

## KAREN FEATHER ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

This is an interview with Karen Feather at her home at 120 Bauman Lane in Coram, Montana, on Friday, July 21, 2017. Interviewer is Lois Walker.

Lois: I have so many questions, and it has been so much fun preparing for this interview. John Frederick had some surgery recently, and he was at our house recuperating, so Val Cox came by, and Gerry Stearns came by, and Joyce O'Hara came by. I said, "I'm going to go talk to Karen. What kind of questions should I ask? Do you have any questions you'd like for me to ask?" Each of them said, "Oh, be sure and ask her about this event and that event, and ask her about the time such and such happened."

Karen: So that's what you want, is what went on during my tenure at the store [Polebridge Mercantile].

Lois: Start with the Merc itself. I sent you some pictures. I have a list of what I think are the previous owners. I want to verify that as much as we can. Let's start with some background, where and when you were born, when was your first trip to the North Fork and what you remember about that, what were your impressions.

Karen: I was born in California, ten years in Eugene, Oregon, and then I came out here to play bridge with a friend at the University of Oregon because he said, "They don't know how to play bridge out there at Lake McDonald Lodge, and we could go and whip the pants off of them," so I said, "Good." So, I came out in 1963. I was 21, and then I met the man that I married the following year and ended up staying here in 1964.

Lois: In the summer time you came up?

Karen: I came in 1963. It was the summer of that year, and then I went back to Eugene and he was going to go to school out there, but they wouldn't let him in because he was an out-of-state guy and it was too expensive, so we came back to Montana because we could live here for a year and work at his job and I could get a summer job. He was with the Park Service, a trail boy with the Park Service, so we had a living, and then we waited until he could get to school in Missoula.

Lois: He was establishing residency in Montana?

Karen: Yes. So then we got married in 1964, and on a wild whim bought the store in 1975. I first saw the store in 1963 when I was going up to Bowman Lake and I drove down the road. The Camas Road wasn't there, I don't believe.

Lois: You came up the Inside Road?

Karen: No, the outside road, by Nature Bridge, and I drove down, turned right and saw this store and I just thought it was so classic. I took a picture, and then I drove across the bridge to go to Bowman Lake and I took a picture of the pole bridge. Neither are particularly good, but I just was smitten by the appearance and the backwoods-ness of the place. I just loved it.

Lois: Ted Ross owned it at that point?

Karen: I think so.

Lois: Did you go in?

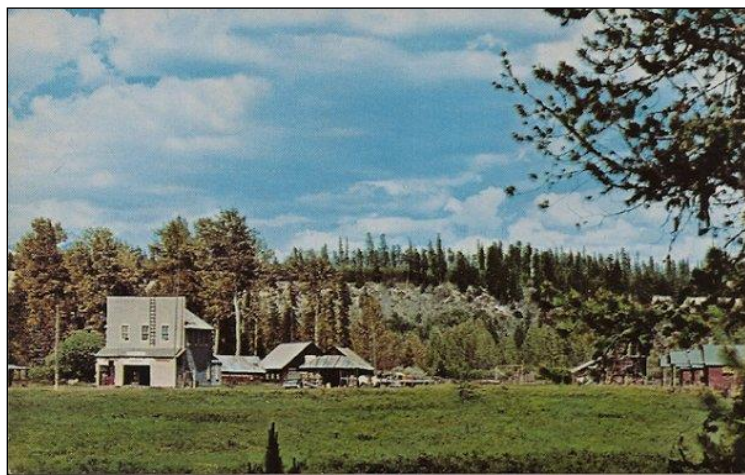
Karen: No, I don't think so.

Lois: It didn't have the lettering on the front then, did it?

Karen: No. [It looked like] the old gray postcard. That's what you sent me, wasn't it?

Lois: Yes, it was a postcard, and I've got a copy here.

Karen: Yes, that's the one.



**Polebridge Mercantile 1960s postcard**

Lois: Obviously, it showed it was beige. The front of the building is completely different. Is this the gas pump out here, I wonder?

Karen: Let me think. I think maybe it was, and I've got some old pictures that show a gas pump.

Lois: Why this big opening here, what is this?

Karen: Well, that was the entrance, and these were louvers, I think, because that kept the sun from blasting in.

Lois: Was there a porch?

Karen: Yes, the porch was the same, and I think this is just kind of a false front.

Lois: And this ladder, is that for working on it, or was that a permanent fixture.

Karen: No, that was there and I'm not sure why. Maybe a lookout, probably for cleaning the chimney.

Lois: Well, yes, there's a thought. This is the list of owners that I have. Let me know what you may know differently. We know that the Adairs had it. We know that Ben and Annette Rover owned it from 1943 to 1955, and we know that Ted Ross bought it in 1955. The date when he sold it is iffy, because we interviewed Bob Ross, his son.

Karen: Oh you did? Good.

Lois: He said, "Well, I thought he sold it in 1969."

Karen: I can maybe find that, although I've seen very little about Cal and Dorothy Oien, but it's probably in here somewhere. I've got all the applications for the National Historic Register, so it should be on that, or do you have that, too?

Lois: I have it, but it didn't outline the previous owners that clearly, but you did buy from Bob Olson, right?

Karen: Yes. Bill and Jessie Adair, his partner was William Lacher. They were in business together.

Lois: Okay.

Karen: I know it's on the safe that it's Adair and Lacher, and I think on some of their stationary is Adair and Lacher. And I just read somewhere in this stuff that I'm going through that they made a pact, the four of them, that if any one of them died the spouse would be taken care of by the other people. Did you hear that ever?

Lois: I never heard that, but certainly it's logical for the time and the era and the place. Because a woman living alone would have had a tough time. There were some who did it, but . . .

Polebridge Mercantile Proprietors			
William L. & Jessie Adair (After Jessie died in 1930, Bill married Emma Lacher, widow of his business partner Tom Lacher, who died in 1925.)	1914-1943	30 years	What is now the Northern Lights Saloon was their residence.
Ben & Annette Rover	1943-1955	12 years	
Ted & Esther Ross	1955-1967	12 years	
Cal & Dorothy Oien	1967-1969	2 years	
Bob & Betty Olson	1969-1974	6 years	
John & Karen Gray, then Karen (Gray) Feather. Dan & Carol O'Brien co-owned briefly.	1975-1987	12 years	Saloon opened in 1976. Karen owned the saloon 12 more years after selling the Merc.
Chrys Landrigan	1987-1994	7 years	
Dan & Deb Kaufman	1994-2009	15 years	
Flannery Coats & Stuart Reiswig	2009-2014	5 years	
Will Hammerquist	2014-		

Karen: Yes.

Lois: And you sold to Chrys Landrigan in...?

Karen: Well, I split it up and kept the saloon but sold [the Merc] to her in 1987.

Lois: Okay, but you still owned the saloon until when?

Karen: 1999. But you know, if you look at the line of purchases at the County, they don't have the actual dates. They have the date that you signed the agreement to buy, and if you don't pay cash it doesn't show up exactly right. So, I don't know about the Rosses, if they were on a time thing. But 12 years is what I remember for Ted.

Lois: I heard a story once that, was it Ted or was it Ben, that had "sold" the Merc more than once.

Karen: It was Ben.

Lois: He would leave in the winter, sell it to some unsuspecting soul, not disclosing that there wouldn't be any customers, or many, in the winter.

Karen: Then he could take it back?

Lois: So he would come back in the spring and take it back, and then he would sell it again.

Karen: Well, that's interesting. I wish I had known that, because I knew him.

Lois: Oh, you did?

Karen: Yes, and of course his wife.

Lois: Annette.

Karen: Then he had another wife.

Lois: One of the Opalka brother's wife, was it Marian that he married?

Karen: Yes, Marian Opalka, right.

Lois: When they did build what we now call Rover Cabin that was Wilhelm's?

Karen: It looks like four cabins [on the Merc and Saloon property] from your aerial view, Ben built, and I don't know, sometime during his tenure.

Lois: Yes, these three cabins are here, and the one behind the saloon is there. And on the National Register Nomination it said that they were built in 1945, but when I was talking to Val Cox she said, "Oh no, I know a family from the east side that came over here hunting, and they said that they stayed there in the 1930s sometime." I was wondering who told you that they were built in 1945, and do we have anything to verify that?

Karen: I don't have any idea. I thought Ben built them all, which would make it between...

Lois: He didn't buy it until 1943.

Karen: Well, but he probably went in there full-bore and started changing and expanding it.

Lois: We suspect that Adair did not build them...

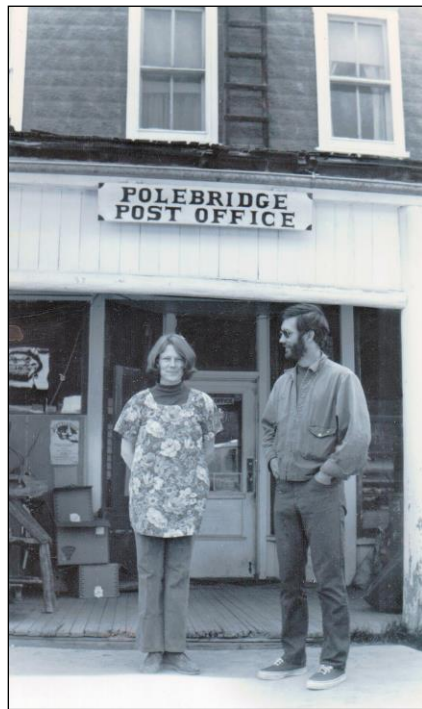
Karen: I'm sure he didn't.

Lois: If it was Ben who built them, then we know it was after 1943 that he did it.

Karen: Yes. Well, if they stayed there they stayed upstairs in the store, because he had a rooming house and board.

Lois: Did you live in the store, or did you live over in the saloon?

Karen: I lived in the store mostly. The saloon we rented for the first year, and then it was a saloon the second year.



**John and Karen Gray, and their friends Dan and Carol O'Brien, became new proprietors of the Polebridge Store in April 1975 and renamed it the Polebridge Mercantile.**

Lois: Tell me what your vision was for the store when you bought it, what big changes you made physically to the outside, to the inside. Did you modify the upstairs? Were you the one that painted it red? Did you put the lettering on it? Everyone says, "We just called it the Polebridge Store." So, I said, "Well, maybe it was Karen who thought if we call it the Mercantile that would be more in line."

Karen: Yes, we just spiffed it up, just made it a little more attractive, a little more of what I thought it should be.

Lois: Good for you.



**The beginnings of external renovation of the Mercantile in 1975.**

Karen: And then we took the apartment off. Mom had a little money and asked, “What do you need? Any way you want to spend this money?” and I said, “Well, we could put a foundation under it,” and Ron Wilhelm and Rick Upton did that. They did a great job.

Lois: When would that have been?

Karen: That must have been the summer of 1982.

Lois: So when you bought it, this extension, this was an apartment out here?

Karen: Ted Ross built that apartment.



**Putting a new foundation under the Mercantile in 1982 also involved removing the apartment on the south side of the building.**

Lois: Oh, he did?

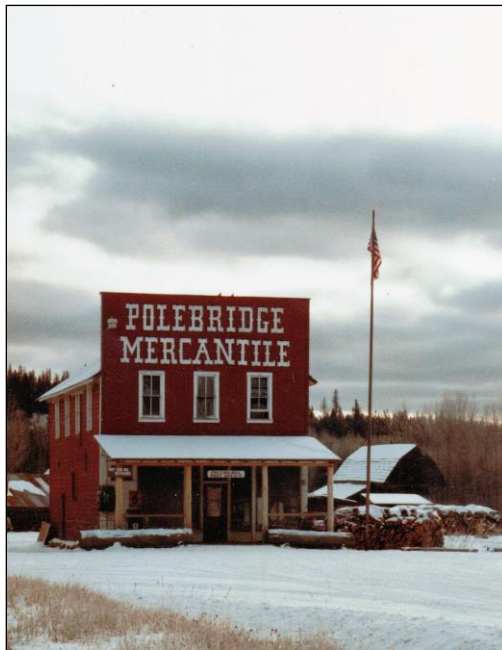
Karen: Yes, that's my understanding. Bob could tell you for sure.

Lois: Did he live there?

Karen: They did, as far as I know. And, of course, they had four kids. Maybe they lived there and upstairs.

Lois: Someone told me that Bob and Karen Kraft may have lived in there.

Karen: They did. They lived there several years. Bob had a sawmill.



**The refurbished Polebridge Mercantile, with red paint and Western-style white lettering.**

Lois: Where was the sawmill?

Karen: Right across on Frank Evans' property.

Lois: South of the road?

Karen: South, yes, and you could almost see them from the store. Then she kept store enough to pay the rent.

Lois: Someone told me Esther Ross was deaf. Is that true? Bob didn't tell us that in his interview, but then I was talking to someone else and they said, "No, Esther was deaf." He said, "My mom hated it there. She never liked it." Of course, she was trying to homeschool, the youngest child anyway.

Karen: She didn't like the alcohol.

Lois: Oh, okay. [Chuckles]

Karen: Was it Pastor Bob Ross you talked to?

Lois: Yes.

Karen: She would make Ted come in and take the money if anybody was buying a six-pack. That's what I understood. I think she was a little bubble off plumb.

Lois: Tom Edwards said he was working up there and came in to buy beer and she wouldn't sell it to him. Even though he was of age she said, "No, a nice boy like you, you shouldn't," but his partner was there and she sold it to the partner.

