

Kay Rosengren Oral History Interview

Lois: This is Lois Walker. I am here with Karen McDonough, and we are interviewing for the first time Kay Rosengren. This interview is taking place at Glacier Campground, just west of West Glacier, where Kay stays each summer. This interview is sponsored by the North Fork Landowners Association and is part of the North Fork History Project. Today is the 5th of September 2017. It's just a joy, not only to interview you, but to interview the two of you together.

Kay: Because we really have a lot of shared memories, yes.

Lois: You have overlapping memories, right, and so you're going to feed off each other, which is good. Oh, where to start? I guess the first question is to find out when you and Keith first decided to come to Glacier National Park, why, what year it was, what motivated you and in what capacity you were here, where you were living at the time, where you came from.

Kay: We were both in college. It was the end of my junior year. Keith was just graduating, and our good friend, Jim Olson, this was in 1958, had gotten a job as an aerial observer out here. He said to Keith, "Why don't you apply for a lookout? It sounds like your kind of thing." Keith did and he got the job, and when they sent the letter they said sometimes they hired wives. So, Keith wrote back and typically—never mind he was an English major, among others—he said, "If I get a wife, will you hire her?" They wrote back and said no, that all of the couples' positions were full. Well, about two weeks later he got a letter from somebody with a sense of humor who said, "You'd better get that wife, because she has a job." [Laughs] That's how I got involved in this, and I had no idea what I was getting into—none.

Lois: So, you weren't married at the time?

Kay: So, we got married, and of course his mother was sure I was pregnant, because I can remember her saying, "Well, if you have to get married in a hurry I guess that's the way to do it." So, in two weeks—well, bless my parents, they arranged a wedding.

Lois: What year was this?

Kay: This was in 1958. We didn't even have a vehicle, so our friend Jim who had the job out here, his wedding gift to us was our trip out to Glacier. Then they put us in the motel that's now where they look for mussels. We lived in a unit there, and then Adolph came.

Lois: Adolph Opalka.

Kay: Keith went up with someone else, and Adolph Opalka came, who was the ranger—well, he was the emperor of the North Fork. [Chuckles] Anyway, he came to pick me up. I remember I was just appalled, because he came into the unit and started taking things out of drawers and out of cupboards, and he said, "Oh you might need this, you might need this," and I was horrified. I thought the government is going to think I stole all these. Well, I found out that much of what was on the North Fork Adolph acquired one

way or another. My favorite story about that is one of the employees was going to headquarters and Adolph said, "There is a gas refrigerator on the loading dock at the warehouse. Pick it up and bring it up." So the man did, and Adolph said, "You stole that, you know." [Laughs]

Lois: Oh my gosh.

Kay: That's how he got—I mean, I could go on a year about Adolph.

Lois: And he lived in the Polebridge Ranger Station?

Kay: He was the area ranger for Polebridge.

Lois: His wife was Marian. Was it Marian or Marion?

Kay: I think it was i-o-n—I'm not sure. I don't know if I ever saw it written. He also, pipe by pipe, got enough pipe to get a water system at Bowman Lake, which headquarters was unaware of. The head engineer came up to see about getting a water system into Bowman and discovered they already had one. [Chuckles] I mean, he was unique. He was an incredible character.

Lois: How many years was he at Polebridge?

Kay: Oh golly, now that I don't know.

Lois: Had Keith applied for a job specifically as a fire lookout?

Kay: Yes, as a fire lookout.

Lois: Where was your first assignment?

Kay: It was on Numa Ridge, which was like Heaven. Then for two years we were at Apgar.

Lois: Where in Apgar?

Kay: Up on the lookout, and that was the head communications lookout at the time. At that time—which you couldn't do now—the women were hired for two days and the men for five, but on Apgar it was five and five, because somebody always had to be at the radio, so I then got quite an uptick in my salary.

Lois: Where were you in college?

Kay: Moorhead State in Minnesota. I grew up in Fargo, and I had hardly been out of city limits. I can remember the ride up that Inside Road, because to me it felt as if it went on for a year. I mean all these trees and this terrible road, and I thought, "What have I done?" And I loved it, fortunately. I loved every minute.

Lois: Had he ever been west?

Kay: Oh yes, and his aunt always said, "We're jack pine savages." His mother's family grew up in the north woods in Minnesota, so he was used to this kind of thing.

Lois: But it takes training to be a fire lookout. What kind of training did he get?

Kay: Well, they send you to fire school. I don't remember how many days, I think it was five days, and you got a pretty thorough background.

Lois: What did you do when the first storm came over the ridge, and there you were at Numa?

Kay: I was terrified. My husband loves storms. I never liked lightning storms, and of course you have to plot your strikes until the hair on your arms stands up. That was frightening. Keith was never scared, but I certainly was. I didn't enjoy that part at all.

Lois: So, you got thrown into the deep end right-off.

Kay: Yes. And we did have a fire. They had said in fire school that they can burn for two weeks and smolder. That's why you plot your strikes. And sure enough, our first fire we had had a strike there two weeks before that. At that time they were very aggressively fighting fires, so they brought smoke jumpers in, and that was a thrill. It was close enough we could watch, and if you've ever seen it, it looks like those planes aren't moving. It's really, really awesome. It's as if that plane stops in the air, and then down they go. That was really very interesting.

Lois: Quite a few fellows on the North Fork, when you ask them, say, "Yep, I worked as a smoke jumper. I really wanted to work as a smoke jumper," and they did.

Kay: Yes. We had one guy at the station who was very young. He was 6'6", and he kept thinking he could be a fire jumper. We kept saying, "No, there are height restrictions," and he said, "Well, I'll lie." Well, come on! One look at him and you knew he was 6'6".

Lois: You got to come down once a week?

Kay: I didn't come down the whole first summer. Keith went down. I was convinced some grizzly bear had been given my name.

Lois: Well, that's a long hike.

Kay: It is a long hike.

Lois: Even from the end of the lake it's what, another five or seven miles?

Kay: Yes, it's 6.4 or something up there, and I just was terrified. I was just sure some bear was waiting, you know. [Laughs]

Lois: Did they bring all your supplies up on mules?

Kay: Yes. And that again was Adolph's rules. Other lookouts every two weeks you got a pack train. Not with Adolph. He said, "You'd better get a lot of stuff up there, because I'm not coming up there every two weeks."

Lois: He sounds like a real son of a gun.

Kay: Well, he ran his own fiefdom. I got to know Superintendent [Edward] Hummel a little bit, and that's a long story, but he understood. He said, "You know, he runs a really good ship, and he runs it his way, and that's the way it is."

Lois: But it was your first year! I guess he broke you in.

Kay: Oh, yes yes. After that everything was a piece of cake. [Laughs]

Lois: Well, you must have liked it well enough, if you came back the next year.

Kay: Oh yes, we absolutely loved it. And we were hoping, of course, that we would get Numa again. Well, we were the only experienced couple who came back, so we had to take Apgar. We had no choice.

Lois: I was going to ask, who made the assignments? And you could give a preference but then they...?

Kay: Because of our experience they definitely wanted us up there.

Lois: How many lookouts were there in those days?

Kay: Oh golly, there were quite a few, and I've tried to think of that.

Lois: Huckleberry.

Kay: Huckleberry, Loneman, Scalplock, up north, and of course Swiftcurrent. There was one way up north, and I've forgotten the name of it [Porcupine Ridge].

Lois: And then all the ones on the Forest Service side.

Kay: Yes, we did communicate with them. We did cooperate with the Forest Service side, which was really nice, because we overlooked the same territory. And so, at least on the radio, we got to know some Forest Service lookouts. At that time there was Cyclone.

Karen: Hornet.

Kay: Hornet, and what else Karen?

Karen: Wasn't Crevice still done? That was in Canada, the Crevice Lookout?

Kay: Yes, and I think somehow we did have some communication with Canada, too.

Karen: I think it was through Crevice, because it was manned back then.

Kay: Yes. So, there were quite a few lookouts then.

Lois: What did you do all summer? Did you get down out of the lookout and hike?

Kay: Well, I did go down and pick huckleberries, but I never strayed very far. [Laughs]

Lois: That's funny.

Kay: And, of course, on Apgar I was down at least once a week.

Lois: Did you have visitors? Did a lot of people come up and see you?

Kay: The pack train, or not pack train, but folks from McFarland's dude ranch. Gene Hensen was wrangler that summer. His mother and father, of course, had a homestead—Ann

and Ben—so he brought people up. Probably the nicest gift I've ever gotten in my whole life, a couple came up from McFarland's, a father and his 16-year-old boy. The boy asked, "What do you miss the most up here?" I said, "I would kill for a Coke." And he actually hiked up the next day with a Coca-Cola in his pocket for me. I've never had a sweeter gift in my life.

Lois: You had snow up there you could keep things cool in?

Kay: No, I drank it warm. Who cared? By then the snow was gone, but some very nice people came up from McFarland's occasionally. Bauman, I think, was the name. I'm pretty sure it was Bauman.

Lois: Tell me a bit about coming up the Inside Road in those days, and did you get to know any of the people along that road?

Kay: Slifers, just above the campground, but otherwise there wasn't anybody right on that corridor south of Polebridge on the Park side, on the Inside Road.

Lois: There were at one time.

Kay: Yes, they were all gone.

Lois: Because Joe Opalka had a cabin down there.

Kay: Down at Dutch Creek, yes.

Lois: And the McNeils [Cecily and Ed] were there for a while.

Kay: Yes, before they went to Moose Creek.

Lois: Sullivan's Meadow.

Kay: And, of course, again we got to know Gene Sullivan quite well.

Lois: Did you?

Kay: Yes. Of course, they said NPS stood for nice pickings for Sullivan, because when they retired they apparently had a lot of wonderful NPS stuff. And that was not unusual.

Lois: Really?

Kay: Yes. That's what I understand.

Lois: Did he still have a place there?

Kay: No. Where did May and Sullivan live then? Through a mutual friend we got to meet them, and they were fun. They were really a fun couple.

Lois: They had seen it all, I'm sure.

Kay: Oh, absolutely, and of course he never complained and was never well after he was buried in the avalanche.

Lois: When was that?

Kay: Oh, was that 1956? Before we came, anyway. As I say, he was never really well again, but he was just a sweetheart, and May was this sweet-looking little lady. She played cards with a friend of mine. If you didn't watch her, she would turn her whole hand around for her partner, and then she would just give you this sweet, angelic smile.

Lois: Because in the 1950s they would have been there for 30 years or longer by then.

Kay: Yes, yes.

Lois: When I go back through all the old newspapers, *The Columbian*, it's always mentioning the Christensens and the Sullivans.

Kay: Yes, and we hiked into the Christensen's. We actually spent our days off when we were at Polebridge and Logging going to old homestead sites. That was our recreation, hiking back into these places, so we pretty much knew where they all were.

