were putting on a forestry stewardship workshop designed for out-of-state Montana tree owners at Yellow Bay. We jumped at the chance and took it. It was a two-week long workshop. You went and stayed in the cabins down there for one full week, and then you came up here and inventoried your property according to what you learned, and then you went back and had a couple of days back in classrooms to talk about what you did. So, it was a two-week program. It was a very extensive thing and very nice. Anyway, we became stewardship members at that time. In the process of doing this you had to write up your own forest plan with objectives, and you had to have a professional forester, one of the instructors that certified your plan.

Lois: So, it has to do with thinning and preserving certain kinds of trees?

Duke: Well, that all varies. You build your own plan, but it has to be based upon good forest principles, and sometimes, in our case, our preferred specie was larch.

Lois: Right. You've got a lot of them.

Duke: Because the lodgepole, so many of them had died with the beetle, but still lodgepole is still our principle specie. Our goals, #1 I think was to improve the property in all aspects and pass it on to the next generation in better shape than we found it. #2 was to create better wildlife habitat with everything you do, and #3 was to produce timber by thinning and selective cutting and all that sort of thing, and goals like that. We have about seven or eight of those goals.

Lois: Wow.

Duke: They were supposed to come around about every ten years and see what you were doing, but in the meantime we became tree farm members, and we became tree farm members, too, because of Lee Downes, I think. He was the only member in the North Fork at that time.

Lois: I remember when I first came up the North Fork in the mid-80s and I saw that sign that said "Tree Farm," and I thought what does that mean? Does he sell Christmas trees? I didn't know what it was about.

Duke: Anyway, I liked the tree farm program even better because they were more actively involved with you. They interviewed you every five years, so we did the same thing with the tree farm. They came up, and we made a plan and got certified and all that sort of thing, but now we've got two forest plans.

Lois: I see.

Duke: When it was time for a whole bunch of new requirements for recertification, at that time our tree farm forester was married to a girl that was a forestry stewardship forester.

Lois: How handy.

Duke: They came up here together, and we combined the two plans together and made one combined plan, so now we just have one forest plan, a combination of forestry stewardship and Forest Service, the tree farm program.

Naomi: It has come a long way.

Duke: But through the tree farm program, every year we go to the convention and every year we take workshops and classes here and there. Missoula has a mini college, they call it, one day in the winter time with a series of small classes on forest issues.

Lois: I know the Chrismans do it, too. Are there other tree farmers here in the North Fork, people who you've encouraged?

Duke: There's a lot of them now. Molly Shepherd is a tree farmer, the Chrismans, us.

Naomi: McDonoughs [Gary and Karen] aren't yet, but they want to be.

Duke: McDonoughs are tree farmers. The Kinsolvings are members of the tree farm. There's a whole bunch of them now.

Lois: Well, that's good, because you've got a lot of property up here in the north end that needs to be managed. How about the Sullivans [Don and Sue], have they done anything?

Naomi: They are thinking about it.

Duke: Anyway, we created a lot of interest when we had the first stewardship program at the Hall, because a lot of people that took that class wanted something more, a more hands-on thing, and so they became tree farmers as a result of that exposure.

Naomi: Irv and Chris Heitz are.

Lois: Well, it behooves you to know your land.

Duke: I'm surprised there's so many people who don't know anything about the tree farm program, because it's big in the North Fork now, and we've had two western regional winners.

Lois: That's pretty amazing.

Duke: Both the Chrismans and us became Montana State Tree Farmer of the Year, and then we both won the western regional Tree Farmer of the Year.

Lois: The regional, terrific.

Duke: But actually, we haven't done that much work, and we do it all by hand you know—very little equipment. One little tractor and the rest is chainsaw.

Lois: I've seen you out there dragging trees with your tractor.



Duke: But they liked our story about how we came here in 1993, and everything we built here we built out of our own forest, and in the process we were creating a better wildlife habitat.

Naomi: We came here in the 1960s.

Lois: And you have the grizzly bears to prove it. [Laughs]

Duke: You see, in the process of thinning and all that we've always left unthinned areas that we call security areas, where animals can hide from the rest of the commotion. We have several of those in the place around here, and there's a lot of other things. You know you encourage the growth of forbes and brush.

Naomi: We had really good help though. We had the one guy, who had a Labrador, who was our first tree farmer.

Duke: Our first tree farmer was Scott Hicksaw.

Naomi: Yes. Scott Hicksaw was fabulous, and then Paul McKenzie is now, and he is absolutely wonderful.

Duke: But Scott Hicksaw moved away. And when he moved away Paul McKenzie became our forester, and then his wife is Molly, who was into stewardship, so now we've combined both programs together and we have one forest program. But they liked our program. They liked our plan. They liked our goals, and they liked our way of life, how we just lived here and built everything out of the forest, and without any big power equipment, did it by hand. To compete for regional we had to develop this webinar.