Karen: Oh, that was good.

Lois: But she wouldn't sell it to him. So, you were born in California?

Karen: Yes.

Lois: What year?

Karen: 1942.

Lois: You're just a little older than us, not much. Still a spring chicken.

Karen: Still a spring chicken, you bet.

Lois: So, when was the first time you actually went inside the Merc?

Karen: Well, I don't know. I remember seeing the cheese that was on the big wheel before I went in and we started negotiating with the Olsons, but I can't say.

Lois: How did he advertise that it was for sale?

Karen: There was just a little sign on the door.

Lois: Did you go through a realtor at all?

Karen: No.

Lois: Can I ask how much you paid for it?

Karen: We paid \$85,000.

Lois: Really? Such a deal.

Karen: Yes, but if you look at it in today's money, it's a different story. That was 25 acres and all of it.

Lois: Just 25, okay. Tell me what you know about Ted doing the subdividing and creating essentially the Polebridge townsite.

Karen: It wasn't Rover, so it had to have been Ted. Yes, they divided it.

Lois: It was Ted, but it was near the end of the time or after the time he owned it?



Karen: I don't know when he went through that and sold those lots. They were pretty inexpensive in those days, too.

Lois: There are about maybe 48 of them. They are different sizes. Most are just under an acre, but there are a couple that are larger than an acre. And then at the end of each road, nearest the river, he gave those first two lots to his daughter and Wally Nolan.

Karen: Right, yes.

Lois: And then the next two end lots on Rainbow Drive went to Bob Ross, the pastor, and then on the next street two lots went to another son.

Karen: Hmm, there's Kenny.

Lois: Kenny, yes. Those double lots went to his kids.

Karen: What about Norma?

Lois: Is Norma the one who married Wally Nolan?

Karen: No.

Lois: That was a different daughter?

Karen: Yes. Betty is Wally's wife, and Norma married a guy named Swanberg or Swan-something. She's a great gal.

Lois: Is she still living, do you think?

Karen: I don't know if she is or not. Bob could tell you, but she's a fun woman. She's very nice and smart. Her husband was kind of a rounder, I think.

Lois: Did you rent out the cabins when you owned the place?

Karen: Oh, yes. I was just seeing that they went for \$12 a night.



**The rental cabins to the south of the Merc were included in the purchase agreement and rented for \$12 a night in the late 1970s.**

Lois: Oh, my gosh.

Karen: Well, they weren't first-class. I used to have dishes and stuff in them, but then that got to be too much.

Lois: They just had a wood stove and a bed at that time?

Karen: Yes, and a refrigerator. We put propane lights in them. I don't think there were lights before.

Lois: Yes, I've heard that you were the queen of how to burp a propane refrigerator.

Karen: I certainly know my propane refrigerators. That's my mechanical skill. They are very simple. And they last forever.

Lois: I've even heard you put one in the back of a truck and went down the road with it to burp it. [Laughs]

Karen: Well yes, but you don't have to do that, really. It's usually just a matter of keeping them clean and keeping them level and that kind of thing, having the right parts, because people have often tried to replace a part and it's the wrong one.

Lois: On those old Servels—it's hard to get parts now, if you can.

Karen: Who does that now up the North Fork? Because I have a legacy of old parts.

Lois: Well, everyone used to call Elmer Benson.

Karen: Well, he's probably over the hill.

Lois: He's not able to now. He's living in town.

Karen: Yes, I saw him.

Lois: John O'Hara will try and help people when he can. Many people are now just going to an electric refrigerator, because they are so efficient, and we have so much solar that it's really not the issue that it used to be.

Karen: In the winter?

Lois: In the summer our generator never comes on unless we turn it on to do something specific. In the winter it might run once a day. You know solar really saves our bacon.

Karen: Oh, it's wonderful, yes. We put a panel on top of the saloon early-on. I don't remember when it was, and it ran the lights and the radio.

Lois: This would have been in the late 1990s probably?

Karen: Well, it was just after Jimmy Carter, because that was when solar came to our attention, because he gave us such a good tax write-off, but I can't tell you.

Lois: So, when you sold the saloon you sold it to Heather?

Karen: I sold it to Deb.

Lois: To the Kaufmans?

Karen: Yes. And then after two years she and Heather decided that Heather wanted to buy it.



**Karen and John converted the mother cabin into the Northern Lights Saloon in 1976.**

Lois: Was there a relation there?

Karen: Yes, Heather is Deb's step-daughter. When Dan and Deb came they announced that they had 11 children. Some were foster, only one was theirs [Connor], but she had children and he had children, so there were 11. Heather was one of them, and then a brother that was hanging around was one. They were both Dan's kids.

Lois: Yes, I've heard about the brother.

Karen: They worked together, and I think Deb's ideas weren't coming to fruition, so Heather had other kinds of ideas.

Lois: Did you just do a traditional mortgage when you bought it?

Karen: Yes. Well, the escrow was at the Whitefish Credit Union, and then it went right into Olsons' account. You know they are down at the Veterans Home?

Lois: I had heard that, yes.

Karen: I don't know how alert they are, but they might be fun to talk to.

Lois: Yes. It's like working a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. With each little piece, a picture starts to emerge. What changes did you make inside the store, in terms of decorating the place?

Karen: None.

Lois: Really?

Karen: Well, we painted the floor and washed the windows. We repaired a couple of the windows. They were boarded up.

Lois: But the burlap that is up on the walls, with all the old tools and traps, that was in place?

Karen: Is that burlap?

Lois: It looks like burlap to me.

Karen: I'm not sure, and I don't know that Dan and Deb changed very much either. And I don't know what Will [Hammerquist] has done. He has refinished a lot of the wood, it seems.



**The interior of the Mercantile has stayed much the same for many years. Karen's mother's cat, named Black Magic, added a touch of sophistication.**

Lois: The walls look the same. I mean, the same things are mounted there.

Karen: I've not looked at it super carefully. I have some pictures of it, actually.

Lois: Okay, any interior pictures would help. Bill Adair's saddlebag is still back there, and the little safe is still there.

Karen: Yes, and that says Adair and Lacher, so he needs to be part of it, he and Emma.

Lois: So, in 1982 they took the addition off and redid the foundation?

Karen: Yes, I'm quite sure it was 1982.

Lois: But the siding on the front of the store, you can see that it's beige. Is that that metal cladding? Was that already on there?

Karen: Yes, it was everywhere.

Lois: Down the sides?

Karen: Yes, and I think that's still there, but then I don't know for sure.

Lois: But you didn't put it on?

Karen: Oh no, Adair did. He built a very classy structure. He knew what he was doing.

Lois: Where did you get the lettering?

Karen: Well, we didn't buy it, we made it. We cut it out of plywood and had it all painted all around the floor. During the winter you could do anything, because there was nobody there.

Lois: And then affixed them? Will has a nice big banner across the front now. You may have seen it. It says "Keep our public lands public."

Karen: Oh, cool!

Lois: Yes, they're having fun with it.

Karen: Yes, they seem to be. That's really nice. I want to write down that you want interior pictures.

Lois: What are all these clippings you have?

Karen: If you wanted to make a list of the people who have seen the store and taken a picture and written an article, it would be a long list. This is *Montana Magazine*.

Lois: Many of them I have. If Larry [Wilson] had clipped it and put it in his notebooks with his columns then I scanned that and digitized it, too, so I have quite a few.

Karen: Did you get the one from the *GRIT*? I can't even tell you where *GRIT* came from.

Lois: The girls raised in the south, Grit?

Karen: I think it's southern, and I couldn't find it there.

Lois: That's the name of the magazine, *GRIT*?

Karen: Yes, or some kind of periodical.

Lois: Well, I would be glad to come back at some point.

Karen: Yes, please. If you could tell me what you would like.

Lois: To look through these, and I could bring a scanner. I have a small photo scanner with me, so if there are little pictures I can scan those, but I have a larger scanner, too. I have some interior pictures, and some of them are from when your mother was there, of her grinning behind the counter. You must have had a series of cats. There's a big black, long-haired cat.

Karen: That was Ma's. Black Magic. He was mother's cat.

Lois: Okay. It's sitting there like it owns the counter.

Karen: Yes. She must have let him in when I was away.

Lois: I think it was Val [Cox] who was talking about the O'Briens. What role did the O'Briens play?

Karen: They were our partners. The four of us bought it. In 1974 we signed the papers, and took possession in 1975? They were there just a year, I think, but it wasn't working out. And then John and I were there for a few more years, and then that wasn't working out, so I got the whole store.

Lois: And he went on to have something to do with Glacier Raft Company or something? He stayed in the area?

Karen: Yes. Not Glacier Raft; Glacier Wilderness Guides. He was able to buy in there with his proceeds from the store, and he did that for I don't know how many years. Then he became the head of the Ski Patrol on Big Mountain. There was a big article about him when he retired. I can't tell you how long ago that was.

Lois: So, you bought him out in the Merc?

Karen: Yes. We bought O'Briens out, and then I bought him out.

Lois: We talked about playing Pinochle and that the only food that he [John] would serve at the saloon was burgers and beer. I don't know what year, but that had to have been early if he was still involved?

Karen: John?

Lois: Yes. Did you sell any food out of the Merc before you had the saloon?

Karen: No.

Lois: But you started the saloon the next year in 1976?

Karen: We did because it began to be such a social place that nobody could get any work done in the Saloon, and we ended up buying half the beer, and that wasn't going to take us very far.

Lois: What all was involved in converting that cabin to a saloon?

Karen: Well, we had to take the wall out of the middle. There were two rooms in the middle, and then the back part, I can't remember if it was even habitable. But the one in the

middle was taken out, and then we had to take all the boards that were covered with wallpaper and we had to get all that wallpaper off. You will see that the logs are hewn flat. They did that so they could paper.

Lois: But the area where the kitchen is, was that a room already or did you have to create that room?

Karen: No, we didn't build it, it was there. I don't know if it was storage. Well, the kitchen now is out in the extended part. That addition was there, too. That was the woodshed, and there's a hand pump there. I don't know the back part, if that's seating now?

Lois: No. It used to be you would go around the left end of the counter to get back to the restrooms. Last year Heather [Matthews] remodeled all that so that the bar goes all the way across, and to get to the restrooms you have to go outside and come around. It gave them a little more space behind the bar.

Karen: Oh.

Lois: But other than that, they haven't remodeled the interior.

Karen: It was interesting cleaning off all the wallpaper and getting down to the wood, which is there now. I think we just blew in insulation between the rafters, and left that for a while. And then I put burlap over that because it was discolored, because everybody smoked in those days, you know. Then I understand they had to do a real ceiling in there for the County. It's too bad. I don't know what that looks like.

Lois: I sure remember the saloon from the 1980s. It was still a community place, and you just went. Who were some of your bartenders? I remember Peter [Moore] tending bar.

Karen: Well, Peter. Karen Reeves was a good bartender.

Lois: There was someone's son who had been a bartender. How did you come up with the name Northern Lights? What's the story on the artwork of the lady?

Karen: Well, that was in the boneyard down at Park headquarters, in the dump or the old vehicles and stuff like that. I don't know who found it, but it ended up in the girls' dorm in West Glacier, the Northern Lights Saloon, and this is a picture of it.

Lois: When you say the dump, you mean the dump in Columbia Falls or the Polebridge dump?

Karen: The dump at Park headquarters. Because this guy, this I made a copy from.

Lois: It's a scan, yes.

Karen: And "Al Hoover, proprietor" shows that this was a joke sign for his retirement party. He was a longtime Polebridge ranger.

Lois: Oh! So, was there actually a saloon? There wasn't a saloon; it was just a joke?

Karen: Yes, just a joke. Just a big party. My friend got ahold of the sign. I'm not sure how.



Lois: She took it out of the dormitory?

Karen: Well, it was hanging up there, and she lived in the dormitory. Maybe she was the dorm mother or something, but she had possession of the sign, and when we told her that we were going to have a saloon she said, “You’ve got to call it the Northern Lights, and I’ve got a sign for you.”

Lois: Perfect.

Karen: Then when we got divorced she said, “If John gets the saloon, I want my sign back.” I thought that was pretty loyal. [Chuckles]



**Happy Northern Lights Saloon bartenders, Peter Moore (left), Kathy Thompson Lundgren, Beth Secrest, Paula Dziuk, and Karen.**

Lois: Yes, it certainly is. The DeSanto boy, Sam DeSanto was a bartender.

Karen: Yes, that’s right, Jerry’s nephew. He and his wife Maggie, I don’t know if they worked for me. I don’t think so—I think they leased it from me. I leased it a couple of times, a couple of years to Beth Secrest, one year to John and Joyce O’Hara, or John and Michel [Peretiako] together. I don’t know how they worked that out. Beth was very bright and hardworking.

Lois: Who were some of your waitresses who came and went?

Karen: Well, let’s see. There was a gal up the North Fork. Was her name Karen, too? I think maybe it was. Well, all of them—Joyce, . . .

Lois: Yes, Karen Eddy.

Karen: Well, Karen Eddy came and worked in the kitchen.

Lois: I knew she worked the counter at the Merc for a while.

Karen: I think that’s right. She was really good. Dawn Gaitis was a bartender and a waitress. Well, the bartender often was the waitress because one person could handle it.



Lois: Not anymore. Now it's all tourist traffic. I mean, the locals don't go much. They might come on Friday for pizza.