Lois: Did the Slifers have their camp then at Hidden Meadow?

Kay: No, it wasn't Hidden Meadow. It was just up across the road, actually, from the Polebridge Ranger Station.

Lois: I heard that they dug a lake in there, the Slifers did. John and Ann were their names? I understood they dug kind of an artificial lake and built cabins. It was supposed to be a girls' camp?

Kay: It never came to fruition. Karen, I remember you kids had gone up there to visit and there was a trivet, a heart-shaped trivet. Isn't this funny, the things you remember? One of you had dropped it. I think Beverly had dropped it in this little creek. Years later Bill Slifer apparently fished it out, that same trivet. The thing I remember about it is in the *Smithsonian* and this big book of treasures that they had, that identical trivet was in there. So obviously, I remember you kids describing to me what that thing looked like.

Karen: See, I don't remember that at all.

Kay: Well, anyway, I still have it. [Laughs]

Lois: Evidently some of those buildings that were at that camp were later moved to Polebridge. Bob Schepe's studio, I understand, was one of the cabins that came out of that camp.

Kay: I'm trying to think if there were any cabins when I was there. I don't recall any.

Lois: Ben Bowerman's cabin that Bo Tanner burned. They said that that one had come out of Hidden Meadow, but it's actually not Hidden Meadow?

Kay: No. But you know the crime is that prior to our getting there the Park was burning everything down. It was just a crime. I remember Thelma Edwards telling me that they had burned down the Cutbank Chalet, and she said all the hand-forged hinges and everything hand-forged, and they just torched it. Now they are screaming you can't touch anything. It has to be historical.

Lois: It's a little late.

Kay: Amen. Yes. That has always been one of my sadnesses, that the stuff was all gone.

Lois: Well, then the things that do last become even more precious. Because so much is destroyed. That is true with all of history and documents. People destroy letters and stuff, so the things that do survive become even more special.

Kay: And then we got to become very good friends and lived on Edwina Noffsinger's ranch.

Lois: On the east side?

Kay: On the east side. I've said two of the most important women in my life were Mary McFarland and Edwina Noffsinger—two strong women, and each of them represents that whole era, one on the east side, one on the west side. Edwina's husband, at one point, had 3,000 horses. If you went into the Park, you went in on their horses, before there was a road.

Lois: Did they not also run the Bar X Six ranch?

Kay: Bar X Six—that's where we lived was on the Bar X Six at Duck Lake.

Lois: It has another name they call it. Isn't that the Triple Peak Divide? Because Pat Walsh said that's where his dad, Dick Walsh, met his wife Bernice. She was working there at the Bar X Six, and he would come back and forth to see her.

Kay: So much of what I know was intertwined with Edwina, who then became the superintendent's secretary until she retired.

Lois: Did she really? Wow.

Kay: So, both Mary and Edwina were Park history, on both sides of the Park.

Lois: They had to be tough. I think they, too, followed their husband's good judgement and going into these situations that they just had to grow and adapt to.

Kay: Mary and her husband honeymooned at the Ike Chance cabin, which finally caved in not that many years ago. It was as you went north toward Kintla Lake, on the right-hand side. It was just all caved in and kind of a in swampy area.

Lois: He had been in Alaska, Jack [McFarland] had, right?

Kay: Yes. He was a veterinarian.

Lois: He actually bought that land early-on, I believe, then it was later that they came there. Larry Wilson tells about his mother, Louise, who was at Kintla Ranch and Mary at the Quarter Circle MC having to feed all of those guests. Once a week they would hop in their cars, or her car—they had an old Nash—and they would tear down to Belton. They would feed everybody breakfast, tear down to Belton, pick up the groceries, come back and be there in time to cook dinner.

Kay: Mary, up until her last years out there, always did these marathon trips once a week to town. I went once. I was exhausted. I can't do this, you know, and she thought nothing of it. And Mary could sleep anywhere. I remember it was blazing hot one day, and we went up to Kintla Lake because we knew it would be enough cooler up there that we could at least breathe. Mary curled up on rocks and slept. She did that several times when we went down to the river at the ranch. She would go down and just curl up on rocks. She said, "When you run a dude ranch, you learn to sleep when you can."

Lois: And she had three boys on top of the responsibility of the ranch. Did you and Keith have children?

Kay: No, no children.

Lois: Tell me your assignments. You started at Numa in 1958, and then 1959 and 1960 you were at Apgar?

Kay: During 1961 we were at Logging, then we were at Polebridge 1962, 1963, and 1967.

Lois: So, you shifted from being a fire lookout to being rangers?

Kay: Yes, because we couldn't ever do anything together. One of us always had to stay on the mountain, so this way we could do things together and hike and that kind of thing.

Lois: So, he was a ranger?

Kay: Yes, he became a summer ranger.

Lois: What were the responsibilities then?

Kay: Well, of course, as district ranger cleaning outhouses. [Laughs] Keith had a wonderful letter in his file praising how clean his outhouses were. And he and Spud DeJarnette used to go out in the marine with their equipment and used to sing something like, "Hi-ho, hi-ho," but it was "the pee with glee" brigade. They would clean, but just about anything that came up, which Keith loved, because it was back country. You weren't confined. I mean, you were never in an entrance station. You were doing something interesting. They did a lot of repairing of that antique phone line. Adolph kept that going, so we always had communication. Spud's dad was with the Forest Service in Missoula.

Lois: Did they issue back country passes in those days, or people just kind of did whatever?

Kay: Then they just did what they did, yes.

Lois: Karen, what year did your family come here? Were you always at Polebridge?

Karen: We were always at Polebridge, but I would have to look at some of my documents at home to figure that out, because I was so young.

Lois: But you were there you said in 1952-1953?

Kay: No, 1962-1963.

Karen: But she came in 1968 and met us.

Kay: Yes, and we were assigned at Polebridge for a couple of weeks before we went up the mountain, because there was so much snow, so they had to stay back. Then we went up, and again, in the other lookouts they brought cans of water up. Adolph didn't do that, so we went up and melted snow for a week and then filled these huge old kegs, mammoth kegs, and we would fill those with water.

Lois: Then you just had a wood stove to heat water?

Kay: No, actually up there we had a little gas apartment-size stove.

Lois: Oh, did you?

Kay: Yes, and in Apgar, too, that's what we had.

Lois: So, they had to haul the propane up there, too, the propane tanks.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: Oh my gosh. How do you guys overlap?

Karen: I remember I was 10 years old, and at 10 years old the big deal was that they were newlyweds. Here were these newlyweds that were coming and going to go up on the mountain.

Lois: Totally green.

Karen: Totally green and totally newlyweds.

Kay: See, Keith really was an experienced woodsman. And the Park, when we were on Apgar, used him as a troubleshooter a lot. So, I was alone on Apgar most of the time, because they had him doing other things. So he was never a dude; I was always the dude. [Laughs]

Lois: You were the probie.

Kay: I was the probie, and that was always really funny.

Lois: Are you the youngest of your sisters?

Karen: Yes.

Lois: What are the ages? Beverly was?

Karen: Beverly is five years older than I am. Paula and I had an argument always. I always said she was two years older than I am, and she always said three, because between February and June there were just two years. Well, you know how siblings are. She wanted to be older than I was. Since she wanted to be older than I was, I said, "Oh no, you're only two years older," so we constantly had that.

Lois: So, how old were you?

Karen: I was 10 when they first came.

Lois: Your parents had been coming before that, though? How old were you the first time you came out?

Karen: I can't remember if I was six.

Kay: I was going to say, somehow six sticks in my mind.

Karen: I think it was six, but I could look it up, because my parents have records.

Lois: And why did your parents come? What motivated them to come out?

Karen: Because my dad had to work in the summer, because he had three girls to raise, and at that point you couldn't support a family on a teacher's salary.

Lois: He was a teacher?

Karen: Almost everybody in the Park were teachers. They only hired teachers, because it was the perfect break. They had their summers off. They needed money to supplement their families, and so when I was very young my dad—one year he stayed at home and worked in a steel mill. That only lasted one year. I don't remember that, I was so young, but then he went to Colorado, and we were at Estes Park.

Kay: Oh, that's right. I had forgotten that.

Karen: Yes. We were at Estes Park, and then my dad decided there were too many people at Estes Park. He wanted to get farther away.

Lois: Was he ever a fire lookout, or was he a ranger?

Karen: He was a ranger. And how I can remember this, we had Aspen Glen Campground at Estes Park where my dad was the ranger, and then, I'm sure, unbeknownst to me because I was young, he probably applied for the most wilderness area, and he was put immediately on Polebridge, and that's where he stayed.

Kay: Yes, all of us there wanted to be in the back country, most of us. We had one young woman who didn't.

Lois: Your mother bought into all of this?

Karen: Oh yes. Maxine adapted no matter what. She was remarkable.

Lois: To take three children, pack them up in a car—whatever kind of car you had in the 1950s.

Karen: We had a Nash at one time, too, I think.

Lois: And bring you up that back road. What were the facilities like?

Karen: We had a cabin that was the size of a single car garage, wouldn't you say?

Kay: Yes.

Karen: When you came in the front door—I laughed, because when we went to Alaska they had a cabin set up that was so similar to the one we stayed in. You came in the front door and to the left, which was toward the ranger station—because we had the prime cabin, the first one in line right next to the fire cache—there was a sink, and then there was a wood stove you faced as you walked in the door, with a partition wall behind it that only went three-fourths of the wall, and then there was an opening. On the right-hand side was a cupboard with a table that came down. So, when you came in and the table was up you could walk through. When you came in and the table was down you had to wiggle between the sink and go around, and then the cupboards were up there and this table came down. Around the corner was a double bed, and the back wall of it was a closet. Because I was the youngest of three, I slept in a twin bed like where the stove and stuff is, so you could always see my bed. But my parents' bed was hidden by that half wall. And my sisters slept in the trailer that my parents pulled.

Lois: I was going to ask, how did five of you fit in there?

Karen: My sisters, because they were older, got to sleep in the trailer. You know, that little trailer always sitting there right next to the cabin?

Kay: And blazing hot. Those cabins were not insulated, so late in the day it was just pure hell to cook in those. I always used a Coleman stove when it was so hot, because heating up that stove [was too much].

Karen: And my parents had to pay rent for it.

Kay: Oh yes, absolutely.

Karen: You paid rent to get those cabins. And Opalka, when you mentioned that about the refrigerator, in the last of the cabins he finally got that propane refrigerator, and you guys all had to share it.

Kay: Yes, we shared a frig.

Karen: You see, I was a kid. I don't remember how that worked, if you had a shelf or what, but we were allowed a certain portion of that refrigerator.

Lois: Did you cook your meals inside and eat outside?