**Duke and Naomi with their grandchildren**

Lois: I remember you talking about that.

Duke: I had never heard of the word before in my life, but it turned out pretty good. Did you see it?

Lois: I never saw it. I heard you talk about going down and being on camera.

Duke: Anybody can get to it, even to this day on the computer, but I can't tell you exactly how to do it.

Lois: Bill is always telling me not to use up the bandwidth you know.

Naomi: It's only five minutes.

Duke: We had to sit there and talk about our place and at the same time show pictures on a computer screen, and we talked about the pictures that were being shown and the significance of them. It turned out pretty good. I was scared to death.

Lois: You've always been cutting edge Duke, what can I say? No matter what the initiative, you just jump right in there.

Naomi: Scared to death, but he does it.

Duke: It was a very good experience. You know, Naomi's tie to the Blackfeet has been an addition to our life, and I have a direct connection to all our Norwegian relatives. We have Norwegian relatives coming over almost every summer, and that's a great addition to our life.



Lois: You've been to Norway?

Duke: Been to Norway twice.

Lois: Oh boy. You know, the whole country has only five million people, if that, so they can do all these wonderful initiatives in Norway, and it works for them. I was hearing something about their renewable energy initiative, that by a certain year they will have only electric cars.

Duke: But there's a lot of old-fashionedness to them, too.



**Duke and Naomi at Pulpit Rock [Preikestolen] in Norway.**

Naomi: The thing I admire most is their love of country and the respect they show for the King even though he's mostly a figurehead.

Duke: They love their country, and they love to take care of it.

Naomi: We have so much, and we don't . . .

Lois: We waste it. [Starting to eat Indian frybread Naomi provided] I want to see you eat some your wife's fine preserves. Obviously, you enjoy canning and putting up things, Naomi.

Duke: But anyway, I enjoyed the interview.

Lois: Well, thank you. Doing the history of the North Fork is like working a gigantic jigsaw puzzle, you know. You get little bits of information at a time. Part of the goal is to paint a picture of the kind of people who have come here and what their stories were and how they ended up here. Everyone is so different up here, but that contributes to building a picture of what the North Fork is, why it's become what it is.

Duke: I've enjoyed that diversity of personalities.

Lois: Yes, personalities, that's a good word. Because really, it takes a lot to be outside the norm of the North Fork, because that's a pretty broad range.

Naomi: Yes.

Duke: You asked a question here about building roads on the place. I never built a road on this place. We had existing little forest roads already there. We created some just by going over the same place all the time.

Lois: I think about that poor UPS guy coming down your hill in the dead of winter. He must be a brave guy. [Laughs] You keep it plowed, but still he's riding up pretty high in that truck.

Naomi: And they won't give them four-wheel drive.

Duke: The first two winters we lived here there was never any road plowed. We parked our snowmobiles in Mike Eddy's driveway, behind his gate, and snowmobiled up here. We were still dancing every weekend, and we would come home at 2:00 o'clock in the morning and get our snowmobiles over there. We had a sled behind the snowmobile with our laundry and our groceries, and would come in here by snowmobile at 2:00 in the morning on the weekends. [Chuckles]

Lois: I've heard your stories about how you would go dancing down valley and wouldn't come up the road until late, late at night by yourselves.

Duke: The first two winters we lived here we weren't even plowing the road—nobody was, so we just commuted by snowmobile.

Naomi: One time we came at 2:00 in the morning and guess who was there? Our neighbors.

Duke: The Faulkners up here. They were walking up Trail Creek Road with suitcases.

Naomi: At 2:00 in the morning. Each had a suitcase, and one had a sack full of groceries and the other one had the tune box. We gave them a ride on the snowmobiles.

Lois: [Laughs] Is that where the Moris's used to be?

Duke: They owned the property that Gary Moris owns now.

Lois: Ed Neneman built that house, didn't he? Ed used to live up here, right?

Duke: Yes. Ed lived in the house he built for himself that became the first Dennis Moris house, and then he built one next to it that became the Diorios' house, and then Dennis and Sue eventually moved to that house.

Naomi: They bought it from the Diorios.

Lois: That was a sad story wasn't it, about Sonny? Just a heart attack?

Naomi: Yes.

Duke: We liked that guy a lot.

Lois: I think Joe Franchini liked that guy a lot, didn't he? Didn't they have an Italian thing going?



Naomi: Yes, they did.

Lois: Well, I want to thank you both for your participation in the history project.

Naomi: Is it coming together?

Lois: It is. It's so huge, but it is coming together. I would at some point like to get some family pictures, a picture of you guys when your kids were younger, if you've got any family albums or something. The only pictures I have are of the two of you dancing and the one I took for the cookbook. There's quite a few pictures of you doing fire stuff that Larry took over the years, but I don't have a family picture.



**Photo of Duke and Naomi from the North Fork Country Kitchens Cookbook.**