Karen: That was Cullen? Oh, I wish I could think of his name [Robertson]. Peter would know it. Cullen's thing—he started making pizza every Friday, and it just was hot, so he gets credit for Friday night pizza. You know that does break my heart, because what I pictured was a community, you know, maybe with a wild party once or twice a summer with all kinds of people coming in. The 4th of July parade was fine. That was not my idea either. That was Corinne Speidel's. She was also a waitress in the beginning. Wendy, of course, and Joyce.

Lois: Joyce says she remembers grinding the wheat for the Putney Polebridge bread.

Karen: Yes, and then we got an electric grinder. I could make you a list of waitresses with pictures.

Lois: That would be interesting. Well, as long as we're mentioning the parade—you rode your bike the first year? I've heard that it was Corinne's idea. I heard that Hazen Lawson brought his jeep or his horse or something.

Karen: Hmm, both I think, different times.

Lois: I've seen him ride his horse in the parade. What's your story on how it first came about?

Karen: Well, I saw a sign about the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July posted in the saloon, or in front of the store or something, that said "Big 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. Be here at noon. Everybody invited." Corinne had taken it upon herself to have a parade.

Lois: Oh, my gosh.

Karen: I was pretty amazed, because I didn't have time to do anything, but I thought that might be fun, so I put together some prizes. I think she talked to John [Frederick] and got him to be the emcee. She figured the time, noon. I'm not sure if it wasn't maybe just a joke.

Lois: It worked, so that first year it was just a few people?

Karen: Well, I have pictures of Corinne and Doug Chadwick, they were George and Martha, and they are just darlings. [Bill Brown says that he was the first George]

Lois: Did they ride in John's jeep at that point, or was that a later thing?

Karen: You know, I can't tell you.

Lois: So, you said Doug Chadwick and Corinne? Because I started a list from Larry's columns of all the George and Marthas, trying to make a list of them. It's kind of gone by the wayside here in later years. I need to find a picture of Ivan and Mary [Windsheimer], because I know I have a picture of them riding in the jeep one year, and their grandson would like a copy of that.

Karen: Oh yes.

Lois: The first picture I had was in 1983, which was Bob Grimaldi and your mom.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: So, the first year would have been in 1975?

Karen: Let me think. Maybe it could have been 1982, the first one?

Lois: I have 1979 as the first year, but no documentation of that.



**The Polebridge 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, initiated in 1979 by Corinne Speidel, has become a time-honored tradition, commencing at the Mercantile at 12:00 noon each July Fourth.**

Karen: I don't know.

Lois: I can ask Chadwick what year. If they were the first, I can ask him. I just saw him. I think they were there for the Interlocal. No, I'm thinking of Jack and Rachel Potter.

Karen: Oh yes, Jack and Rachel. Ma and Grimaldi were—we used to have an election for George and Martha, and then I would pick whoever I thought and tell them that that's how they voted. A little sleight of hand. Well, Rachel Sweet, you have her? Rachel and Harold?

Lois: Yes, Rachel and Harold. I had Bob and Betty, and then Tom Riemer and Ann Hensen.

Karen: Yes, and they went in drag, I think.

Lois: They had Ruth and Hazen the next year, then the O'Hara's, John and Joyce, then John and Pat Elliott. Then I'm missing a year, in 1988 I have Rod and Peggy Wenger, then Ivan and Mary Windsheimer in 1990, Carl and Linda Pittman in 1991. I'm missing 1992 and 1993. Then 1994 Jeff Swick and Allie Maffit, then Ron and D'Ann in 1995.

1996 I'm missing. Heather Kaufman and Sean Zeigert in 1997. Dick and Mary Smith in 1998. Then there's another gap.

Karen: Dick and Mary Smith?

Lois: Yes. That was before he died. You know, their house sold finally to a guy, a retired two-star general out of USSTRATCOM in Omaha. He had come here as a kid with the Pittmans, I guess.

Karen: What's his name, Robert?

Lois: Rego.

Karen: [Laughs] Oh! Sure. That's very cool!

Lois: You know him?

Karen: Sure. He used to come in and read comic books.

Lois: Oh, my gosh. Well, he owns Dick and Mary Smith's old place now.

Karen: Well, that's where he stayed, with the Pittman's.

Lois: Before they built the concrete block?

Karen: I don't know, but in that place.

Lois: Well anyway, I'm trying to build that list, among others.

Karen: Okay, well I can help on some of it.

Lois: Yes, the Merc obviously was more of a gathering place for the community then than it is now.

Karen: Oh sure.

Lois: Part of that was the post office. Do you have fun stories about operating the post office out of there? We had Box 22, I remember.

Karen: Oh yeah?

Lois: John Frederick just brought me the door of Box 4 [which was the North Fork Preservation Association]. The North Fork Hostel and Square Peg Ranch were Box 1. I bet you knew all the box numbers at one point.

Karen: Yes. I have a receipt book for the box numbers and the people. It's kind of fun. You're welcome to take it and peruse through.

Lois: I would be glad to do an electronic list, and then we would have it.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: There's the Lawsons. Oh, my gosh.

Karen: Here's a fun list.

Lois: So, Jerry DeSanto had a box there.

Karen: He did, and the Ranger Station had a separate box, I think.

Lois: Holy cow. I'm going to scan that before I go.

Karen: If you want to take them you can. I trust you.

Lois: Paula Dziuk. Look at all of them. [Laughs] Dan and Ann Waltz, and then he died.

Karen: She's the one I got the cat from, Pole Bridget. Her name was Bridget, and then she said, "We call her Pole Bridget, so you *have* to take her." A darling cat, a wonderful cat.

Lois: I worked in the post office for a couple of years in Ohio, and I have a friend who spent a career with them. She always claimed she was going to write a book and title it, *Do You Sell Stamps Here?* She said people will come up to the window and ask you the strangest questions. Do you sell stamps here?

Karen: Yes, that is odd. The only post office thing I can think of is the feud between Ben Ringo and Tom Reynolds.

Lois: Tom Reynolds, really? Well, I heard that the mail guy had kind of had a dust-up with Frank Evans, too, about the height and the distance.

Karen: Yes, depending on the car he was driving he would want you to change your mailbox. If he was in his high pick-up he wanted it tall. And Paul Mueller was in that, too. He was a very unpopular mail carrier, but he was pals with Teddy—I can't think of his last name, a really nice postmaster down in Columbia Falls, so you couldn't do much about him, but he was a real jerk.

Lois: When he brought the mail up, would he come to the Merc first and give you the bags and then go on up Star Route from there?

Karen: Right. We sorted the mail that was a Star Route. Anything up to the store was his rural route, and then I would sort it and he would take it up and pick up stuff, if he felt so inclined. Then I would stamp it with the post office, with the logo.

Lois: You canceled it.

Karen: Yes, and send it out, and people would send money and instructions.

Lois: People talk about Ralph Day and some of the others, how they could send tires down to be repaired or give him a grocery list. And everybody had mailbags. Were there two mailbags?

Karen: Yes, for protection, I suppose, and it made it easier.

Lois: They would put the mail in and he would ...

Karen: Yes, just switch bags.

Lois: Switch bags and then bring it back to them, and there was some real creativity in those bags.



**The Polebridge Post Office (zip code 59928) was part and parcel of the Polebridge Mercantile from the 1930s until 2001.**

Karen: Well Mark and Jammy [Ross] did some real interesting nice things, and all their postcards and letters were illustrated with something or other. They were a fun couple.

Lois: What years were they there?

Karen: They were there when we got there in 1975 and had a long tenure. I can't tell you for sure. Valerie [Cox] could, I think.

Lois: They were up on Trail Creek the whole time?

Karen: Yes.

Lois: That's a good reference. I ask everybody, "If you don't know, who would know." We just interviewed Nonie Mathison, Esther Day's daughter who is still living. She's 89.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: Some things are accurate. Some things I've got to go verify. We used to say in the military, "Trust but verify."

Karen: Good. Yes, Mathison was on my list of other people you could talk to, because I didn't realize you were so deep into this. I thought you were just...

Lois: Up to my neck now. Did you play Pinochle?

Karen: No, and I don't know what they are referring to. Pinochleville, I think, was up north of the Ranger Station, and there's another name, Havreville. Although I think maybe that first couple of years the Harkers and Ladenburgs and...

Lois: Yes, and Roy Cooper was down that way.

Karen: Would come and play Pinochle in the saloon, but I don't remember it being a very big deal, but I didn't go in the saloon very often, because I was doing something in the store.

Lois: Well I've seen reference to Pinochleville, and what I read led me to believe that it was down towards Ladenburg's.

Karen: That might be what...

Lois: Those guys got together down there.

Karen: Yes, now that makes sense to me.

Lois: Where was Jeremy Harker's place? Was it on the east side of the road?

Karen: The east side, and the kids still own it, I'm sure.

Lois: This is near where Rose Green's place was?

Karen: Yes, right in there.

Lois: I just got a copy of Green's books that he did, the fellow who was the realtor.

Karen: Oh, Charlie Green?

Lois: Charlie Green, *Montana Memories*, yes.

Karen: That's not Rose Green, though.

Lois: That's a different Green?

Karen: He was a Coram guy.

Lois: So many people kept telling me, "Oh I bought my property through him." Cecily said, "Oh yes, we bought through Charlie Green," and who else told me they bought through him? They saw ads in Chicago, so obviously he was making that connection. "Beautiful properties for sale in Glacier Park." So, that's how Cecily came out here the first time. She saw one of those ads. She called Charlie Green, and he took her up the Inside Road. It was one of the Opalka cabins that was for sale. She looked at it and said it was just filthy and awful, but they had passed another one that had a For Sale sign, and she said, "Well, how about that other one?" He said, "Well, I don't know about that." But they went back, he showed it to her, she says, "I bought it on the spot."

Karen: Whose was that?

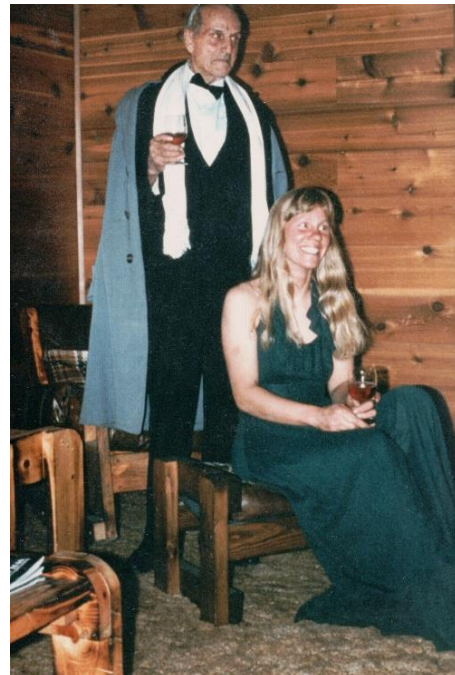
Lois: I'm trying to remember whose it was. [Kid Fredericks]

Karen: Was it in the Park?

Lois: In the Park, yes. It was at Dutch Creek. I would have to look at the map and see who else was there. So, they [the McNeils] had a place there for quite a few years before they bought up north of Moose Creek.

How did the Prom get started, and Tom Riemer bringing in dresses?

Karen: Oh, he was such a sweet guy. I don't know if that was my idea. It was the closing. It was the day that we closed, and maybe I just wanted to celebrate, and I always think dressing up is fun. So, we would have a lovely dinner, and then we would get somebody to play some music, and we would have a Prom.



**The Prom marked the traditional closing of the saloon each fall. Prom kings and queens  
Tom Riemer and Corinne Speidel (left) and Tom Reynolds and Diane Boyd (right).**

Lois: Roughly what year might that have been?

Karen: Well, that might have been...

Lois: Sharon Costantino came, she and John got married in 1989, I believe. I know she really got into it.

Karen: She was a Prom queen once. I've got great pictures of her.

Lois: Well, the only Prom picture I have is of Tom Reynolds and Diane Boyd.

Karen: Riemer and Paula, they might have been the first. No, it wasn't—it was Russ Miller and Paula Dziuk. Russ was an assistant ranger or something. I don't know if that was the first. I don't think that was the first. I know Becky Hardey our mail lady was a queen.



Lois: With whom?

Karen: I think her husband, but I can't be sure about that, but I'll have a picture of that, if you're interested in those.

Lois: Yes, I am.

Karen: That's a whole other 17 boxes of stuff.

Lois: [Laughs] Well. I've been talking to Larry [Wilson] and John [Frederick] both, and saying, "You have so much good stuff." I've offered to both of them, since I'm also an archivist, that I would be glad to go through stuff, order acid-free file folders and sleeves and everything, and inventory things so you know what's there. Someday we need to create, whether it's at the library or wherever the best repository would be, the Larry Wilson Collection and the John Frederick Collection. It can all go on microfilm, or whatever. John, my God, you know that big old leather scrapbook he used to have on the table at the Hostel where he would collect anything that had to do with environmental issues and stuff? I have that now, in a big acid-free box, because he's the only one that collected all that stuff.

Karen: Well consistently, for sure, yes.

Lois: After he sold the Hostel he didn't [collect] anymore, and Oliver hasn't kept it up, so things are just in boxes and a file cabinet. It makes me cringe.

Karen: I know. A historian takes a different view of these things than us.

Lois: I started building on the computer a North Fork History Chronology, so whenever I learn something I just pop that open and put it in, and just keep adding and keep adding. Again, working the puzzle.

Karen: Well, good for you.

Lois: Well, a lot of times people ask, "Will you do this? Will you do that? Will you do the other?" I said, "History—that's what I'm doing."