Karen: No, we basically ate inside, but we had the prime cabin. All the picnics were by us, because my mom and dad put a picnic table right between the cabin and the fire cache barn. There was a little space there, and there was a picnic table. Remember that Kay?

Kay: And it stayed there.

Karen: Yes.

Kay: I mean, when we lived there in 1967 that table was still there.

Karen: And we had a #3 washtub on the outside, on that side, and on Saturdays before the square dances that was brought in and set in front of the wood stove. Water was heated up, and that's where we took our baths.

Kay: And then it got posh later, because we actually had a shower with hot and cold running water.

Karen: Right. That was quite later.

Kay: That was much later. [Laughs]

Lois: Wow.

Kay: And, of course, the outhouse.

Lois: Had your dad been in World War II?

Karen: No, he was younger, but he was in the service. They were just kids. Well, my mom was 31 when she had me, so she was 41 already when I was 10.

Lois: So, he had done some camping with the Navy, and at least he probably had a clue about how to do some survival.

Karen: My parents always camped. Before I was born my dad had a travel bug, so they went camping in the Smokies. This is only stories I heard. They had a tent, and my dad was afraid of bears, because there were bear problems, so they took a flatbed trailer and put a tent on the flatbed trailer and camped that way.

Kay: Oh, smart.

Lois: As if a bear couldn't get up there. [Chuckles]

Karen: And then they actually built their very first trailer. They got it as a kit and put it together.

Kay: Okay.

Lois: I could never get my dad to camp. He'd say, "I spent two years in the Army; I'm never camping out again." I even put him up at Square Peg when he visited, and he was like...

Kay: "Not me." [Laughs]

Lois: He had no desire.

Karen: My dad was in the Navy, and he was, I think, an officer. He went to naval school and stuff, so he was on a ship. But he loved that stuff, and he loved to drive. As a kid I hated it. Every flipping weekend we would go somewhere. He drove everywhere.

Lois: How many days did it take you? You were coming from Illinois (Karen), and you were coming from North Dakota (Kay)?

Kay: Fargo.

Lois: How many days did you take to come out?

Kay: Actually, we drove straight through, because Jim and Keith spelled off driving. I didn't drive at that time.

Lois: I'm just trying to picture packing three girls in the car and driving.

Karen: My mother was very organized.

Kay: Extremely organized.

Karen: We left the day school was out. We would drive and stopped—my dad's and mother's favorite places to stop was where they had gravel pits next to the roads, because then you could pull off behind the gravel pit and camp there. In the morning we would get up early in our pajamas and would get in the car, and my dad would drive for two hours, probably three. Then they would pull off alongside the road, and she would have a picnic breakfast. We would run and get dressed, and then we would get back in the car and travel again. You know, that's just the way our life was.

Lois: Post-war stuff. That's kind of neat, actually.

Kay: And the Walters [George and Dorothy], of course, brought a trailer load of beer from Wisconsin. The story always was, "Well, you know the Walters are wealthy. They own a brewery." Well, they didn't. George discovered a brewery in Wisconsin. It was the George Walter Brewery. Of course, he gave tons of it away. Everybody got at least a 24-pack or whatever.

Lois: How did he haul it? They had a trailer?

Kay: He had a trailer, and that's what the trailer was for. One year they came across Highway 200. If you've been across, of course there's nothing on 200. I don't know if they had a flat tire or what it was, but George had to go for help. He left Dorothy with the trailer of beer and an umbrella. No, she didn't have an umbrella. A farmer came along and brought her an umbrella so she wouldn't cook to death in the sun. There she sat, guarding that trailer load of beer. [Laughs]

Lois: The bodega. So, they brought a trailer, but then eventually they built a cabin, or was there a homestead cabin on their place?

Kay: There was one little cabin. It's still there, bunkhouse size. There were no other buildings on that property.

Lois: Do we know whose property that was before they bought it, which homesteader?

Kay: I don't know, but they bought it from Walt and Hazel Hammer, of course.

Lois: I understand Walt and Hazel had rentals. They built little cabins and rented them out.

Karen: I believe this cabin was a homestead cabin.

Kay: Yes, it was, and I don't know that I ever heard whose it was.

Karen: I've heard, but I can't remember.

Kay: I do not know.

Lois: Did you know Andy Fleutsch?

Kay: I knew the name.

Lois: That Karen's parents bought their place from? He was like a back country ranger.

Karen: I'm not sure about that, Lois. What sticks in my mind is that George and Dorothy came from Appleton, Wisconsin. Why I remember that, I haven't got a clue.

Kay: He was a professor. In fact, it was interesting in that his major was English, and his specialty was John Donne, but of course he was a football coach. And built like a brick.

Karen: I don't remember him being as tall, but he was solid.

Kay: He was not particularly tall. David and Pete were—his sons—but he was not, and Keith loved to tell about how he had gone on a hike with Bob Paul and George and who else? They had hiked all day on Boulder Pass or something. They were all exhausted, and George picked up a boulder and wanted to play touch football. Keith said, "We really wanted to throw him off the side." [Laughs] But he just had that kind of energy. I mean, he was an incredibly energetic man.

Lois: So, there were those two boys. There were the McFarlands' three boys, you three girls, the three Edwards boys, right? And the Evans' two kids, and then four kids after they took on their friends' kids. And then once Cecily and Ed came, their two boys.

Karen: They weren't there as long as we were. She didn't spend the entire summer there. And then on this side of the river we had . . .

Lois: You had the Lawson girls.

Karen: Yes. That was my sisters' group. I was a different generation.

Kay: Yes, you were younger.

Karen: Well, and just a different mindset. I was of a different mindset and interest. But we also had Verna and Merrill Marx, their children Kathy and Tom. Because the people in Polebridge were very social—Edna Evans was in that group. Then we had other people who lived up the North Fork Road, and they didn't want to exclude them, so we got to where we had picnics every other Wednesday. They wouldn't come down to our side of the river, distance-wise, but my dad would drive anywhere. We would have a picnic at River Campground one Wednesday, and then the next Wednesday we would have a picnic at maybe Sondreson Meadow or somewhere, so that group of kids could come. It was all to get the kids together.

Lois: Really?

Karen: Because the mothers, I think, were ready to pull their hair out.

Kay: Oh well, yeah.

Lois: Tell me where River Camp was.

Karen: Before you got to McFarland's Dude Ranch. Along the river, just down from Walsh's.

Kay: Just a few hundred yards. Then the Schoenberger place and then McFarland's. But oh, I loved River Campground.

Lois: Really?

Kay: It was primitive.

Karen: Well, fishermen loved it. It was a very popular campground. Five sites.

Lois: Is that where they ended up sort of subdividing that area?

Kay: No, That was Havreville.

Karen: That was already there.

Kay: Havreville was there when we came. It was a group of railroad workers from Havre, and we got to know some of them, and there were quite a few cabins.

Karen: Yes, and some of the kids worked at McFarland's dude ranch.

Kay: Yes.

Karen: I never worked at McFarland's dude ranch, but I got all the benefits of McFarland's dude ranch.

Lois: They were like a major employer for teen girls and for boys, too.

Karen: Many people that are here in the North Fork started at McFarland's dude ranch. That was their introduction to the North Fork, and they fell in love with it.

Kay: I just thought of a story I should share. Ted Ross, of course, owned the Mercantile, and his son-in-law Wally Nolan had a pet badger named Elizabeth. The kids would walk it around on a leash, remember?

Karen: I do.

Kay: They would walk all over with this silly badger. Well, about three years ago I was eating lunch with the man in our town who is the Assembly of God pastor. His three children were there, and his wife, and we were talking about animals when I said, "Well, I've got one for you." I said, "I knew a badger named Elizabeth." And the pastor said, "Oh, would that have been Wally's?"

Kay: I said, "What?!" He somehow got to know Wally Nolan and had heard about Elizabeth. Now, I'm in Hallock, Minnesota, and he knew all about Elizabeth.

Karen: Because his brother-in-law is a pastor, Ted's son Bob.

Kay: Oh, okay.

Karen: We call him Pastor Ross, but his real name is Bob. I'm sure how he heard the story.

Lois: Wally was married to Betty?

Karen: That's right, Betty.

Lois: But there were two girls, right—two boys and two girls? There's Ken, Bob and [Betty and Norma].

Karen: They lived in the [cabin that became the] saloon. That's where he had the badger. It was the homestead cabin. They lived in the saloon. That was a house at the time.

Lois: This is before Wally moved the buildings from the Quarter Circle MC over to Polebridge that became the North Fork Hostel, right? Because he and Betty lived there.

Karen: But originally they lived right there next to the store in the homestead cabin, and that's where they had the badger.

Lois: Okay. Because Karen Feather tells the story about when she took over the Merc in 1974-1975 Wally had quite a tab that he wasn't able to pay. So, she let him replace the foundation on the mother cabin and said it came out just about exactly what he owed.

Kay: Yes, and she's the one that remembered Betty's name. I could not think of it. Her name was Betty, Wally's wife. Boy, now the memories are tumbling out.

Karen: Because it confirms, I've said that before, that they had a badger and people look at me like, "Oh no, you can't have a badger as a pet," and I'm saying, "I'm telling you."

Kay: And on a leash, for Heaven's sake. I can remember the first time I saw it I thought, "What in the world?"

Karen: Because they are notoriously supposed to be so mean.

Lois: The Newtons—did you know Frank and Ethel Newton?

Kay: Oh yes, I was in love with Frank. Every woman was in love with Frank.

Lois: He was a good-looker that I could see.

Kay: Well, not so much a good-looker, he just was a sweetheart. He just exuded happiness. I mean, he really did. For some reason, it came up who was the most attractive man on the North Fork, and my friend and I both said, "Well, Frank Newton," and the men said, "What?" I mean they were expecting some young buff guy, and we said, "Oh no, it's Frank. Frank is the catch of the North Fork," and he was a sweetheart. He was just fun. He had that incredible twinkle.

Lois: I was talking with his granddaughter. She said that he had built a cabin in 1925. That was his cabin before they got married. She never even saw it. They got married. They went on a pack trip in the Park for their honeymoon, and while they were gone his cabin burned in a fire. So, then they came back and they built again. Then in 1946 that cabin was torched. Somebody burned it down.

Kay: I didn't know that part of it.

Lois: Then they didn't have a place, because they were living in California. It wasn't until 1956 that they built the cabin that's there today. So, for ten years they didn't have

anything, and then they came back up and they were there every year. You knew them in the new cabin.

Kay: Yes. And Ethel was Ben Hensen's sister?

Lois: Yes, she was, Ben Hensen Jr's. sister, that's right.

Kay: That's what I thought. But oh, I loved Frank, and all the women did, just because he was so nice.

Lois: He looked like he was quite a horseman. I have a number of pictures of him on horseback.

Kay: Oh yes, definitely.