Karen: That's what you want, yes.

Lois: Don't ask me to spend my time doing that. Let me spend my time doing history, because nobody else is going to do this. (Talking with Karen's cats). I gave John Frederick a birthday card one year that showed a bunch of people doing yoga, and they are in all these weird positions. There's two cats sitting there, and they say, "All these years, and they still can't lick their butts." I thought it was hilarious, only because John was trying to take yoga himself.

Karen: What was his operation, what was his surgery?

Lois: Well, he's not really wanting to let people know. It's a bladder thing. He's been taking so many meds for so many years.

Karen: Were they able to fix it or give him a permanent catheter?



Lois: They may have to do that. They removed about 20 percent of his bladder, and that, of course, has all gone to the lab, so he goes back next week and they will tell him where they go from there, whether they want to try some radiation or chemo or whether they are going to take it out.

Karen: Is it cancer, not prostate?

Lois: No, it's in the bladder itself. And Duke Hoiland has had a terrible time this year. He had kidney cancer. They removed one kidney, and because it was further upstream he had cancer in the bladder, too. Now the remaining kidney isn't functioning the way it should, so they've got him on dialysis.

Karen: Oh, that's an awful way to live.

Lois: It is so sad.

Karen: He's a young man, isn't he?

Lois: He's 83, I think. But thank goodness he was in excellent shape. That's what saved him, I'm sure. Yes. I think it wasn't last year but the year before, we lost 13 North Forkers. I was keeping track of it.

Karen: Wow. I've tried to read the obituaries at the Veterans Home, but I missed the last two weeks now. I don't know who is gone. I don't want to be caught short with somebody who has lost somebody, like Larry [losing his mother].

Lois: Well, go ahead and send Larry a note. He's still getting condolences, I'm sure.

Karen: Well, you know, David [Silverstein] is my nephew.

Lois: I do, yes. So, there were three children, right? They called him Babu, but there were two other kids?

Karen: No, he has a sister, and then there were three kids with the family that adopted him. Well, didn't adopt him, sort of took care of him until he was such a pain in the ass that they sent him to his mother.

Lois: That was Honey and Bruce?

Karen: Yes.

Lois: Someone said, "Be sure and ask her about delivering Honey's baby upstairs."

Karen: Oh, gosh.

Lois: [Chuckles] And then she invited people to come to the birth?

Karen: Yes, she was kind of one of those New Age . . .

Lois: That's the way we were in those days, yes.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: I had people attending my daughter's birth.

Karen: Just one child?

Lois: Just the one, but in order to get a lesser rate the doctor said, "If you will allow students to come in and watch, I will charge you less." I said, "I don't care." [Laughs]

Karen: Robin Cox attended that; he was an EMT. He had been a medic in Vietnam.

Lois: He had training.

Karen: And he had delivered a lot of babies, because did they come from Chicago? I think so. He had worked in some kind of a poverty program. Val can substantiate this. There were lots of babies, and he had attended lots of babies. But Honey got to the point that he was getting ready to call the air ambulance, because she had labored for so long. And then finally Adair was born.

Lois: Adair, is that what they named him?

Karen: Yes.

Lois: Oh, that's wonderful. Where are they today?

Karen: Well, let's see. Adair, I think, is in Colorado with Ahisha, his sister.

Lois: Ahisha? How do you spell that?

Karen: A-h-i-s-h-a, something like that. I saw Honey—she came to see mom as mom died, and that was in the fall of 2011, so that's the last time I saw Honey. When we got divorced, because they had my sister's kids I thought maybe they would like to come to Polebridge and run the store and help me out and be partners and all that. They were there a year, but Honey did all the work. Bruce was a drinker, and of course she had the kids, too, five kids, David and Sage, my sister's kids, and her three kids, so it was really quite a zoo. And Bruce would hold court in the saloon. Was I with my mom? I wasn't there that winter, but my husband was. I left, but I thought we could all get along. Boy, was I a damn fool.

Lois: That's an incredible lot of work.

Karen: Yes. The hard work was trying to understand one another and cut each other slack, and some of us can't do that.

Lois: John's parents [the Grays] were there for a while, too?

Karen: They were there when we first opened the saloon. They must have been there the spring of 1976, and they did a lot of painting and fixing, fixing chairs and painting the tables. Yes, they were great.

Lois: That's where the Polebridge Putney bread came from, because they were from Putney, New Hampshire?

Karen: Vermont. Anyway, at the end of their tenure Honey had her son, Adair. I'm trying to remember; it was mid-summer, I think.

Lois: She had those kids and worked, too?

Karen: Oh God, yes, and a worthless husband.

Lois: Where did they live?

Karen: They lived in Eugene, Oregon.

Lois: When they were working, where did you house all these people?

Karen: Well, you know, I wasn't there a lot of that time. They must have been upstairs.

Lois: Who has lived in the cabin behind the saloon?

Karen: Mom was there for a couple of years, and then I moved back there for my last few years. Mom left in 1989, the year after the fire.

Lois: I know she made a trip back east with John Frederick to go to the Rio Algom stockholders meeting.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: And insisted on taking him to the ballet while she was there.

Karen: Oh, good for her. I didn't know that story. [Laughs]

Lois: Everybody knew, when you came into the Merc you had to sign the petition.

Karen: Yes, yes.

Lois: So many people have fond memories of her.

Karen: She always wanted to be in theater, and there she was on stage, and it was just great. She really enjoyed it.

Lois: Well, she's an amazing woman. She was in the Peace Corps, wasn't she?

Karen: Yes. She quit that just before she turned 80. She just said that was too old to be in the Peace Corps.

Lois: What country did she go to?

Karen: Sri Lanka. She wanted a warm country after being in Polebridge.

Lois: That's where Winnie Storli came from. Isn't she from Sri Lanka? She married Per Storli, who was Norwegian, of course. There's a whole story about how she and her two children left Sri Lanka on a Norwegian cargo ship, I guess, and that's how she met him. She was coming to the West Coast. He pursued her and pursued her, and she finally gave up and said, "Oh, okay." How they made their way to Montana, I don't know that part of the story, but I need to interview her, too.

Karen: Oh good. Yes.

Lois: Bonny said, “Oh, on this subject and this subject and this subject.”

Karen: Bonny Ogle?

Lois: Yes, Bonny Ogle will say, “Ask Winnie, she will know. She’ll know those people.”

Karen: Yes, she’s a very astute woman.

Lois: Tell me about the New Year’s parties at the saloon.

Karen: Well, they were kind of raucous, and it seemed like it was always about 40-below when we were having those.



**New Year's Eve party at the saloon, 1998.**

Lois: The Predictions Jar. Wilhelm would read the predictions from the previous year? [Chuckles] Did that just sort of happen, or did somebody come up with that idea?

Karen: They became a tradition. When we were first went up there, there were lots of people from Whitefish and West Glacier who were our friends, and they would come in droves and party before we got to the know the locals. The year we came was kind of an influx of *Five Acres and Independence*. That was some kind of publication, in Mother Earth News or something. Anyway, there were a lot of people who came that year to set up housekeeping, Rick and Wendy [Upton] and Doug [Chadwick] and Karen [Reeves], and the O'Hara's, I think, came in 1975.

Lois: And the Costellos [Jerry and Sally] were there pretty early.

Karen: They were there a year earlier.

Lois: Yes, because he was working in the [Flathead National] Forest, and she talks about them living way up Hay Creek in a camper or something for a while before they came down, and then they rented that cabin from Frank Evans for a while.

Karen: And then that got sticky.

Lois: Well, their house is the first place I remember going to up here that had wallpaper and drywall, with Sally saying, "I know, I'm tired of logs." [Laughs]

Karen: Yes.

Lois: That sounded so different to me at the time.

Karen: Yes, well you'd just started.

Lois: My grandmother thought we were absolutely crazy. "Why would you have an outhouse? Do you know how many years it took us to get indoor plumbing? Why would you voluntarily have an outhouse?" It just was beyond her.

Karen: Well, you can't explain it to some people.

Lois: And there were Halloween parties?

Karen: We had great Halloween parties

Lois: Once Sharon and John were married it seemed like some of that stuff migrated to the Hostel sometimes. I remember a Halloween party there at one time. And now the Caldwells have the Halloween party at their place, Alice and Jan. They've taken that up. That's their holiday, you know. But the parties were at the saloon for many years.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: Well, tell me about fighting the 1988 fire.

Karen: Well, where did it start? Red Bench didn't it. It came down...

Lois: Yes, and it came fast.

Karen: It did come fast. I think it started on September 6<sup>th</sup> as I recall, and by the next day it was across the river at Big Prairie and burned down Big Prairie and it stayed pretty much on the park side then, I think. They sent water trucks up the road so that the firefighters could get up the road without choking to death. And the County, somebody—the fire boss, maybe—said, "Save that water and put it on these buildings." They saved the saloon, I think, by doing that. Although we put sprinklers on top of the saloon and the store until the generator ran out and the pump quit, and they were both saved. We came down here. Chrys owned the store then. But Mom and Chrys and the cats came, and that's when her cat Black Magic ran away and we never saw him again. We were asleep about midnight that night. I think we left, I don't know, at 5:00 or 6:00. I've got a whole bunch of fire stories, as well, that I can share with you. Maybe I'll just give you all this stuff.

Lois: I'll be glad to take it, organize it and put it in folders, inventory it, and bring it back to you.

Karen: Wow!

Lois: Then you'll know what you have.

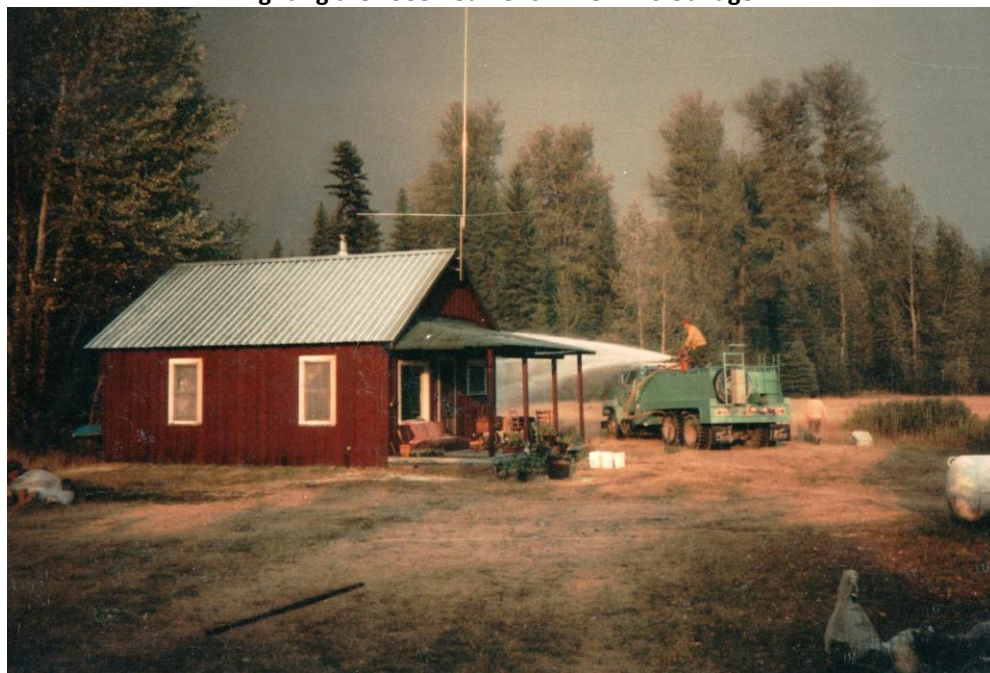
Karen: Yes, wow. It was late afternoon, early evening when we left and said goodbye to the store and everything.

Lois: The barn was still up at that point?

Karen: Yes, but we could see it. Did you see the picture of the airplane dropping the fire retardant? I think was a mistake. I think they were too heavy and had to let it go right where they did, but it was a perfect spot to barricade the store.



**Fighting the 1988 Red Bench Fire in Polebridge.**





Lois: They said because there was hay and such in there, the barn was burning from the inside more than from the outside.

Karen: Oh, well, that could be, sure.

Lois: Someone told me Wendy had a whole bunch of stuff stored in there, that she was using that for storage and lost a lot of things that were in the barn.

Karen: I don't remember much about that.

Lois: Chrys may have let her put stuff in there. I don't what she lost.

Karen: Well, that could have been, yes. And then the sheriff, I guess, had gotten word from the fire people, who said to Chrys, "You have to get up to the North Fork and give the firefighters permission to get into the store, because your roof is on fire. Your attic is on fire." So, she let them in, and they went up and put it out, and several of the rafters were burned, and she got those replaced.



Replacing fire-damaged roof section at the Merc (top); Destroyed gasoline pumps (bottom)



Lois: Did you do a lot of remodeling in the upstairs?

Karen: No. Nothing, really.

Lois: What was the upstairs like when you bought it?

Karen: It's a big room, and it had two bedrooms and a bedroom and a bedroom along the sides, and a nice big room in the middle.

Lois: An open area with a kitchen?

Karen: No, nothing. There was a bathroom—a toilet and a shower.

Lois: The Olsons didn't live there because they had their own place there at Hay Creek, right?

Karen: No, they hadn't built that yet. They lived in the apartment. That's where they lived, and then built at Hay Creek. We put in the outhouse out back for the public, because they forgot to stop on the roadside before they got to the store.

Lois: Bumped all the way up there, yes.

Karen: Yes, and then they needed a toilet. That was the best we could do, because it was a steady stream of people in the restroom.

Lois: So, Bill and Jessie Adair and then Emma lived in the cabin?

Karen: Did Emma live there, too, with Jessie and Bill?

Lois: Well, after Jessie died and he married Emma.

Karen: Oh, I see what you mean, yeah.

Lois: And then Ben and Annette likewise lived in the cabin?

Karen: I would guess they did.

Lois: Ted and Esther?

Karen: They built the apartment.

Lois: Upstairs?

Karen: Well no, on the side. Bob should be able to tell you that, I think, or Norma. I hope you can get ahold of her.

Lois: I will. I will track her down.

Karen: You will have to get her last name from Larry, if she's still alive. I think Larry might know.

Lois: We're trying to set-up another appointment with Bob. It was a sad story. Karen Maas McDonough and Chris Heitz went and interviewed him two years ago.



Karen: Who?

Lois: Bob Ross, and it was a wonderful interview. They brought the tape recorder back to me. I went to put it on my computer, and there was nothing there.

Karen: They hadn't turned it on?

Lois: I don't know whether it malfunctioned, or they didn't do something right. His phone was ringing and so they stopped the recording. He answered the phone and then they started it again. I have the last 20 minutes, but I don't have the first hour and a half. I said, "Write down all the things you talked about." Well, shortly after that he was cutting wood and the tree fell and broke his back and he was severely injured and we didn't know if he would be available again. So two years by, and I said, "Please, please go back." So they finally did go back, but instead of asking him the list of questions I had, they just turned the recorder on and let him talk. And he talked about hiking the Whitefish Range, but they didn't ask him any of the questions about the store and Polebridge. I said, "Please, we've got to go back again. I want to go with you this time."

Karen: Yes, good for you. Now is Kenny still alive?

Lois: As far as I know, yes.

Karen: Well he would be a good one, too. Is Bob the eldest?

Lois: Bob's the oldest. And he was already of some age when his parents bought the place.

Karen: But they were there 12 years.

Lois: Bob worked for the Forest Service up there, and then he was away at school, so he has some memories, but not complete memories of that time.

Karen: Interesting family. I don't know if Betty Nolan, is she gone?

Lois: He keeps referring to his sister, but I don't know if it's Betty or Norma that he said is in a nursing home. He said he would try and make arrangements. He doesn't know how much she will be able to talk.

[Then after the fire] we had trouble getting the pole bridge back, and then they got the bridge, but no bolts?

Karen: Right. It took forever.

Lois: Was it the Elliott kids—Melissa—who marched in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade as the missing bolts?

Karen: [Chuckles] I don't remember that. I didn't have time to watch the parades.

Lois: But I remember you putting up the "No Bridge" sign at the river, or they were going to rename Polebridge as No Bridge, Montana?

Karen: Oh, I don't remember.

Lois: There was an article, or maybe Larry wrote a column about you or something. And then Val told me that Jerry Costello had arranged a bridge party at the saloon, and everybody got there and they got pretty wound up and liquored up, and they said, "We need to write a letter to the Park Service." Val said she got a big piece of paper, and they would dictate to her what it should say. So, she wrote, "Dear Roger Ranger Rulebook."

Karen: [Chuckles] Oh yes, that was Roger [Semler].

Lois: They got this letter all written, then she said they hopped in the back of Bill Brown's pick-up truck and drove over to the melted bridge. They got across the river somehow and nailed it to the door on the ranger station. Were you in on that?

Karen: Yes, I was, and that was really fun. And I have a picture of the sign somewhere.

Lois: Oh really?

Karen: Yeah, yeah.

Lois: Wonderful.

Karen: I think we had to walk across the old bridge. I think foot traffic was okay. Oh God, I remember one thing we said, "Can Bob and Mary come out and play?" They were at Bowman Lake, and somehow there was a rule about not going across the bridge, or having to stay at their duty station or something.

Lois: This is Bob and Mary?

Karen: Bob and Mary Paul. They were the rangers at Bowman Lake for years and years.

Lois: John Frederick talks about walking across the bridge to talk to the ranger, and that he wasn't supposed to do that but he did it anyway.

Karen: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so we all went across drunk, and it's a wonder none of us died, but no, I think it was pretty safe. And I think Sam DeSanto was really a powerful instigator, Jerry's nephew. But I've got a picture of that sign.

Lois: Oh, that would be great. So, Jerry DeSanto was the ranger there. I saw in the paper the exact years that he was the district ranger. Was he there when you bought the Merc?

Karen: He and Cindy [Mish] arrived a month after the four of us arrived. We came April Fool's Day [1975].

Lois: That was your first knowing him, that he was the ranger and you were running the Merc.

Karen: Well, John knew him, because John worked in the Park. John and Dan both knew him, and I had met him a time or two at Big Mountain, I think, and some other time. I had just met him, but I had known Cindy. We had worked together, I guess at Big Mountain.

Lois: Well, I just hear people talk about him with great affection, “Oh yes, when Jerry was the ranger, he would let us ride our horses,” or he would let us do this or that or the other.

Karen: He wasn’t lenient. He protected the resource, but he was reasonable.

Lois: With the locals, yes.

Karen: Yes, but he was also very protective of his Park, and he didn’t let any abuse go on. But he wasn’t officious about the rules.

Lois: Why make a fuss about things?



**Karen Feather and Jerry DeSanto, 1998.**

Karen: Yes. There was an interesting time. In 1980-1982 we had a guy at the Wilderness Cabins by the name of Paul Mueller—not the Paul Mueller [who owns a place on the North Fork].

Lois: A different Paul Mueller?

Karen: Yes, which was another curious thing. We always had a funny thing about names, but this Paul Mueller I think was handicapped. I think he had an arm that wasn’t working right. I think Sally and Jerry might have rented to him, and he ran out of wood in the middle of the winter, so he drove up to Dick Walsh’s woodshed in the snow and left perfect tracks, filled up his truck a couple of times with wood, and took it down to the Wilderness Cabins. It was a surprise when he got busted for stealing wood out of the Park. [Laughs] That’s about all I remember about it.

Lois: Who was running the Wilderness Cabins then?

Karen: Well it belonged to Terry [McCombs].

Lois: The original people whose name I see associated with it were the Stonestreets, John and Trudy Stonestreet.

Karen: That's right. I think they built it. And then Terry had a pal named Jerry Gelsinger, but Terry and—what was her name [Pam], a really pretty woman. Well, Jerry and Sally would know that. They bought it, and then the year that we got there they had put an ad in *Mother Earth News*. Is that the magazine?

Lois: That we used to all get? Yes.

Karen: Back country, that was *Five Acres and Independence*, and they did have ads for these places out in the sticks. There was mail by the truckload coming in to apply to come to this place. Somewhere I have that ad. The mail would come in, and I would say, "What is all this stuff?" And then I found the ad, and I couldn't figure out why they were doing it. Sally and Jerry would know about them.

Lois: Well, the Pittmans said they looked at that property when they were looking at property, and they went down and looked at the cabins. They thought about it and then Carl said, "You know, it's a good thing we didn't buy it, because the mosquitos are just awful down there." [Laughs]

Karen: Oh, they were really. That first year I think we rented out the mother cabin, and I don't think we had the grass cut on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, but the people were going to spend a couple of days there, but they left the first night because the mosquitos were so bad. The guys at Logging Lake, they were doing some kind of a timber study in the Park, and they would get up in the morning—well, at least one time I know they did—and drive around with their heads out the windows, and that would suck the mosquitos out so they would get a little bit of time without being chewed on. They were just awful. But I don't remember them being like that ever again. Maybe it was just that year.

Lois: They've been pretty bad this year. [Laughs] Just because it was such a wet winter.

Karen: Yes, I noticed earlier, but they are gone pretty much now, aren't they?

Lois: Well, we were at the Hall the other night and they were eating us up.

Karen: Oh gosh.

Lois: All that fresh meat in one place. What do you know about the competitive store that the Hensens ran that was there at the intersection [with the Loop Road]?

Karen: I was just reading Cindy Mish's—you've seen her interviews?

Lois: I've read her interviews, but I have never seen the little booklet that she put out. Someone told me that Alice had one. I'd like to borrow it and scan it, if I can find it. Did you ever see her booklet?

Karen: I didn't know she had a booklet.

Lois: Joyce told me she put together a little booklet based on the interviews that she did.

Karen: Well, I'll ask her. She's been a friend of mine.

Lois: Oh yes, by all means, please. I just got the four interviews that she did with Ralph Thayer.

Karen: Four? Good for her.

Lois: Yes, I've got those, and I've seen some of the others, but I would love to get the booklet, if it exists.

Karen: Well, one of them was with Ben Hensen, or with Mrs. Keith, Emma Lacher Adair's daughter. Did you read that one with Mrs. Keith?

Lois: No, I haven't seen that one.

Karen: Well, I have that here, and she was talking about that, and I think he had that going for... And then there was another line in that that was really a shock, that not Harley, but somebody Huck, Helen Ramon's...?

Lois: Dad, Milton Huck?

Karen: I don't think it was Milton, either. It might have been an uncle.

Lois: She had brothers—Harley, Donald, and Vernon were her three brothers.

Karen: I think Vernon might have been the one. He brought a truckload of lumber for his store up the North Fork. Maybe it was in a newspaper article, maybe it was in an interview, but I will write that down, because when I come across it again. But it must have been short-lived, but they were all pretty short-lived. It runs in the family.

Lois: Yes, and then her brother Robert was an artist, too, and he committed suicide in 1951, I think.

Karen: Oh, I didn't know that.

Lois: That was early on. She was still married to Voelker. She was Helen Huck Voelker Ramon.

Karen: There was a beautiful window at the library. Go to the Columbia Falls Library. They've always got a little display, and there were some nice pictures of Helen and some pictures of her art.

Lois: Oh really?

Karen: Yes, it was a really nice display.

Lois: Well I'm working with Teddy [Ramon] now.

Karen: Is he out?

Lois: Yes, he's out. They let him out after 18 months. I think he served 25 percent of the sentence, and they let him out. He has so much stuff at his place. If you ask him a specific question about a painting, he knows. He said often she would do a sketch, then she would do a watercolor, then she would do the painting. And he said

sometimes he has all three. If not, I can say, “Well where is this painting?” “Oh, so and so bought it. It’s in a bank in such and such a town.” He knows all these things; you just have to ask him the right questions. Helen also wrote a whole bunch of stories about her childhood. Well, Ted had all this stuff on his computer, which got seized, and now he can’t get the computer back.

Karen: Did he throw away the originals?

Lois: Who knows? But I’ve been trying to help him get those stories down and scan some of the paintings. Again, we need the Helen Huck Ramon Collection, whether it’s at the college, which is a logical place, or someplace else, but let’s have an inventory of her works. It’s going to be a long project, but it needs to be done you know. Darn it.

Karen: Well, we need to consult with John, because I don’t know if he thinks the species is going to last very much longer. That needs to be done for what? It’s always a consideration, you know. And I need to do a job, but then I think why bother?

Lois: Well yes, if you’ve got contact with Cindy that would be great. I saw Regi [Altop] the other day, because someone said to me, “Well, Regi had the job, while the bridge was down, of rowing workers back and forth across the river to go to work.” I asked him, and he said, “No, that wasn’t me. I was down at Two Medicine then,” so somebody had that job.

Karen: Yes. Well, Jerry was gone by then. Roger [Semler was the ranger].

Lois: Do you know who might have pictures of that Hensen store?

Karen: I don’t think I’ve seen one either.

Lois: And the remains burned in the 1988 fire, so it’s not there anymore. Larry said he thought it closed in about 1936, that the Depression killed it, and that’s when the Hensens went to California, and that’s where Ben Jr. met Ann, because she was from Fontana or wherever. That’s their connection to Alice and Jan Caldwell, because Jan’s sister was in school with Iola Mason.

Karen: Have you talked to Iola?

Lois: I’ve tried. We haven’t connected the way we need to. You know she’s getting a little touchy these days, I think, and her husband died a couple of years ago.

Karen: Another husband? Not Louie? Louie has been gone a long time.

Lois: This was I think just a couple of years ago. I can’t remember his name.

Karen: I didn’t know she remarried.

Lois: I have the National Register nomination for that place, which I’m assuming Ann did all that work, all the research to get that on the Register.

Karen: I suspect somebody did that for her.

Lois: I need to go with the Caldwells, or somebody that knows her. I mean, she doesn't know me from Adam. I talked to her when we were doing the cookbook because I wanted a picture of Ann for the cookbook.

Karen: Want to see a picture of Ann?

Lois: Oh yes. The only one I had was the one of her in the back of the pick-up with the pipe in the rocking chair.

Karen: Oh yeah. It's probably a little dirty, but this is Ann. Isn't that a nice picture?

Lois: It is. The one we used is like that, and it's slightly out of focus, but I showed Iola the one with the pipe and she said, "You will not use that picture!"

Karen: [Laughs] Oh, that's funny.

Lois: I said, "Surely you have a picture of your mother. I would be glad to use whatever picture you want." Nothing was forthcoming, nothing. So, I finally got that picture from Alice, which isn't a very good picture, but I scanned it and I sent it to her and said, "Would it be okay to use this picture?" "Yeah, that's fine. Use that one."

Karen: Gosh, maybe she's just proprietary. It's my North Fork, just keep your nose out of it.