Lois: And he worked in the Park, too. To what extent did you have interaction with those people who were leading tours and had that concession, outfitters in the Park?

Kay: Oh, very little, really.

Lois: Frank Evans, Newton, the McFarlands—they all took people up, like you said.

Karen: But McFarland's was different. It was a dude ranch. Frank Evans, when we got there the concessions had stopped. They were no longer doing that when April and Buddy were younger. They still had the tent behind their house that the dudes used to stay in for that. McFarland's was the only going dude ranch. And then they had the one that they tried to start between Polebridge and Logging, that were all from Salt Lake City, Mormons. The English's, wasn't that their name?

Kay: Yes, it was English.

Karen: They tried to start a boys and girls camp for Mormons.

Kay: I had forgotten that. Yes, you have a better memory than I have. I had forgotten that.

Karen: I just remember the kids, the English's. That was the first time I was ever around people that did not have coffee and caffeine, you know.

Lois: But didn't Frank Newton take people into the Park?

Karen: That was before my time.

Kay: I was going to say, not when I knew him. Something is jogging my consciousness here. My friend Cindy, who was a student of my husband's and has become a very close friend, when she was out here got to meet both Mary McFarland and Edwina Noffsinger. She got so interested in Edwina, particularly, because of the rich history of that Bar X Six. I never could understand why Mary and Edwina had never met, and we were the link. Keith and I were the link, and they would exchange information about us. They would hear from us about each other. I thought that was strange that they had never met, because they were both almost legendary. So Cindy did a week's research and went through all of the archives in Helena on Edwina. It turns out that Edwina's husband had sued the McFarlands, because they were taking horses into the Park, and

supposedly the Noffsingers had an exclusive contract. Cindy called me and said, “I think I know why they never met.” She said there had been a lawsuit.

Lois: Wow.

Kay: Because I know that the Noffsingers, or he did what he could to keep other...

Lois: Territorial.

Kay: Yes. So that explained that mystery. They met incidentally not too long before they both died at the Episcopal Church in Kalispell, and both of them said, “Well, I finally met Mary” or “I finally met Edwina.”

Lois: And they both outlived their husbands?

Kay: Oh yes. In fact, Edwina was much younger than her husband. That was her second marriage. Edwina lived to be 98, and Mary lived to be 96. Edwina got a little fuzzy at the last. I saw her just prior to going home again, and she died that fall. I went in to see Mary, and it was on a Tuesday. She was in the nursing home in Whitefish, and she said, “Oh, I’m so glad you came. I thought I was going to be dead today. I felt so terrible last night, I thought this is it, I’m done.” Well, she died on Saturday, and I am so grateful that I went and spent the afternoon with her.

Lois: I’ve been going through the old NFLA records, and I noticed that Jack died early, in the late 1950s it looks like.

Kay: 1957.

Lois: But she and Gordon and George and David still kept coming to meetings and paying their dues and were active in the organization, even after he was gone. I know the boys were kind of upset that she sold out to the Park and all that.

Kay: Well, she had no choice.

Lois: Did she?

Kay: Yes, that was a long sad chapter, a very sad chapter. In 1967, we spent literally the whole summer looking for property, because she knew she had to get out. Imminent domain—they took the place.

Karen: The Park took it. It wasn’t because she wanted to go.

Kay: No.

Lois: Really? Oh, oh.

Kay: It was nasty. It was not nice.

Lois: They were trying to force her out?

Kay: Oh, they did force her out.

Lois: Why?

Karen: Because she had people there. She had a dude ranch. She was bringing more people into the Park.

Lois: Well, it was a business.

Kay: She wasn't even running the dude ranch then.

Karen: No.

Lois: He had an air strip and everything.

Kay: And they put it in; the government put it in.

Lois: Oh they did, the air strip?

Kay: Yes, because they wanted it. I can still remember the dedication. Najeeb Halaby was the administrator for the FAA, and that summer they had some boys, just boys...

Karen: Because it was a boys' camp. Guys from California came out. Paul—I called him Bald Paul, what was his name? He was from Colorado, and Tracy Bianca—her dad was from California, and they started a boys' camp, like a survival camp.

Kay: Yes.

Karen: They got all these rich kids like from New York City, lawyers' kids. Oh, I was in my heyday at that time. That was like in 1964. Maybe 1963.

Kay: I think 1963.

Karen: They brought in all these young boys in.

Lois: To the McFarlands?

Karen: To the McFarlands, and turned it into a boys' camp.

Lois: Was this the Culver thing, or was that something else?

Kay: No.

Lois: There was a Culver Military Academy from Indiana.

Karen: No, this was like Outward Bound or something.

Kay: Yes, that kind of thing.

Karen: And Paul was involved in that, this Bald Paul.

Lois: Paul was his first name?

Karen: Yes, and he was bald. That's just the nickname we gave him was Bald Paul.

Kay: Well, the kids—Halaby was there, and of course he had Secret Service with him. And some of the kids had firecrackers. Well boy, did they mobilize Secret Service. They

thought somebody was after Halaby, so that got to be kind of a mess. But yes, that was a very sad chapter.

Lois: I asked George when I interviewed him, “How many homesteads did your parents buy? How much land did you have?” He pulled the old, “Well, you know it’s rude to ask a westerner the size of his spread.” I said, “Okay, I can go to the county and get the records, but how many did you get?” It sounds like they bought up maybe three homesteads’ worth, 160 acres each, so they had a good bit of land there. It wasn’t because she was hard up and needed the money.

Kay: Well, she did. She never had any money left. She took care of other people with her money. I mean, she was always raising some kid whose family didn’t want him and blah blah blah.

Lois: What was her background?

Karen: They went to the Arizona in the winter time. They had a place in Arizona.

Kay: Yes, Cave Creek. She was from a very wealthy Seattle family, and mostly I gather her parents subsidized them right along. I mean, she didn’t make too many bones about that.

Lois: But he was a state veterinarian, right?

Kay: Well, he was head of DNR – Parks and Recreation.

Lois: What is now DNRC [Department of Natural Resources and Conservation].

Kay: Yes, he was the head of that, and he had a lot of political clout.

Lois: I mean, if they had an airplane they had to have some money. Let’s face it.

Kay: Well, Gordon had the airplane. Gordon was a soldier of fortune. I only ever met Gordon once. He was gorgeous.

Karen: I don’t remember much of that. Jeannie we knew real well.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: But Dave was the one who was killed in Laos?

Kay: No, that was Gordon, and that’s an interesting story. Then David died of one of these viruses where he died in 48 hours, I think. Mary and George did get there.

Karen: He had one child, right, Merrilee?

Kay: Gordon had two, Melanie and Jack.

Karen: No, that’s not...

Kay: Oh David, yes, Merilee is the daughter. His wife was Connie. Jeannie was Gordon’s widow. But back to this land thing, this is really kind of funny, and the Park I don’t think ever quite got over it.

Karen: [Whisper] I like this story.

Kay: Mary was all over looking for land, and we went everywhere.

Lois: On the North Fork, you mean?

Kay: On the North Fork. She wanted to be in the North Fork. She didn't want to be in the trees. She wanted to be in a clearing, so we looked all over the place. One afternoon she went into her accountant's in Kalispell and was saying she was not having any luck finding land. He said, "Well, you know," I love this, "I own a corridor from the road back to the river." Was it 100 feet?

Karen: Yes, probably. I don't know. They shared a fence line with McFarland's dude ranch.

Kay: He said, "It's for sale." So, she bought it, and the Park liked to have had a stroke. They hadn't gotten rid of her. She quickly put up that first cabin, I mean right now. She said, "I didn't mess around. We got it up in days."

Lois: This is that strip that they own now?

Karen: That is actually on the other side of the fence from their property.

Lois: From their original property.

Karen: Yes.

Lois: Now there are what, three or four structures back there?

Kay: Yes, Jack added some buildings.

Lois: They paid Mary something for the property that they took over, but below market value.

Kay: Way, way, way below market.

Karen: But the story my parents always told—and Kay might agree with this—the Park exerted so much effort to get that property and to get her out, then they didn't have the excess money to get her out of the other piece of property.

Kay: Yes, they had no money left.

Karen: People like my parents and the Edwards' and the people who loved all this area were so tickled that the Park didn't get its wish.

Kay: Oh, absolutely. We were just thrilled.

Karen: Everybody that was up there in the North Fork was thrilled to death. They got rid of the dude ranch and they burnt stuff down, but Mary went over on the other side of the fence and stayed there until she died.

Lois: Bless her heart. My gosh. Well, I'm really glad to hear that story, because the stories I kind of picked up from the kids are that they were irritated with her for "selling out to the Park," that she shouldn't have, but you're saying that she didn't...

Kay: She had no choice whatsoever.

Karen: And you have to remember that Jack, and if you've ever talked to Melanie, his sister, they were quite young when this happened.

Lois: I figured they had to have been.

Karen: It's like my memory of some of the things you were recalling back when I was 10 years old. I have one perspective, but not the adult perspective. But everybody that was up there knew the Park was forcing her out and making her life miserable.

Kay: I can remember somebody from headquarters, just a seasonal, had come in on a plane. There again, the government wanted that airstrip there. It wasn't that Mary wanted it. It was that the government wanted it. And this guy came. Oh, he was so rude to Mary, I could not believe it. I stood there and bit my tongue until it bled. He just knew a surface story, and he was just awful.

Lois: I mean, what pressure could they bring on her? She owned it.

Kay: They used eminent domain.

Karen: It would be similar to what they did to Jack when all he wanted to do was have the right to bring his snowmobile to the property with three young children, and look what they did to him and shut him down.

Lois: What argument were they using for the eminent domain? What did they need it for?

Kay: They needed the airstrip. They wanted the airstrip, which has not been used since. As far as I know, it's never been used since. That was the rationale.

Karen: Because she had the right, if one of her kids wanted to, they could continue a dude ranch, so they could bring people to that area again.

Kay: That's what Jack did.

Lois: If Jack was still living, do you think they would have brought that same pressure?

Kay: Probably not.

Karen: He would have told them to stick it.

Kay: He had a lot of political clout.

Lois: But because she was a widow.

Kay: Yes.

Karen: McFarland's dude ranch survived a long time, but it was always to the Park's detriment. They did not want the dude ranch to be there. Because they took the horses up to the lookout. That was not something the Park wanted done. They did other horseback rides. They would go up Big Prairie, because that was part of the dude ranch deal.

Lois: They didn't start that dude ranch until after the war, so it was 1946-1947, and you're saying she sold it, I think, in 1963. That wasn't all that many years in relative terms.

Kay: You see, in every administration the rules change.