Lois: She doesn't want anybody to walk back there and see the lodge or anything. They've got it gated off, and she gets hot if anybody walks in there.

Karen: Who are the heirs? I don't think Gene has children.

Lois: I don't know. Jan would probably know. He led a history tour to the J. K. Miller cabin over in the park, and if he had time he was going to bring people by the lodge. I said, "Well, you are checking with Iola, aren't you? Don't go there without telling her." He said yes, he would check with her. And I gave him the National Register nomination. I said, "This has a lot of information you could share with people." But I know she's touchy about folks going in there.

Karen: I don't know her well, but I'm kind of surprised.

Lois: If you could describe how the function of the Merc changed over the years that you had it, was there any noticeable change in clientele, the kinds of things you tried to carry for people?

Karen: Well, you know Dave Walter's Bon Ami box story. We had fiddle strings, and they had galoshes, everything. It was everything for the homesteaders in those days.

Lois: And he had the customer list which was great, yes.

Karen: And the Forest Service and the oil developers, those were the original customers. And then when we got there it was loggers and the Park.

Lois: Because they had the beetle kill, there was a lot of logging going on?

Karen: Yes, and there had been. Ethel Newton could have told you; she had a great memory. A lot of people burned out during the Depression. They just weren't able to stay up there, so that was a real down time, I think. Then when we got there in the 1970s, and the 1960s before, it was the campers who went into the Park. They were all low-budget people, or they wouldn't have been camping, so they had a few curios and essentials. I think Bob and Betty did, although they could probably tell you. And that's really what I had, was a few curios, moose-drop earrings.

Lois: I remember those, yes.

Karen: I have some, I think.

Lois: Who made those?

Karen: Ruth Sondreson.

Lois: Oh, did she really? I didn't know that. Then you had the people who built their homes in the meadow. They were summer people, a lot of those. Well, some were year-round. The O'Hara's were year-round at first, and the Uptons were, and John got the Hostel going. Grimaldi was always a summer person, wasn't he?

Karen: I think they were there full-time at the end. Gee, I don't, these blocks of years are hard for me to picture, I think maybe the last ten years, anyway, or more than that the Grimaldis were there.

Lois: Until Jean died.

Karen: All of those people would drive to town for their essentials. I know Jerry and Cindy would come in and buy a six-pack of beer every now and then to support the store. I don't think many people supported the store like that consciously. They would get something that they needed, and usually if I didn't have the spice they needed I would go in the kitchen and give them a tablespoon full. But I think the Historic Register has it as a community center, and that was partly because of the post office.

Lois: The post office ensured that everybody came in.

Karen: Yes, but there was also the big dance hall upstairs. I think they had parties up there.

Lois: I've heard that.

Karen: Chance Beebe's wedding reception.

Lois: Yes.

Karen: There's a beautiful article about that somewhere.

Lois: Chance and Eva. But when they interviewed Evans he said no, that it was in the upstairs of their house.

Karen: Frank Evans?

Lois: No, the son, Bud. But it was at the Merc for sure, in 1914.



Karen: Yes, [it was] a brand new facility. I don't know when Evans—well, that was the Beebe's homestead, I think.

Lois: The Evans' bought that in the 1940s. Actually, I think it was during the war that Frank came.

Karen: From Adair?

Lois: No. [Yes, actually Evans did buy from Adair, who had bought it from Beebe.]

Karen: I've got that down somewhere.

Lois: Who had bought it in the meantime? You know, Ralph Thayer and his wife bought Square Peg. It had been Charlie Wise's homestead.

Karen: Right.

Lois: And then there was somebody else, I don't know the family name in between, her name was Margaret [Causey], which is how it got the name Square Peg. But evidently the Thayers bought it from Charlie Wise, and they were in there in the 1920s when, who was his wife? Dode? They said she was the one that burned the schoolhouse down. That was always the rumor. She didn't like those kids or whatever.

Karen: Was there a schoolhouse right there?

Lois: There was a schoolhouse, yes, across the road where John had his hay barn. The Polebridge School was there from 1919, I think, until it burned. The question is why it burned. It burned in 1924. There's a young man from the University of Montana, Alex Kroll who did his master's thesis on that school. He was an archeologist, and he excavated the site.

Karen: Wow. Well, the school board would have the names of all the students.

Lois: They sort of do. Up here it was iffy, whoever they could get to teach. I'm pursuing that, because we want to save the Ford Schoolhouse, and I've been working the current Forest Service archeologist, he's new. There may be a grant we can get. They have a special grant that they can get money to do restoration. It's in pretty good shape. The roof is in good shape. The foundation is in good shape. I think Bob Funk did that when he had it. It just needs some loving care. I said, "Listen, we've got community organizations. We can provide the labor."

Karen: Wouldn't that be fun? Yes.

Lois: If you guys could get us the money for materials. They have restoration people who know how to strip lead paint, those labs in Helena.

Karen: Yes, they are perfectionists.

Lois: They can do all that, so anyway, we're pursuing that.

Karen: That's good. My gosh, you've got a wide net you are casting.

Lois: Yes.

Karen: How much time a day do you spend on this project?

Lois: Six or eight hours probably. I look at myself and say, "This is retirement?"

Karen: [Laughs]

Lois: There's something wrong with this picture. But who else is going to do it? Nobody else is going to. I find that everybody is interested in history. They will tell you how much they hated history in school, but if you start talking local history with people, everybody is interested, they are. But they're not going to spend time. They would rather be out rafting the river or hiking or whatever they're doing. I'm supposed to ask you about the Cooper logs in front of the store.

Karen: Oh, they're just Cooper stoppers.

Lois: What did he drive?

Karen: I don't remember. I think it may have been in Bob Olson's time, but he [Roy Cooper] drove something onto the porch. That's the story.

Lois: I have a picture of Dan Kaufman's horse on the porch.

Karen: Oh yes, and the 18 dogs.

Lois: So those were put up to keep Roy from coming on the porch?

Karen: Yes, to protect it from Cooper.

Lois: You started a pool, when they paved the road, betting on when the first pothole would appear?

Karen: Right, yeah.

Lois: Who won the pool?

Karen: Well, I think that the date was kind of in between two guesses. I was one of them, and my former husband was one of them.

Lois: Who was the County Commissioner that had that fine project?

Karen: Oh, the bald guy? I can't think of that. Ron Wilhelm and I were interviewed by Jim Connor, I think for a little local TV station, and I think he has a tape of that. Here, I have tapes for you. I have the flood [1995].

Lois: Oh my gosh.

Karen: And then I have the Unsolved Mysteries episode.

Lois: Bo Tanner! I have pictures of the cross being erected. Remember the Church of the Circus Tent, we called it?

Karen: Yes.

Lois: And when he burned Ben Bowerman's cabin, was it?

Karen: Yes.

[Others coming in with vegetables]

Lois: Tell me about some of the old-timers who were still around when you started operating the Merc. Who would come in, if they would come in? The Holcombs, the Wurtz's?

Karen: I didn't know either of them. Johnny Mathison used to stop on his way up and down, but he wasn't social. He didn't socialize.

Lois: Was he logging? Is that what he was doing up there?

Karen: I don't know.

Lois: You know, it's so funny. I asked Nonie, "Johnny was a horse logger, right?" "Oh no, he wasn't a horse logger." But I have articles about him being a horse logger, so I know he was.

Karen: Who is Nonie?

Lois: Nonie Mathison is Esther Day's daughter, and she married Johnny Mathison. Johnny was her husband, and then they had a son who is also John Mathison, who married Darlene, John and Darlene Mathison. They live in Evergreen.

Karen: Have you talked to them?

Lois: John was in on the interview, and he interjected some stuff when we were talking to Nonie.

Karen: Esther Day married John Mathison?

Lois: No, no. Esther was married to Ralph Day. Esther was the Holcombs' daughter. She was Esther Holcomb, and she first married a man named Lynn Chapman, and they had a daughter Nonie [Wynona]. They were only married a couple of years and Lynn died. Then Esther remarried Ralph Day, the mail carrier. Esther Day had the daughter Nonie by Lynn Chapman. Nonie Chapman married Johnny Mathison.

Karen: Okay, the elder.

Lois: Yes, the older Johnny Mathison. They had six kids, I think. And their names all rhyme: Donnie Ray and Johnny Day and Connie Mae and Lonnie... [Chuckles]

Karen: Gay. [Laughs]

Lois: There were six—Lonnie Gay, yes, and Bonnie Kay and Ronnie Jay.

Karen: But he's the one with six kids?

Lois: Right, and I know he worked with Loyd Sondreson. I know he did horse logging up there. In fact, Larry gave me a picture of horses hooked up, and I said, "Whose horses are those?" He said, "Those are Johnny Mathison's horses." Tom Reynolds, I know, didn't come out much at all.

Karen: Not often, but I used to get an order from him in the fall, and then I would deliver it.

Lois: You would take it up to him?

Karen: I did a couple of times, I took it up, real elaborate.

Lois: Becky [Hardey] would take things to him.

Karen: Yes, she would take stuff all the time.

Lois: Like staples for the winter?

Karen: Yes, a big order of all kinds of stuff. Several times I did that. I would pick it all up and get it to him, so I thought maybe we were friends, and I thought he was a very interesting guy. He spent a lot of time with the Walters, so I knew he was social. So, one day I went up to visit him, and I took something as a gift. I don't remember what it was, but I knocked on the door and he answered the door, and I said, "I thought I would just stop by. I have a..." I don't know what it was, a bag of cookies or something, and he said, "Oh, okay. Thank you very much," and he closed the door.

Lois: I've had that experience on the North Fork. I have. Yes, like, "Ah, okay." [Laughs]

Karen: He wasn't interested in being social.

Lois: Did you know Walt and Hazel Hammer?

Karen: No, I didn't, but I know that he was a great craftsman and that she had a feud with probably Frank Evans about the mail delivery. Larry probably knows all about that. That was before my time.

Lois: Ollie Terrian.

Karen: No, he was before my time.

Lois: Ruth and Loyd Sondreson.

Karen: Sure, I knew them, great guys. Is Ruth dead by now?

Lois: Yes, she's gone.

Karen: Has it been a long time?

Lois: 2008 rings in my mind. I confuse her with Rachel Sweet sometimes.

Karen: Rachel is still alive?

Lois: No, Rachel is gone, too. I hear wonderful things about the Sondresons.

Karen: They were as good as they get. They really were nice people.

Lois: Someone talked about how if you were up in the morning, you were welcome to go by the Sondreson camp and there would be a huge breakfast, and everybody knew.

Karen: Oh, the logging camp, yeah.

Lois: You were welcome to come.

Karen: Well, Loyd had stopped logging by the time we got there.

Lois: He passed in '85 I think. He had lupus.

Karen: Yes, he fought that for a long time.

Lois: The Foremans, Helen and Orville Foreman.

Karen: Yes. And do you know Margaret Chesley?

Lois: I know the name.

Karen: She's got a place up on Saturday Street [referring to the Seventh Day Adventist community having their sabbath on Saturday.] It was some of McFarland's property, with Wernicks, down on the river.

Lois: Yes, down on the river, Red Meadow East.

Karen: Red Meadow East, okay. I was traveling up and down the road one time, and I knew Helen Foreman and she was very friendly. She was just one of the nicest women I had ever met, so I took Helen in to meet her and she said, "Margaret Chesley, Chesley—hmm. Are you related to the woman who, with me, helped start the League of Women Voters?" I was just astounded, because she remembered Margaret's mother. I think her mom was still alive then, but maybe not. But anyway, Helen was so astute and remembered fondly her political ties.

Lois: She was big into that, yes. Someone said they thought she was chair of the Republican National Convention one year.

Karen: Republican? Well, it was a different party in those days wasn't it?

Lois: Yes, it certainly was.

Karen: She may have been. She was the mayor, of course, of Jacksonville, Illinois. She had two lovely daughters who I didn't keep track of—they didn't come in real often.

Lois: One of them just died, Peggy Cohn.

Karen: Oh.

Lois: Yes, so now I'm dealing with the grandson, Jason Cohn. Because I really would like to document that property. That was Ed and Emil Peterson's homestead, and the original buildings are still there, Old Main and the big barn. I guess Richard Hildner is planning to dismantle that barn and move it to his property. He's working with the

family to do that, but I want to document it *in situ* before he does that. You mentioned Ethel Newton.

Karen: Yes, she was Ben Hensen's sister, you know.

Lois: Right.

Karen: She was a very sweet dispositioned, tough old gal, but good. Ray Brown can tell you everything about Ethel.

Lois: Right. There's a structure down there I need to go look at. So, you knew Dave Walter. You knew his dad George, too?

Karen: Oh yes, George and Dorothy. They were very social. Well, I'm not sure that's the way to describe them, but they got around. George got around. He was a networker, maybe.

Lois: What did he do for a living?

Karen: He was a professor at Wisconsin Boys School. It's where George McFarland went to school. Is that how they got out here? Have you talked to George?

Lois: I have talked to George, yes.

Karen: Have you seen him lately?

Lois: It's been probably a year and a half. They had an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party for him at Home Ranch Bottoms a couple of years ago.

Karen: Well, good. He's getting around then.

Lois: He is. He still comes up, and the grandson . . .

Karen: Jack.