Karen: Right, but they were always trying to get inholders out. Inholders is a bad word. All of Havre City, all those people, for whatever reason. I don't know how Pat [Walsh's] uncle kept his property. I don't know if it's who he knew, or financial things, but part of it was because they started using so much money up that it wasn't available to continue. Cecily and Mac lost their property as inholders. They did not want you there.

Lois: I know it was particularly heinous in the 1930s, right after the Depression started and people were hard-up. The Park Service got money from Congress in 1929, and then they really pushed. In the Depression they pushed almost everybody out.

Karen: But that would have been—I don't mean this rudely—but small change compared to what they had to give Mary McFarland, because she had established a business that was making money. You know how they always put value on things when they don't have value.

Lois: Oh dear. So, other old North Forkers that you met when you were there. Tell me about the Wurtzes, Frank and Ella Wurtz.

Kay: Actually, we got to know them. They did moose hide moccasins, and that's how we got to know them. We knew them before, but then we spent some time visiting with them because they made moccasins for us.

Lois: How long did they live in their place before they sold to Jokersts [Jim and Carol].

Kay: I don't know how long it was.

Lois: They were there in the 1960s, right?

Kay: Yes, so it wasn't—see, there again I never kept a journal, which was stupid, because I'm impossible about dates. It was in the 1960s when we were visiting with them.

Karen: I don't remember the circumstances of what time they left. I mean, I remember because they were always close friends with my parents.

Kay: It was a hard life.

Karen: And they could no longer support themselves, because they were supporting themselves making moccasins and gloves, and they canned everything. You know, that's just a tough old world.

Kay: I remember her telling me that one of her children was born with a tooth, and nursing was so awful. [Laughs] Isn't that funny, the things you remember?

Lois: They had Louise, then they had the two children that they lost. Then they moved to Washington State and had another three or four children there. Then they came back in about 1929 or so. They discovered their house was being used as a schoolhouse. What the heck? But they agreed to stay in her father's cabin, the Archibald Hanes cabin, until

the end of the school year and then moved back into their house. This would have been in about 1930 or so. So, they were still there 30 years later, living in that cabin.

Kay: Yes, because it was the early 1960s when we knew them.

Lois: Did she still express regret about losing the two babies?

Kay: It never came up. Well, we lost two, and you don't talk about it.

Lois: You just go on.

Karen: You don't forget it.

Kay: No, absolutely not, but you don't dwell on it.

Lois: Their younger children then, that second set of children, we hear stories about because they ended up going to school up there. The Wurtz boys and girls were in some of those school classes.

Kay: Of the homesteaders, we probably knew them the best, moreso than others.

Lois: Tell me about Ella. I know nothing about Ella.

Kay: Well, she was just a very nice, take-it-as-it-comes person, I guess. Well, you had to be.

Karen: You have to roll with it, you do.

Kay: Unlike poor Minnie Beaton. Well, she wasn't Beaton. Did you ever go back into Scotty Beaton's place?

Karen: Oh yes.

Lois: Where was it?

Karen: That was one of the things you did when you went to the picnics at River Campground. The parents were all around the campfire chit-chatting, and we kids took off.

Kay: Scotty Beaton was on Numa Lookout for, I think, 26 years. There was a woman—I think she was Minnie Schoenberger.

Lois: Yes.

Kay: Mentally unstable, and was kind of shunted from man to man, as I understand it, and finally ended up with Scotty. Of course, if she's unbalanced why would you take her up to the lookout? She tried to kill him with a knife apparently, so that didn't work out. Anyway, we always took people back in there. I could never stand to be there for more than a few minutes. Invariably I would say to Keith, "I'm leaving. I'm bailing out."

Karen: You had a bad vibe?

Kay: Oh, a very bad vibe. So, time after time I just bailed.

Lois: This is at Numa?

Kay: No, this is at Scotty Beaton's cabin.

Lois: Which was where?

Kay: On the bench. You know where the Prairie is. As you go toward the west, there's a bench and a creek, and it was right there. It was dark. It was in the trees. Again, if somebody is not mentally balanced, to be in that dark place I can't imagine. So anyway, we took some people in, and that feeling was gone. I said to Mary, "I don't understand it. That's the first time I've been into Beaton's place where I haven't fled." She said, "Kay, Minnie died in Warm Springs last winter. She's not guarding the place anymore."

Lois: It was scary huh?

Kay: It really scared me, and I sometimes get feelings about places. The old place up by Kintla where they were drilling for oil. George McFarland and I and Keith went in, and George and I had to leave. [Laughs] George gets feelings like that, too, from places.

Lois: This is the Crow's Nest place?

Kay: Yes. So, George and I got out of there. Isn't that funny? [Laughs]

Lois: You said, "When we would go to the campground." What campground was that?

Kay: The River Campground. It was an easy walk from there, and we always took guests in there, and I never could stand it. I would have to get out.

Lois: I drove back in there a couple of years ago. I took that road down. I about got stuck in the mud, but somebody told me there was still a stand of rhubarb back in there.

Kay: Oh, because it burned in 1988.

Lois: I didn't see anything.

Kay: Just like Sullivan Meadow. There were always hyacinths and poppies and all those wonderful things that the Sullivans had. I loved that place. That was one of my favorite places, going to Sullivan Meadow.

Lois: Ralph Thayer, did you know Ralph?

Kay: I met him, but I really can't say I knew him.

Lois: How about Austin Weikert and Ruth?

Kay: No.

Lois: The Brills, did you know Matt and Mata?

Kay: I met them just briefly. A lot of these people I just met socially.

Lois: Some of them were kind of out of it already by then, and Paul Abbott the same way. I think he left fairly early. Walt and Hazel Hammer?

Kay: Oh yes, we knew them quite well. They contacted us several times wanting us to buy something, to buy some land, because they were very vocal about wanting to sell to people they wanted to sell to. But we talked it over at great length and said nah.

Lois: Were you ever tempted to buy land on the North Fork?

Kay: Yes, we were, and then we thought about the amount of work involved and being away, as far as we were, and we just decided no.

Lois: Yes, we found that once you buy a place it's like you don't go there for entertainment anymore; you spend your whole time working on your place.

Karen: Absolutely. All the times we stayed at Walters' that's what we did; we worked, because they were building up that place. I was telling her that Marcella was really surprised looking at George's diaries or journals how often we were up there, and we were always working.

Kay: Oh, my favorite George story. Marcella loves this one, too. I don't remember if David and his first wife, Margo, were married yet. I think they were, and we were all in our van because there was always a bridge out, so we all agreed that we would take them up. Peter was with his current girlfriend, who I think was the Senator's niece from the head of the lake. I can never think of his name [Burton Wheeler]. Anyway, Margo and David and Peter and this young lady—and at that time they didn't have the place on the hill. It was all down in the meadow. We drive in and George, as he did every day of his life, was in the river. He rears up buck-naked. I mean, this is so George. "Welcome!" And I hear Peter say, "Oh dear God." [Laughs]

Lois: He wasn't fishing?

Kay: No. Margo took it in stride. By then she knew George well enough to know this was very typical, but poor Peter, bringing this girl up there. [Laughs]

Karen: First impressions.

Kay: And he was like a giant walrus. [Laughs]

Lois: I need a picture of him and Dottie for the slide show, because they were very active.

Kay: Oh absolutely. And, of course, they fed the world.

Lois: Did they? But they were way up there. I mean you had to work to get to their place.

Kay: Before, when they were at Bowman, they fed everybody who ever crossed their paths.

Lois: When were they at Bowman?

Karen: The same time my dad was at Polebridge. He was a ranger at Bowman Lake, had that big lodge there. She cooked on a wood stove the whole time. The Edwards' were at Logging, my dad was at Polebridge, and the Pauls [Bob and Mary] were at Kintla Lake. They didn't socialize much.

Kay: They were wonderful people.

Karen: Yes, but they didn't come down and socialize. I got to go up and stay with the girls.

Lois: Who were their girls?

Kay: Nancy and Janet. Janet Bones and Nancy Trembath. I've got it in my address book.

Karen: They've both worked for the Park.

Lois: Did they buy land on the North Fork though, the Pauls?

Kay: No, they didn't.

Karen: They loved Kintla Lake, but then as soon as Bowman Lake was available they went to Bowman Lake and stayed there. But the girls were raised at Kintla.

Kay: Yes, and that's where I first met them.

Karen: I did like to go up and see them, because they did not come to town. But I just couldn't deal with the fact that they used nothing but powdered milk. They basically, in a sense, lived off the land and what they could get for a month's supplies of stuff.

Kay: I loved them all dearly. As I say, Mary kept in touch until she died. They were such a close-knit family, but the girls were almost other-worldly. They were not worldly at all. I never understood. I mean, Mary really made a point of making sure I got to know her girls. Janet had to go to town one time, and Mary got ahold of me and said, "Would you go with Janet to town?" I said, "Oh, that would be fun." Janet started talking about one of these trail crew boys, and I said, "Oh you really have a case on him." She said, "Huh?"

Lois: She was smitten?

Kay: Yes, and she didn't even quite know what I was talking about, and she was about 18. It's not that their parents were hoverers or anything, they just were lovely people.

Karen: They weren't exposed. Just like you said, I went up and spent time with them, because they stayed as a group family up there.

Lois: Where were they from?

Kay: McMinnville, Oregon. She taught home economics at a junior college, I believe, and he taught high school math. He was a seasonal ranger for 47 years or something.

Lois: So, the Walters were at Bowman, and then they bought their property after that?

Kay: Yes.

Karen: All that property was bought about the same time, because all the homesteaders were at the age where they had to supplement their income. Burt and Thelma Edwards, have you got stories about them?

Lois: When did they first come to the Park, do you know?

Karen: Oh, Thelma was there before she was married.

Lois: That's right, she was.

Karen: They were both single people, working in the Park.

Kay: I remember just loving her. I actually saw quite a lot of her. I don't have any particular stories about them. They didn't do anything irrational. [Laughs]

Lois: Did they get married before or after the war, do you know?

Karen: I believe it was before. I may be quoting this wrong, but I think one of Uncle Burt's jobs was to walk the beach in Washington when [he was in the service].

Lois: Right. And there the story about him riding all night to get to where she was working to give her an engagement ring.

Kay: They were another really sweet couple. I felt so bad when he went blind. That was just so awful.

Karen: But he handled it so well, you didn't even know. If you were just talking to him and visiting and he recognized your voice.

Lois: I didn't realize he was blind. They bought Chester Wall's place, not too far from where we are. I was only into their cabin once, I think, before the 1988 fire. If you had asked me if he was blind, I wouldn't have keyed on that.

Karen: No, because he was always my Uncle Burt. He would say to me, "Karen, if you watch," he puts his thumb in his coffee cup. He was a smart man. He had all these little things that he did, that you would have never known.

Lois: And he was a forester, was he not?

Karen: Yes.

Kay: She was just so comfortable to be around. I just loved being around Thelma.