Lois: Jack kind of takes him around, but I went and interviewed him upstairs in the apartment he has in the one building. He's still got the big old butcher block table that Mary used. He had great stories. The recipe he and Jack wanted to put in the North Fork Cookbook was Mary's sourdough pancake recipe, because Jack has all these memories as a child of her making pancakes and coming up in the spring. The bacon would be all covered with uck, and they would vinegar it down. He said the sourdough starter would be in the basement, just thick with black stuff. Mary would scoop all that off and get herself some starter and get it going again.

Karen: Wow, good for her. Yes.

Lois: The Maases [Paul and Maxine]?

Karen: They'd stop once on the way up, maybe, and said, "Tell Virgil to deliver the mail," and that would be just about it. I probably wouldn't even recognize them.

Lois: Who was Virgil?

Karen: He was the mail carrier. Virgil Lane was the guy who was doing that then.

Lois: Yes, I remember the name. I'm trying to get that list locked down. I've got chunks and pieces. What years do you believe he delivered the mail?

Karen: I don't know when he started; it was before me, but I think Becky was the next one.

Lois: I think I have when Becky started. You don't think there was anybody between him and Becky?

Karen: No, I don't think so. And then I don't know when Karin [Colby Craver] started, but she was right after Becky.

Lois: I have her dates. The Edwards, Burt and Thelma?

Karen: I knew Burt and Thelma. I thought they were just the loveliest people, and then I knew the three boys. I didn't know Tom very well, and Gary was kind of a tough person to know.

Lois: Yes, he was.

Karen: But Wes was a complete love. He's the nicest guy. Westie. [Chuckles]

Lois: Yes. Ivan and Mary Windsheimer.

Karen: Well, they were close by and they were social. We would see them on mail day. They were just a charming couple, and then when she died I thought Ivan might go, too, he was so brokenhearted, but he rallied and lived quite a while longer.

Lois: He was around for quite a while. We have him on tape, too.

Karen: Good.

Lois: Bob and Sophia Schepe.

Karen: Yes, they were social and at all the parties. I always thought that every artist needed a Sophia because she was the greatest promoter in the world, and Bob could do his art and not worry about how to market it.

Lois: I understand that little building was his studio, that that had come out of the Park from Hidden Meadow. There was a couple that started a girls' camp, John and Ann Slifer. They wanted to have a girls' camp in the Park, and they excavated a big lake and put up cabins. It didn't last real long.

Karen: Into the Hidden Meadow Trail?

Lois: Hidden Meadow, right. Then after that died, some of those cabins came out and Bob's studio was one of those cabins. And the Bowerman cabin that Bo burned, I think that was another one that had come out of there. I had a request from the Park the other day. Somebody wanted to know about Hidden Meadow?

Karen: Interesting.

Lois: I said, "Surely there's something in the Park archives." I think he was a summer person, and he didn't know.

Karen: Well, their archivist has not been the greatest.

Lois: I know. It's been so sad.

Lois: When we were thinking is there any way we could come up here full-time I went over to the park and said you know, I'm working for DOD but I can do the job. They had a Director of Interpretation, and then I said, "But who is your historian?" "Well we have a person, she's the historian, the archivist." She was public affairs, she did the newsletter, and she was like a GS-3 and she had been there forever, and I thought what kind of a history program are you going to have?

Karen: Right, and when one of them quits then they like to wait about six months and save the salary.

Lois: You bet.

Karen: So they can use it somewhere else, so that's not their focus I'm sorry to say.

Lois: Did you ever know Scotty Beaton?

Karen: I didn't. He was gone by the time I got there.

Lois: Tell me your memories of Frank Evans. He died in 1982, so he was there for seven years.

Karen: Full-time?

Lois: Yes, I think he pretty much was. He and Edna had divorced by then, and then he had the girlfriend.

Karen: Ginny Lee.

Lois: Right.

Karen: Well, I remember the morning he shot himself, and Ginny came racing over to the store in a complete...

Lois: Was she the one that found him?

Karen: Yes. They say suicide is a way to punish somebody, and I think that was his intention.

Lois: But they weren't together at the time, were they?

Karen: Well, she had come to visit, and she was on her way to China. He wanted to go with her, and she had other plans. She was a good traveler/tourist, and he would need a lot of attention, not because he was so old or anything, but because . . . he wanted a lot of attention anyway, so she had said no, but she would be back. It didn't fly, and so he shot himself. And then some very good-hearted North Forkers, John O'Hara among them, Ron [Wilhelm] probably, maybe Rick [Upton] went and cleaned up the mess. It



was really a ghastly and nasty thing to do. He was always in some scuffle with somebody about . . .

Lois: He just liked to stir things up?

Karen: He liked to stir things up. There was one really good story about a logger who ran down one of Ladenburg's cows. I guess he talked to Ladenburg and got permission for the carcass, so he called a knacker and they skinned it and cut it up and froze it. Then I think Frank sent somebody a bill for something or other, but he actually had the audacity for doing that. He was always looking for...

Lois: Did he come to the store very often?

Karen: He did, with lots of advice.

Lois: Did you serve coffee there?

Karen: No. You know, if somebody hung around long enough Ma would pour people a cup of coffee.

Lois: But his property comes right up to the store. Did you ever have any confrontation over property stuff or anything?

Karen: No, I didn't fight with him, I don't think. Maybe he was so tired after fighting with Bob Olson for so many years. They really had a terrible time. And you've read all his columns.

Lois: Well, I'm trying to get them all. I don't have them all yet.

Karen: Well, there is a publication that Ginny just put together of all his columns.

Lois: Where?

Karen: It was on that table. I will get it to you.

Lois: Oh, I need that, yes. So, she had his columns? I know that Floyd Luke was trying to do that. How does Ginny spell her last name?

Karen: Now it's Lee, but it was Tcheng, I think.

Lois: I see various spellings, so I didn't know which one was correct.

Karen: Was it Chinese? She was married to a Chinese. I've got pictures of her. She's a great gal, but she's a free spirit, and he wanted her in a birdcage.

Lois: She was considerably younger than him?

Karen: Yes, a lot younger.

Lois: Mid Connelly.

Karen: Have you talked to her?

Lois: Yes, I've talked to Mid. Mid likes to talk.

Karen: Oh gosh, and her relationship was like Bob Evans, the guy at the border, who I think was usually the guy who if they were together would be the talker, and they would go on until the cows came home. But when you got the women away from their husbands they went on just the same way, and Mid is one of them.

Lois: She's had a stroke, too, and that has affected things a bit. Her son brings her out. She has all of her mother's stories and her father's stories.

Karen: Well, her dad was Austin Weikert.

Lois: She had a bunch of stories. She was going to publish them, but then her computer went down and then something else happened. I really want to help her do that, and I think I may just have to drive to Oregon and say, "Okay, let me take the hard drive out of your computer. I'm sure everything is still there." Her brain is kind of scattered, so it's hard to keep her on track.

Karen: How long ago did she have a stroke?

Lois: Oh, it's been years now. She was just here earlier this year and I talked to her and said I really want to get you on tape talking about your dad. She said, "Well, I've got to go home." I said, "When will you be back?" She said maybe September. It depends on when somebody can bring her. I think she's got a house full of stuff.

Karen: I bet she does. I'm sure she does. She's got how many kids?

Lois: Three or four, I think.

Karen: Maybe they are the ones.

Lois: Well, they're are scattered.

Karen: Well, and sometimes people don't give a damn about this until they are a little older.

Lois: The one son that I did meet last year when I went up to see her at the cabin, I think he could care. The other son she seems to not have much to do with, and there's the two daughters. One is in law enforcement, I believe. I think she's maybe with the Washington State Patrol, and the other one is back in school again in California somewhere, but I'm not getting warm fuzzies about the kids. I would like to help her organize what she does have and get her on tape talking about her dad, but it's hard to keep her on topic.

Karen: Cindy Mish did an interview of Austin.

Lois: Did she? Yes, I need Cindy.

Karen: She will be out. We're going to have a party for Jerry [DeSanto] in mid-September, and Cindy will come out. I know she would love to talk to you. She likes to talk, too.

Lois: Yes. Ann Hensen.

Karen: Oh, Ann was just a love, and she used to come to work at the store because she always had so much company from California she had to get away from them. She said she ended up just cooking and cleaning for all the company, so she'd just as soon come to the store.

Lois: When she worked in the Park in the summertime, was she living at Vance Lodge?

Karen: Yes, but she didn't do that until the end of her career, and then she was on the gate, but when we first got there she would work at the store for the first, oh five years. Was I there 12 years? I think maybe the first six years, and then the last six years she was over in the Park. She got a job at the entrance station.

Lois: Which would have been a seasonal thing, which is why I was wondering if she went away in the winter.

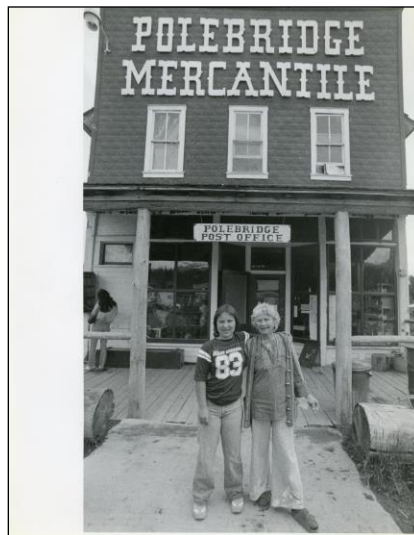
Karen: Oh yes, she was never here in the winter.

Lois: She went back to California in the winter?

Karen: Yes. She would say, "Have fun." What would she say? I can't remember, but Jerry was always amused by her parting gesture to the tourists. She was a sweetie.

Lois: I'm supposed to ask you about the day somebody brought a man in with a gunshot wound to the gut and laid him up on the counter.

Karen: Well, I was in Seattle. I had left my mother and Paula to run the joint. I was gone that winter, but I called and some guy answered the phone. I was just calling mother and Paula to see how they were doing, and a man answered the phone and said they were out getting a helicopter to come in. So I said, "Well what's going on?" "Well there's a guy laying here on the floor." You know, I think that was a snowmobile accident, and it might have had something to do with Roy Duff. The gunshot wound I was in town or something. I wasn't there, and it was early in our tenure, because I think John Gray was there and he administered to the wound. He was a first aid kind of guy, being in the ski patrol and that kind of thing.



**Karen's mother Bettie Jacobsen and Paula Dziuk.**

Lois: Was it a hunter?

Karen: You know, I think it must have been. Well, it's hard to say, but I don't know. I think both times there might have been a helicopter come in. Oh boy, my memory is so fuzzy, but I wasn't there. Thank God I missed both of those.

Lois: What do you remember about John Frederick moving in with his wife Sue at the time and then setting up the Hostel? That was in 1979-80.

Karen: I just remember them and their plans, that they were going to get a national...

Lois: Part of the Hostel Association.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: She was the one that wanted to have a hostel. John said he had looked at other properties. He looked at one, and it was all run down. He took one look and said he knew that wasn't for him. But then he said Sue wanted a hostel. Wally and whichever Ross girl he had married . . .

Karen: Betty.

Lois: Wally and Betty, yes, were there, but I don't know at what point they left, or if it was vacant before John and Sue took over.

Karen: I think it wasn't vacant too long. I think they bought it from Wally, but I don't know.

Lois: And, of course, it needed a lot of work to turn it into what it became.

Karen: Yes. And I'll bet it's pretty different now with Oliver down there, too.

Lois: It's much neater.

Karen: I imagine it is. I used to feed his cat from time to time if he would go away in the winter, and I was always kind of amazed that people would actually stay there. [Laughs] Of course, it was always a mess. You can't leave a cat in a place where...

Lois: Oh, the big fat, round, orange cat? [Peaches]

Karen: Yes, she was just a disaster. It was terrible. She was so fat, not good for your kitties.

Lois: And then they had goats and they had rabbits.

Karen: Sharon did.

Lois: Yes, when Sharon came along. Sharon was working on her PhD in geology.

Karen: Piled higher and deeper.

Lois: Yes, climbing up those mountains. I remember she had big sample bags full of rocks, because they were finding Precambrian rocks, the oldest rocks, on top of the mountains. It was interesting to talk with her.

Karen: When you talked with her, you've been doing this for a while?

Lois: She's on Facebook, and she's still married to...

Karen: The real estate guy?

Lois: Billy Bob [Lacy], yes. She was supposed to come through here last year, but she got in trouble in the real estate world, which is one of the reasons she took off.

Karen: Oh.

Lois: And also cleaned John out pretty good.

Karen: I know that much.

Lois: Then they were living in Kentucky or somewhere. Anyway, she got religion. Then they were living in Ohio. Her daughter was living in Michigan, and she's got grandchildren and all that. I haven't interviewed her about the history.

Karen: That's interesting, because she would have lots to say about it.

Lois: Yes, I'm sure she would.

Karen: You've talked to Larry Wilson about Bo Tanner?

Lois: I've talked to him many times and have him on tape a couple of times. I remember all the Bo Tanner stuff. We stayed at the Hostel the first year we came up, and then we had the trailer after that, but we would spend a lot of time down there cooking meals. He'd just shot the dog, that big Chesapeake Bay retriever. There was the thing about the pigs. He said the dog got into the pigs or something. My husband was really upset about the dog, because he liked that dog.

Karen: It was John's dog?

Lois: I can't remember who the dog exactly belonged to, but it hung out at the Hostel a good bit, and everybody was friendly with him. But you know, Debbie remarried successfully. She had two or three children.

Karen: Oh good.