Karen: She was a schoolteacher, and in California he started doing trees for all the rich and famous people in California. That's what he did. He sprayed their trees and cut their trees, and that's what made him blind, because of the blowback from all the chemicals. At that point you didn't think about goggles and stuff like that.

Kay: And she always called a sofa a Chesterfield. That always intrigued me. She was the only person who ever talked about a Chesterfield. I don't know where that came from. Someone in her family called them that.

Lois: The property that your parents and the Edwards bought together, Karen, was in roughly what year, 1960-something? Your dad and Burt were no longer were working in the Park when they bought that?

Karen: Uncle Burt quit before Daddy did, because he had such a good deal going with his tree trimming and stuff. They really couldn't afford to leave the business in the summer. But Uncle Burt and Aunt Thelma, I don't know if it was because the kids or my mom and Aunt Thelma, but it was like family. We went on trips together. We went to Calgary

when he was in the Park. They had one of those cars—Gary will kill me because of this, but it was just like a big old sedan, and the doors opened together, not like our doors open now. The front door opened to the front and the back door opened to the back. I don't know what kind of weird neat car that was, but we all took off on their vacation time from the Park and went to the Calgary Stampede together.

Lois: Oh neat.

Karen: So, even though we were separated, they were a unit and very close.

Lois: What's the thing about going over to Browning for Indian days? Did you have a connection over there?

Karen: My dad just liked to go places, so we went. Do you have stories about Mom and Dad?

Kay: I admired your mother so much, and your father could be so cranky, but she always handled it so well. [Laughs] I would think, "How does she do that?"

Lois: Why was he cranky?

Karen: He had this gruff exterior. He was a schoolteacher, and he taught mostly boys in shop.

Kay: That was his exterior, yes.

Karen: My friends and people that actually knew him would say, "He's just a big teddy bear."

Kay: Well, he was, yes.

Lois: With three girls, what chance did he have?

Kay: Maxine, as I say, I just admired her to death, and she was a very good square dancer. That was the most terrifying moment I ever had on North Fork.

Karen: Square dancing?

Kay: Oh! Keith and I did not know how to square dance. Marian literally—and my husband was 6'3"—picked him up and threw him because he wasn't doing it right.

Lois: This was at the Hall?

Kay: At McFarland's. Oh, it was scary. I mean, here we were just married in this strange place, and now we're all going to square dance?

Lois: Who did this to him, Mary or Maxine?

Kay: Marian. Not Maxine, no.

Lois: Marian Opalka?

Kay: Yes. Just picked him up and threw him. [Laughs]

Karen: "What do you mean you don't how to allemande left?"

Lois: "Get with it, kid." That's funny.

Kay: Although Marian was lovely to me, because she adored Keith, thank goodness. I mean, she really, really liked Keith, so she put up with a lot.

Karen: What I remember as a kid is we would have picnics for the trail crew, and you were always included in the trail crew picnics. Because they weren't always down from the lookout, or wherever they were at. And even after you got off the North Fork, you would come back for the picnics.

Kay: Oh yes.

Karen: Who was the trail guy who ended up being the head on the Going to the Sun Highway?

Kay: Russ Landt. He lived with us for a winter, another sweet sweet man and oh, it just breaks my heart. Again, he had Parkinson's, and he died five years ago maybe.

Karen: But he went from a trail crew kid and ended up being the head honcho of Logan Pass, clearing it for the snowplows and stuff.

Kay: That threw me. As I say, he lived with us for a winter. Of course, we were readers and Russ was not. He read *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, which was like this thick. He finally confessed that's the only book he had ever read. He had a history major. I didn't find that out until his obituary. I always thought he had a biology major. He had a history major, and he had never read a book. [Laughs]

Lois: Being a history major, you read your eyes out. I can tell you that, because my degree is in history.

Kay: I never did quite figure that out, unless the obituary was wrong, which it must have been.

Karen: His name will be in a lot of stuff in the *Hungry Horse News*, because my mom and dad always loved to read about him. When he first came up there he was just a green kid.

Kay: Yes, he was just a sophomore in college.

Karen: Kind of like she was. [Laughs]

Kay: John Gray was on that trail crew, and he married Karen Feather, of course.

Lois: This was after he and Karen separated?

Kay: No, before. Before they ever met, I think. Then there was a guy named Mike Gerard who was in school at Cornell. We were all pretty unhappy with Russ's wife, because there was a tiny announcement in the *Hungry Horse News* saying they were having a memorial for him. I would not have known, but I saw John Gray and he said, "I'll see you at Russ's memorial." I said, "What?" And he said, "Well, Kay, it's tomorrow." So, I did get there for that, and some of the old trail guys came. Gerard lived in Kentucky or Tennessee, I think Kentucky. He flew in for it. Those trail crew boys stuck together.

Karen: My mom was kind of like the mother hen. When they would come down she would always have picnics for them, because she felt like they didn't get fed well enough.

Kay: I'm sure they ate some real scrap, probably. They got good food from the government, but they didn't know what to do with it.

Karen: Kay, who was the guy who helped with Big Mountain? They had the cabin right outside the main ranger cabin on the other side of the road from ours. He was like the fire head of it. Can you remember their name? She was always knitting and making caps to sell at Big Mountain. They had two boys. I remember Tim's name.

Kay: It started with an 'H', didn't it? [Karl Hinderman] He was one of the guys that founded Big Mountain, wasn't he?

Karen: Yes, he was.

Kay: He taught skiing. He had been with the 10th Mountain Division. He took me and Keith up to Numa the first time. I remember I didn't know about altitude and hiking, and I wanted to die. I just wanted to be done with this. His wife was always knitting mittens and scarves to sell at Big Mountain.

Karen: I remember as a kiddie when you were newlyweds, but I can't imagine being that newlywed, never being here and then going through the road to get here. The trail...

Kay: The trail, I thought, "Oh, dear God."

Karen: And to see where you're going to stay, and then you have to come down those steps to go to the jon that just appears to be hanging on the side of the hill.

Kay: [Laughs] Yes, there was like no door, because the view was magnificent.

Karen: I just can't imagine what you must have thought.

Kay: Fortunately, I guess if God has given me one gift, it's to be content wherever I am.

Lois: That is a gift.

Kay: I pretty much always have been.

Lois: Well, your love was forged on that Lookout.

Kay: Yes, really. Well, I didn't know how to cook. That was the worst. [Laughs] Bless Marian again, and that old wind-up phone. I was on the phone to Marian or Dorothy, whoever I could reach. "Help! What do I do now?" Because I didn't know diddly about cooking, and I had to bake bread. That first batch was gray and heavy, and it quivered. It was so bad. I finally called Marian, and she took me step by step. After that it was fine, but she was endlessly patient with me.

Lois: Can you imagine what her thoughts were with all these kids on the lookouts? She was like the mother hen.

Kay: And she would always [making squeaky noise]—her voice was just like that.

Karen: And she was always going to take a shillelagh after us.

Kay: [Laughs] Yeah.

Karen: She always threatened us, "I'm going to come after with a shillelagh." And we were like, "A what?" [Laughs]

Kay: They had two daughter. I never met the daughters.

Karen: We did, but it was long ago.

Lois: I've heard Alan McNeil say they had a nickname for her. What did they call her? Marian, the Terror, or something? He had a name for her, and also for Annette Rover. He had kind of a nickname for her.

Kay: I didn't know Annette. Of course, I can remember when Marian Opalka married Ben Rover. What a shock that was. [Laughs]

Lois: So, Adolph passed away and Annette Rover passed away, and Marian married Ben?

Kay: Yes. I can remember she came up to the campsite to tell us, and she said [in a squeaky voice], "I hope he realizes"—because his mother was over 100—"I'm not going to take care of him if he's going to live that long." And, of course, Marian died, which was a real shock. I thought she would go on forever. [Marian was Ben's third wife. He married another woman after Annette died, then they divorced and he married Marian.]

Lois: When did they build the cabin that's now the Ben Rover cabin?

Kay: It was there when we came. [Ben had built it shortly after Annette died in 1955.]

Karen: It was there before they married, because they knew each other as a couple. Well, there was just so few people up there all winter long, so they were like a couple of friends that I think got together and played cards and ate.

Kay: I don't know if I ever heard Ben say a word.

Lois: Yes, they always said he was expressionless.

Kay: Absolutely expressionless. I never saw him smile or frown.

Lois: That's funny.

Kay: But yes, when she said she had married Ben Rover I can remember just going...

Lois: Well, you know, to be a woman up here alone.

Karen: Well, this was later in life. She wasn't up here that much. She wasn't up here at that time, because they were no longer at the ranger station. And they had a place, because we would stop and visit them.

Kay: In Evergreen.

Karen: In Evergreen, not a very big house, a very small house.

Lois: And the third brother was down at Polson right? There was Joe and Adolph and who was the third brother? [Leopold]

Kay: I never met the third. I have no idea.

Lois: How about the Foremans? Did you know Helen and Orville Foreman, who came out from Illinois? She was related to L.O. Vaught, who Mt. Vaught is named for. That was her uncle. She started coming out as a kid camping there at the head of Lake McDonald. And I think Vaught actually was a ranger for a short while. I just saw that the other day.

Kay: Another question I had was the Hensen place, that was actually Ann's family?

Lois: It was actually Ben's family. It was Andrew Vance's, and they had one daughter, May, who married Ben Hensen, Sr., and then they had Ben Hensen, Jr. and Ethel, who became Ethel Newton. Ben Hensen, Jr. married Ann. They moved to California during the Depression. The Hensens had that store, then they gave that up and went to California. That's where he met Ann, in Fontana or wherever she's from.

Kay: I was thinking that her family had been on the North Fork.

Lois: It was his family. [Ann worked at the Polebridge Mercantile] and then she worked at the ranger station for a number of years.

Kay: Yes. She was another sweetheart. She worked all winter long. She had a little kiosk in a shopping mall, because she had to buy everything—I mean shampoo, toothpaste, everything that she needed she had to buy it.

Lois: And they had Iola.

Kay: Iola and Gene. The public television show Backwoods of Montana once did an episode on Gene and his large sewing machine collection. He worked on the grounds at the prison at Deer Lodge.

Lois: And there was another daughter, Juanita?

Kay: That was by his first marriage. How did that work? Okay, Kathleen Parr was the ranger's wife after the Opalkas retired. Kathleen was someplace, and she made some remark about the woman who was called Madam Queen [Mary Powell].

Karen: Oh, Queenie.

Kay: Queenie. That was Juanita's mother. Kathleen said there was this profound silence.

Karen: I bet.

Kay: She said, "I didn't know." Well, how would she know?

Lois: For Heaven's sakes, I always wondered who Ben's first wife was. I just knew there was a daughter.

Karen: Bringing up the name Parr, I haven't thought of them in a long time. They had two girls, that was in the 1964-1965 area. I wonder what their life is like now and where they are.

Kay: They divorced. God, I know a lot of history! [Laughs] Parr worked for the Park Service. He screwed up everything he ever touched. I mean that's just...and he was the most personable man who ever lived. Keith said being on patrol with him was scary. One day some guy had gone off the Inside Road, and he said, "Parr gets out of the patrol car and says, 'Well, you stupid son of a bitch.'" Keith was thinking, "Oh God, here we go."

Lois: What was his name?

Kay: Howard Parr. Anyway, Keith said five minutes later the guy had his arm around Howard. He had that kind of charm.

Karen: I liked him.

Kay: Oh, I loved him. Who could not love Howard? But, I mean, he just screwed up all the time. He made no bones about the fact that he was going to make some points, and he took Fred Benowiest, who was the assistant superintendent, fishing and managed to get a fish hook in his head. That's how his life was. Anyway, when they started Job Corps, the Park Service shunted a lot of people over, and Howard was one of them. Chuck Riebe was assistant engineer in the Park. He was a good friend. Anyway, people got shunted over to Job Corps, and they ended up in the same place down in North Carolina. Then eventually, Kathleen and Howard divorced, and she married a doctor and went back to nursing. I don't know where she lives or anything.

Karen: I haven't thought of them in a long time.

Lois: Did you know the Sondresons [Loyd and Ruth]?

Kay: Not very well. Not as well as everyone else did, for some reason.

Lois: Well, they were busy, and they had their business. I didn't know, until I was interviewing Nonie Mathison and her son Johnny, that at one time he employed I think he said more than 60 people up here. He was a major employer in the North Fork.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: With that logging business of his.

Kay: And he had lupus. I have lupus, and I had never heard of lupus. That's what killed him eventually, because he would work out in the sun.

Lois: Did you know the Gaffaneys [Larry and Florence]?

Kay: I knew the name. Most of these people I met at one time or another.

Lois: Obviously, you were in the Park. Especially up on the north end, I'll hear the people up there say, "We didn't have anything to do with those people in Polebridge." They had their own universe up there, from the time it was first settled.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: Because people would go up the road to Kintla and cross the river there. Unless they had to go down for something, they didn't. Did you know George and Ruby Rockwell?

Kay: There again, the name rings a bell.

Lois: The Funks [Bob and Mickey]?

Kay: Oh yes, I knew the Funks. In fact, that would be Jack McFarland's father-in-law.

Lois: He evidently owned that cabin that's now the schoolhouse.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: At the time the Wild and Scenic River initiative was coming along. He really supported that and was the one who ended up selling the property to the Forest Service.

Kay: Oh, okay. Yes, I remember when they had the place up there.

Lois: So, you knew the Harts, Fern and Ray? They were students together and professors, right? The Walters, we've talked kind of around the Walters. You said there was an old cabin that's still there, but then they built another cabin?

Kay: They built another cabin and a warehouse. You have to understand, George couldn't ever do anything by halves. I mean a whole trailer of beer, that's how he operated. I would get things. I would go to the door, and it would be UPS. Here George had been at an outlet store somewhere and bought me something. And he always called me Sis. People thought we were brother and sister. There was a lot of confusion about that, but he treated me like a sister, because as I say I would get packages in the mail.

Lois: Did he call other women Sis, or just you?

Kay: I guess just me. But anyway, they built a cabin that they lived in—not a very big one, but a very nice one which is still there. That's the one that Emily Walters stays in, down on the meadow. And they built a warehouse, because George collected. He couldn't buy one of anything; he bought 20. It wasn't until later years that they built that cabin up on the ridge, but they lived down below for a long time.

Karen: Right. Dorothy liked the lower cabins, is the way I remember.

Kay: Yes, she really did, because she didn't get around that well.

Karen: And then she was eventually in a wheelchair.

Kay: Yes, so that upper cabin was a lot less user-friendly.

Karen: Well, all the bedrooms were upstairs.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: So, Dave had Emily and Amanda...

Kay: With Marsha, and before that he had Heather with Margo.

Karen: Margo was a rich girl who came to the McFarland dude ranch and fell in love with a wrangler.

Kay: She was distantly related to Mary. Which, from stories I heard, probably she was.

Karen: I just knew that she was like a debutante from New York.

Kay: Boston. That's where she had her debut, in Boston. She was actually from Maine.

Lois: Was there not also an Elizabeth?

Kay: No, not that I'm aware of.

Lois: And then Peter had?

Kay: He was married first to Sally and then Rose Marie. He and Sally had one daughter, Jennifer, who I understand is still modeling, and she's well into her 30s.

Lois: So, you knew Ted and Esther Ross?

Kay: Yes. I didn't know Esther well. She kind of kept a low profile.

Karen: She was very . . . backward.

Lois: Someone told me that Esther was deaf. Is that true?

Kay: Well, maybe that would explain it, because she was not aloof so much as elusive.

Lois: What I've heard is she really didn't like it up there that well. She didn't like having to homeschool that youngest kid. Karen Feather told me that Ruth Lawson told her that sometimes Esther would just come over to their place to get away from it all and take a nap, and that she suffered from depression.

Kay: That's tough.

Lois: That Merc eats marriages.

Kay: It does, yes.

Karen: If you're not a people person, that's not the place to be, and she was not a people person. I was one of the people that helped them when I was older. I would go and stay and help with the store, because she had to cover the store when he went to town. The only time she would come out was if we were selling gasoline or alcohol. Oh, and she didn't let us cut the cheese. You know, they always had that big block of cheese. For whatever reason—I don't know if cheese was expensive back then—we were not allowed to cut that. Those were the three things that would bring her out from the back.

Kay: Here's a story about the cheese.

Lois: I've heard about the cats and the cheese.

Kay: Exactly. Once she took over, the darn cat would sleep on that cheese wheel. And, of course, Karen her cats are her life.

Karen: Well, they are like her children.

Lois: The cats would also curl up in the peanut barrel sometimes.

Kay: Oh, I'm not surprised.

Lois: Were you a card player? What did you do in the evening for entertainment? Did you play cards with people up there? I hear pinochle was big.

Kay: We never played cards up there. We did in the winter when we lived at Apgar. We played cards constantly. That was really fun.

Lois: What did you play?

Kay: We played a lot of Yahtzee, and some Whist, but no, we never played cards up there.

Lois: Were you too tired at night?

Kay: We did a lot of sitting around the campfire when we were in the ranger station.

Lois: We started on your assignments, and I don't know that we finished. We said 1958 was Numa, and then 1959 and 1960 were Apgar.

Kay: And then 1961 was Logging, and 1962, 1963, and 1967 were Polebridge. They wanted Keith to come back in 1968. We were ready to go, and the Park called him and Bob Frauson had requested Keith be his assistant on Body Recovery. Keith thought about it for about week. Keith was on the stretcher team that took that woman out of Bowman who was so badly mauled.

Karen: My dad had to go in on that, too, and my dad was not a hiker. He didn't have to carry, but he had to go in. That was one of the requirements, and that was just about the beginning of the end for my dad, too.

Kay: Keith he thought about it and he said, "I can't face a summer of recovering bodies and carrying people out."

Lois: What had happened?

Karen: A man and woman were hiking and were mauled by a bear.

Kay: What happened is they were not making noise, and she was mauled. He tried to get the bear away. The bear hurt him some, but not much, and finally he realized he had to get out. They had canoed up the lake, and of course he had to canoe back down the lake. Meanwhile, these people—and Keith never got over this, they were so smart. The man actually took the flesh that was scattered, gathered it together and took it away and buried it. Then he put the sleeping bag under the woman and dragged her where she would have shade. She had most of her thigh gone. He got down to Bowman, and it was the ranger's day off, so he had to get into his car and come to the ranger station and tell us what was taking place, and they would need help.

Lois: And this was like in 1963 then? Is that the second year you were at Polebridge?

Kay: I think it was the second year. Anyway, Keith said when they got there—because I guess he was on the first stretcher team that got in—the woman said, "Gentlemen, I've

had to go to the bathroom for hours, and I didn't want to go in the sleeping bag." So, they had to help her. Keith said she never went into shock. They were both professors at a university in Pennsylvania. I remember when she was interviewed they asked about suing, and she said, "No, we were in the bear's territory. We were at fault. Why would we sue?"

Karen: That's just a wonderful attitude.

Kay: Oh, a fabulous attitude.

Lois: Did she lose her leg?

Kay: Apparently, they were back the next year hiking. They were able to patch her together. But Keith kept thinking about that, and he said, "I just can't do that again."

Lois: So, from 1964 to 1966 you didn't come out?

Kay: No. In 1964 we got here right after the flood, and Avery Ferguson, another one of my very favorite people, came and he wanted Keith to be a foreman for the gypsy crews that were going out repairing. Keith said, "That's fine, but what are we going to do with Kay? Could she camp in the Park?" Somebody said, "Well, we can't break the rules. She can only stay two weeks." And Keith said, "Well fine, I guess I won't." He adored Avery, and Avery was just sick. He needed Keith desperately as a foreman for one of these crews, but no, I couldn't be in the Park more than two weeks.

Karen: When the flood happened, of course we couldn't get up to the North Fork immediately. There again, that's why you stayed, was because you rented. So, we had to stay at Lake Five until it got good enough that we could go back up and rent the cabin and stay at my dad's position. So, he had to work down here. He had to walk across that bridge every morning, that was tilted this way, and my dad does not like heights. At that point it was just me, just one kid, but we had the trailer, because we always brought the trailer. Daddy and Mom somehow found Lake Five, because the Park would not let you stay.

Lois: Then you went up the Outside Road?

Karen: When it finally got fixed, and then we were able to get in.

Lois: When you said he came across the bridge, which bridge?

Karen: The bridge here at West Glacier, the concrete bridge, because it was turned like this.

Lois: Holy cow.

Karen: They wanted Daddy to work, but he had to find some place to put his family.

Lois: Was that his last year working?

Karen: No, he worked until 1965. I graduated in 1966, and he didn't work that summer, because he didn't have to support kids anymore. [Chuckles]

Kay: Avery just couldn't believe it.

Karen: And he couldn't work it out where you guys could still work? That wasn't in the plan.

Kay: Of course, I did fire dispatching. I was trained, of course, because I was on a lookout, and I was on the radio 24/7. In order to have me available to dispatch they would have to get a special appointment for me. So, one year I was a blister rust boy, and it would go through channels. Can you imagine what it costs? It would have to go all the way up the line, and I would get a special appointment, then it would come back down. Then when they had a fire they could hire me. That got to be a little ludicrous. Of course, in 1967 it paid off, because I was the only one available up there to be on the radio.

Lois: That was the Huckleberry Fire in 1967?