Lois: And Wally Donaldson, her father, still owns the property. They built another house back there, and they still come out. I see the gate up and they plant the field and raise timothy one year and some other stuff, so the family still comes. Someone said they had seen her, that she had stopped in to say hi to somebody.

Karen: Oh good. She was such a sweet innocent. Did you see the Unsolved Mysteries episode?

Lois: Yes, I did.

Karen: She's in it.

Lois: I don't know if he ever did time. They did track him down at one point, three or four women, however many there were that he married and took advantage of.

Karen: Well, I didn't get into that too much, but I did set up a meeting. Larry Wilson officiated. I don't know if he told you about meeting with John and Sharon and Bo and Debbie, because I thought they could iron something out. And, of course, I really thought John and Sharon had completely lost it. Then as it went on, it began pointing more to Bo, as opposed to the rest of the community. What a saga that was.

Lois: It was. Only in Polebridge. And the Sheriff's department got involved. Pat Walsh got involved. He was a detective, and he tried to track him, and he really was on his tail for quite a while.

Karen: After he left, yes. Well, his big old van sat in the airport for weeks and nobody noticed it. Nobody thought to look. It was just sort of a comedy of errors. And again, I didn't have time to get very involved in it, but it just broke my heart that there was that kind of animosity and hatred going around, and potentially blood. Although I'm beginning to think that maybe he was working on Debbie because he had a pretty good insurance policy on her. She was skinny and beat to hell when he finally left.

Lois: Why were John and Sharon so upset? Was there some specific incident?

Karen: Well, because of the dog and the pigs. I can't remember much about that except I guess they found these pigs mutilated underneath the car out in front and Bo accused the dog of doing it. Well, they were his pigs, right? And that the dog had brought them up or something or other, and I couldn't see how that could have been orchestrated by any sane person. Of course, he wasn't real sane.

Lois: No, obviously not.

Karen: Or he was super sane.

Lois: Well, the last question on my list here is—and these are the only ones I could think of—had to do with all of the efforts to draw attention to and oppose the mining north of the border, the oil and gas exploration up there, and also Tom Ladenburg's exploratory well that didn't go anywhere. The stuff with the mining I find in the newspaper articles goes all the way back to 1974 or so, when people were first aware of the effects of what was happening. The Flathead Basin Commission got involved. Now, John didn't start the North Fork Preservation Association (NFPA) until 1982. But what I see in the minutes of the North Fork Improvement Association (NFIA) is that for a period of time, probably almost a decade, that organization was trying to balance both sides. You had people who came in who were very environmental-minded, and then you had the Ladenburgs and the Sonnenbergs and the Downes and the people that were like, "Don't tell me what to do with my property." For a while it almost tore the organization apart, and I see your name at some meetings where you were there.

Karen: Well I don't remember any trying to balance, personally. I just remember John Dziuk coming to the original meeting and saying, "Well, there are people up here who think we need jobs and exploration and blah blah." And I think it was probably Ron Wilhelm who said, "We are starting this organization to oppose that kind of development, so if you're not here to oppose it then you don't need to be here." It was real clear at that meeting. And then I didn't keep up with it. I would send them money, and I ran a campaign.

Lois: You allowed the petitions to be signed at the Merc.

Karen: Oh yeah, and Ma, that was her call to arms.

Lois: But the NFIA, the Improvement Association, Dick Lawrence—Barbara's husband—was president in 1974 or 1975, and there's a letter that he wrote to the Park Service and to other agencies saying, "We in the North Fork don't want change, and we don't want the road paved, and we don't want all this stuff." And I know that was not representative of a lot of people who were in that organization.

Karen: Or, you're saying it tore apart the NFIA.

Lois: I'm talking about the NFIA, yes, because sometimes it got almost vile.

Karen: It really was.

Lois: The meetings were nasty, and people stopped coming because there was this dichotomy.

Karen: Well, it's the same as the road paved and not paved, and probably the same people were aligned in the same don't pave and don't develop.

Lois: Allen Jacobson still has his license plate PAVE NF.

Karen: I wondered who that was. I saw it. Well, I hope the rocks have beat the hell out of it. I mean, it's a zoo now. It's just impossible.

Lois: Oh, it's terrible [the crowds]. It's really bad, yes.

Karen: Think how horrible it would be. We've got too much money in this country. Who is talking about lack of jobs?

Lois: What has finally happened up there is that the property prices have risen to the point where only the well-to-do can afford to buy and build. You're right, the divisions are still there—the Pave/Don't Pave. Sometimes it's funny to see who's on which side.

Karen: Well, Tom Riemer, as soon as he moved up the North Fork wanted electricity and pavement, and it was just hard to reason with him. Why are you here, if that's what you want? Go back to California. He was a good enough guy. But in the long run, I think it's miraculous that it's still in the state it's in, except that it doesn't go through to Canada. That was Mel Ruder, of course. He wanted it all paved so the Canadians would come down and come to Columbia Falls.

Lois: They wanted a loop. They wanted to be able to make the loop.

Karen: A loop to bring them into Columbia Falls.

Lois: Dave Hadden and his folks are still trying to expand Waterton Park to the river, filling in the missing piece of the Park and all that.

Karen: That would be great.

Lois: But yes, there was talk of developing the road all the way up and being able to cut across to the town of Waterton.

Karen: Well, we'd better address population control instead of pavement, I think, but I'm a throw-back.

Lois: Aside from allowing for the petitions at the store, did you get involved in fighting the Ladenburg well? I know your mom went with John to Toronto once [to fight the coal mines].

Karen: There was a lawsuit against it, but it didn't go anywhere.

Lois: John Heberling did that, I think. The one thing it did was raise the issue that the Oil and Gas Board was allowing stuff to go through without public input. And it very firmly put a nail in that. You *will* have public input on these things before you issue a permit to drill. So, it did accomplish that. That was good.

Karen: Well, I wrote a letter to almost everybody on the North Fork asking for money, because there was a big bill to pay the lawyer. People came through to pay that bill, some of them anonymous, but it got paid.

Lois: Roger Sullivan was in that law group. He's now bought a place on the North Fork. Kind of across from the Pittmans. He's planning to build this summer.

Karen: That's very interesting. That's good to hear. That's really nice.

Lois: Bless his heart. All right, well we have been through a lot of stuff.

Karen: I didn't even give you a cup of coffee. Would you like a cup of coffee?

Lois: No, I'm fine. I need to know what you're willing to let me take and copy now, what things you would like me to come back and go through.

Karen: You can take it all that's of any interest. It's not at all organized.

Lois: That's what I do. I'm good at that.

Karen: Lois, if you want to, I would really appreciate it. There's lots of duplicates.

Lois: What I'll do is organize it, make sure it's in proper archival condition, scan a lot of it to make sure we've got it electronically, and I will create an inventory to it, which will help you gain, as we call it in the archival world, "intellectual control" of the collection.

Karen: [Laughs] Oh there's no chance of that. Are you on good terms with Will?



Lois: Yes. What records are still there? What records did you maybe pass down?

Karen: Well, I just gave him a box of all the receipts, the one that the Bon Ami article talked about. You need to go through those. I had them here for an awful long time, but they do belong with the store, but if you can go through them and get whatever you want out of them.

Lois: I just need to glean the information.

Karen: Yes. There's a couple of bounced checks from the Huck family, which are pretty fun. Except for the receipts that went on the bar [at the saloon] and apparently got covered up. There's all the things that he [Adair] sold. There's one interesting little item that Dave Walter didn't figure out, and I didn't figure it out until years after, but he charged like 50 cents and it [was a mark] like this. I think it means a drink or a shot of whiskey, because he had a bottle of whiskey under the counter all the time. The date is in the date place, and that was how I think they had it. So, you know the era of those slips. I also took up just recently some tablet forms for an invoice that has Adair, maybe it's Adair & Lacher, on it. [W.L. Adair, General Merchandise]

Lois: Well, for a while the whole area was just—there was no town. They just called the location Adair, because it was his place.

Karen: There's an Adair Ridge in the Park, you know. I'll have to find it on a map for you.

Lois: What I want is a map of the homesteads. I have one from 1913, but there weren't that many on the west side of the river at that point. I need a homestead map from the late 1920s, just pre-Depression, to see exactly where everybody was, and the extent of the homesteads. I have asked and asked, but I don't know that one exists. I've been going through the old newspapers, to see whenever somebody filed or proved up. I make note of that. But without going out with surveyors to see where the pins are . . .

Karen: And then they change.

Lois: Or Ralph Thayer did them, and we all know about Ralph Thayer's surveying. Ray Hart talks about that. He said, "When I wanted to put in my well box," there's a spring I guess up on the hill behind him, "I used Ralph Thayer's surveys, and I put the thing in. Well, then the Forest Service came along with their precise tools and said, 'No, you are 150 feet on our property.'" So he said, "I went down and talked to the Forest supervisor. I said, 'You know about Ralph Thayer's surveying.'" And he said, "Oh yeah, I do." He said, "Well, I'm another victim." They gave him the permit, since he was operating in good faith. [Laughs] Well, this has been fun. Thank you.

Karen: Well, I don't feel like I've given you very much information.

Lois: As I start processing stuff, I will come back with another list of questions. What do you know about this, what do you know about that. I've found that's true with Larry Wilson. It's all in his head; I just have to ask the right question.

Karen: Well, I know that's true. You can ask Jon and Pat Elliott about Frank Evans and the rototiller. And then you could ask Doug Chadwick and Karen Reeves about the timber for their house, the timber from Frank Evans for their building. [Laughs]

Lois: Precious.

Karen: Well, the store was a hub for a lot of thought.

Lois: I'm sure you heard a lot.

Karen: I did, and there's so much that went on that I didn't hear because I was just making ends meet.

Lois: Why were you going back and forth to Seattle?

Karen: Well, I went to Seattle because Mother and Paula were both at the store and I could get a break. I was just kind of burned out with the store, and I wasn't needed in the winter. Then when John and I divorced I went to Seattle just because I didn't know what was going to happen and who would get what, and he seemed to want to stay there.

Lois: Had you gone to college before you came out?

Karen: Yes, I went to the University of Oregon at Eugene.

Lois: Our daughter graduated there.

Karen: And then I got a degree much later at Missoula. In 1974, I got a degree from Missoula, but I should have graduated from college about 1963 or something.

Lois: I know how that goes. What did you major in?

Karen: I majored in art. I have a degree in fine arts.

Lois: Really? That's what our daughter's degree is in. It's a BS in fine arts, but she majored in metalsmithing and jewelry design.

Karen: Ooh nice. And is she doing that?

Lois: No. [Laughs]

Karen: What's she doing? Running a store?

Lois: Well, she's raising three children.

Karen: Well, that's enough. Does she work outside the home?

Lois: She did for a while. She's got a 2-year-old right now so she's not. I would love to see her design, but it requires a workshop and all the tools.

Karen: Maybe she can do that in a little room in her house someday.

Lois: I think when this little one gets a little older, because some of that stuff is kind of dangerous. We put in a vent hood and everything down there, so she has a room in the basement she can work in.

Karen: I think that's really wonderful that she's with the kids. I think that's very, very important to them.

Lois: Oh yeah, she's a wonderful mom, she really is.

Lois: Now Joyce and John's son Colin and his wife are having their first child. [Talking about Joyce and John having a baby.]

Did you ever know John Stone?

Karen: Sure. Blonde? Well, he's probably gray now.

Lois: Where the O'Hara's are, you turn into Paradise Ridge, and there were three lots that were owned by the Sutherlands out of Hungry Horse. They really wanted to do something with that property because it was still just dog hair from the 1988 fire, and they were really concerned about the fire damage. So, they finally convinced those people to sell them those three lots. They turned around and sold two of them to John and Tami Stone and included in the contract was that John would build a cabin for them on that property. And then the one right adjacent to them they are going to thin a good bit. They got the garage up last fall. John's son is building the log home in Massachusetts, then they'll disassemble it and truck it out here and put it up.

Karen: Okay, we're not talking about John Stone.

Lois: John Stone is out of Seattle, and he's been up here.

Karen: Yes, I know him. The Hungry Horse people sold it to John Stone?

Lois: They sold to the O'Haras, who then sold it to Stone.

Karen: Harshman is the only one I knew up there from Hungry Horse.

Lois: I could go get my computer and tell you. I'll email you that, too.

Karen: So anyway, John is building for John Stone?

Lois: Right. He's really excited. John Stone comes over and checks on the progress from time to time. They are retirement age now, and they are looking to move up there. And up on top of the hill where Ed Neneman is—Neneman's Bluff we call it—there were four big lots up there that the Nature Conservancy got eventually. You know, Charlotte Fishel was up there. The Nature Conservancy finally decided they wanted to sell, so they said they would sell it but with a heavy easement on it, conservation or some sort of a covenant, that it could never be subdivided. There's a family that has just bought that last week. Their name is Rittenburg. I met them at the NFLA meeting and I asked where they were coming from. They were coming out of Pennsylvania. They had been here last year. They saw the area, they liked it. They saw this house was for sale. They just bought it. They sold everything in Pennsylvania. They are just coming, full-timers.

Karen: And a family?

Lois: No, they are older. I asked, “Like, did you do any homework? You’d either better get to know Ed really, really well, or go by yourself some big equipment, because you’re not going to get out in the winter. [Laughs]

Karen: Yes.

Lois: Why did I mention that? I mentioned that for a reason.

Karen: We were talking about rich people, I think. The nice thing about the tape is you can always look back and see where you were going with that.

Lois: I’m going to turn this off now. I’m going to hit the stop button.