Kay: Yes.

Lois: Did you work that?

Kay: Oh yes, I worked the whole blamed thing. In fact, somebody called me from headquarters, and I was up 36 straight hours. They said they could hear my voice drop as I got tired. Another truly funny thing—it wasn't funny at the time--we had a fire up at Kintla, or near Kintla. It wasn't 1967; it must have been 1963. The day before the fire started, the man in the ranger station said, "There's the weirdest group camping up at Kintla." They had wingtips and pinstriped suits. He said, "They're definitely not campers." Well, the fire started, and I was at the radio. All the men were out fighting this fire, and about 2:30 in the morning these three goons walk into the office. Their story was they had driven down from Kintla. One of them had a stomach ache, and did I have any Pepto-Bismol. Excuse me, you don't drive from Kintla to Polebridge to get Pepto-Bismol, and I said, "No."

Lois: The road was as bad back then as it is now?

Kay: Oh yeah. So now I get the feeling they want information. Of course, I'm sure they probably knew the FBI—I mean, they trace these fires if they can. I wonder if these guys started the fire unintentionally, or whatever. But they left, and I called headquarters and said, "I am locking my door. This was weird." And the guys were gone the next day. Poof, they disappeared. So, for years I thought, "What was that about?" Then Al Michaels, who stays here and was a highway patrolman, said, "Well Kay, if you are in trouble with the mafia or somebody is after you, they ship you to Libby," which would explain why the Luciano's are up at Eureka. Anyway, he said, "Undoubtedly they were really nervous about this fire."

Lois: Could you tell if they were from Chicago or New York?

Kay: Well, they kind of sounded like they were from maybe Brooklyn. Anyway, he said, "That would explain that. They were just down there looking to find out what you knew about how the fire had started." I said, "Well that solves that mystery," because for years I wondered about that. I thought that was so strange.

Lois: What did Keith do for a living?

Kay: He taught school, and then he got the county museum going and was curator for the museum there. I never intended to teach, and I ended up teaching forever.

Lois: He taught at high school level?

Kay: Yes.

Lois: You taught?

Kay: Junior high and high school. I taught art. He taught history and anthropology.

Lois: Bless his heart. I would have liked him.

Kay: Yes, I'm sure you would.

Lois: My degrees are in anthropology and history. Did you come out again? Was 1967 your last year working here?

Kay: Yes, working, and then we just started camping whenever we came out.

Lois: It sounds like you have been coming almost every year?

Kay: Yes, all but seven of the last 59.

Lois: Really?

Kay: At that time, you could stay at River Campground more than two weeks. You could stay up there, and I loved it.

Lois: When did Keith pass away?

Kay: He passed away in 1994. I came out for ten days after he died. I closed on the house I'm in on the day he died. I was so overwhelmed, I thought, "Phooey, I'm going to go." I took the train out and stayed for ten days. Then the next year I thought, "You know, I can still do this." We had a pop-up at that time. Friends brought it to Missoula to my brother-in-law, who brought it up here. Then I had a little fifth wheel, and now I have this.

Lois: You're a brave soul.

Kay: Well not really, but the other day I could have snapped at some poor man. He said, "How old are you?" I said, "Well, I turned 80 in April." He said, "Did you drive out by yourself?" I said, "Would you say that to a man?" He said, "No." And I said, "Well, there you are."

Lois: And you leave it here in the winter?

Kay: Yes. I don't have to deal with it. It's not that I'm lugging that thing around at all.

Karen: But if you had to, you could.

Kay: Oh yes.

Lois: And you said his ashes are spread up here?

Kay: Up the North Fork, yes, right by the bridge. I wish it was still the old pole bridge. I loved that bridge, but right where that was.

Lois: That's pretty neat. Do you have photographs of any of these old North Forkers or their homes or anything?

Kay: Unfortunately, no.

Lois: You weren't shutterbugs?

Kay: No, we were not at all, which is really sad. I mean, we have a whole lifetime of interesting things we didn't photograph.

Lois: The fires we're having this year, you've been through some fires.

Kay: 2003, this isn't bad at all.

Lois: That was the Robert Fire, right?

Kay: Oh boy. That was nasty.

Lois: Yes, that was a scary one and the Moose Fire. We've had them. Up north they had the Wedge Canyon Fire.

Kay: Yes.

Lois: That was tough on the north end.

Kay: Oh yeah. I'm trying to think who else; oh, Roy Cooper. He was the sweetest man. I loved Roy. That was such a heartbreaker.

Lois: I was just interviewing Linda Pittman the other day. She is kind of across the street from where the Harkers were. It sounds like he never had a place of his own. He rented or he stayed in cabins up there?

Kay: Yes. I think Ladenburg, did he rent from him?

Karen: I think he had a trailer there.

Lois: The Sonnenbergs. I think maybe was he at Gus and Elsie's?

Kay: He was just the dearest man, and the first time I met him he had this cute little dog. I said, "What's the dog's name?" He mumbled, "Mffn." I said, "What us the dog's name?!" He said, "Well, it's Muffin, okay!" [Laughs] He was just a sweet, sweet man.

Lois: The people that killed him had come there; they wanted to go to the border and they wanted to borrow horses or something?

Kay: And he would have given them a horse.

Lois: But they weren't his horses, were they? Where was he staying?

Karen: It was a trailer house. I thought it was close to Lee Downes, in that general area, but I may be wrong.

Kay: But I've often thought of that. He thought I was married to George McFarland, because every time he saw me I was with Mary, and there was some confusion there. We finally got that cleared up. [Laughs]

Lois: But the funny story about him is the big logs out in front of the Merc. Somebody told me to ask Karen about the logs. They put them up there because he would come up, and he wouldn't stop and he just drove right up onto the porch or something. So she did, she called them the Cooper Stoppers.

Kay: Oh! [Laughs]

Lois: And then in the 1995 flood, I guess they sort of floated off. The Cooper Logs or the Cooper Stoppers, they called them.

Kay: I have another tale out of school, but this was funny. Both Mary McFarland and Edwina Noffsinger went to St. Mary's at Faribault, Minnesota, which was the Episcopal Girls' School, and there was some inherent snobbism there. I don't remember the woman's name, but some woman was living with Ladenburg. Somehow I got to know her, and I really liked her and we got to be quite friendly. In each case, when I told Mary and Edwina they both said the same thing, "Oh she couldn't live with him. She was a St. Mary's girl." [Laughs]

Lois: And Joan, who he did marry, was like a nightclub singer or something, wasn't she?

Kay: Blonde, a very attractive woman?

Lois: I only knew her as an older woman, so I don't know. I think she was a nightclub singer.

Kay: They both knew she was a St. Mary's girl. I thought that was so funny.

Lois: That's hilarious.

Karen: That surprises me, if they were both St. Mary's girls, they didn't know each other.

Kay: Well, there were slightly different eras, and then Edwina grew up in the Conrad Mansion, because her brother was married to Kate Conrad. Her mother died first, when she was about five, and her father was raising her. Then he died very young of a heart attack. Mrs. Conrad said, "We'll take care of her," so she lived in the Conrad Mansion.

Karen: I love the Conrad Mansion.

Kay: And again, people are so funny. She had a treasure trove, and she said to Keith one time, "Do you think they would like this at the Mansion?" I mean, she had Mr. Conrad's driving gloves and his buffalo robes. You name it, she had it. Keith said, "They would kill for this stuff." So, she did turn it all over to them. She lived there until she went to college, and she did go to high school at St. Mary's. So, she's very much Conrad history. When I visited the mansion one time, everything was stored in Kate Conrad's trousseau trunk, which was labeled Montana Territory. I recognized the trunk.

Lois: How about that? Wow.

Karen: It's a small world.

Lois: It is, in this area especially. We think of it as being good-sized, but my daughter has lived in Kalispell now for 12 years or so, and it's like you just know everybody, or know about them anyway. It's a small valley, especially if you have kids.

Kay: Yes. Then, as I say, for me the thrill of all these histories coming together between Mary and Edwina. They had such interesting lives, and then to have it pull together like that, that was always a big thrill for us.

Lois: When you came out in later years were you and Keith big hikers?

Kay: Yes, we hiked, and then we hiked and then we hiked. I always said being married to him was like being in a Marine boot camp. [Laughs] Because he was 6'3", and I was always a slow hiker.

Lois: Did you put a pack on his back to slow him down?

Kay: No, he would just say, "You're on your own."

Lois: Did you go in the back country and stay overnight, and you did day hikes?

Kay: He did more than I did. In fact, I'm trying to think if I ever did. I always found a way to get out of the overnights.

Karen: Was it that initial fear of not coming out of the lookout the whole summer?

Lois: Did you retain your fear of grizzlies?

Kay: Yes, and you know the only bear encounter we ever had on the trail, Keith didn't even see it or hear it. George and Keith and I hiked up to Kishenehn, which we did several times. Keith was ahead of George and me, so it was Keith and then George and then me. Keith had already gone around the bend, and all of a sudden we heard a commotion below us. It was a black bear, and he was angry. Apparently, he had been sleeping in the tree and we woke him. He was not happy, and he was below us. We were on the side of the ridge, and we had gotten lazy. We had made noise all day. We had seen no bear scat, and we figured, "Oh phooey, who cares? We're tired." The bear was below us and visibly angry, and George started to talk to it. You could just see the bear go, "Well, hmm, this isn't so bad." You could see him calm down. It was just the weirdest thing.

Lois: You're talking about George McFarland? He has this thing about bears, he really does. He will give you this long lecture about not taking pictures of them because they think it's a big eye, or whatever.

Kay: It was just magic. Afterwards Keith said, "Were you frightened?" I said, "I didn't have time to be frightened." At first I thought, "I've got to figure out how I'm going to handle this." There wasn't time for panic. And I said, "Furthermore, George calmed me down, too." [Laughs]

Lois: He really liked to hike didn't he, George?

Kay: Oh yes, and Keith and George climbed a lot together.

Lois: They scaled?

Kay: Yes. There again, I have story after story. I will bore you to death. But Con Robinson—they had the place right across from the Schoenbergers. Every night that he was up there he would eat dinner at Mary's. Con was very handsome, kind of a quiet man. George and Keith were on a climbing trip, and he came kind of in his cups. We were sitting at the table; we always sat out on the eating porch. Mary had that screened-in wonderful eating porch. It was hot, and it was 10 o'clock or so before we were eating. Con kept saying, "When are they due?" Mary and I kept saying, "We don't know, and we don't want to know, because if they give us a time we're going to panic if they don't show." Well he wouldn't leave it alone. Mary went in the kitchen to get something. He was so circumspect, I don't think I ever heard the man even say "damn," but he leaned over and he hit me on the arm and said, "Well, piss on 'em." [Laughs] The next day I told Mary, and she laughed until she cried. She just doubled over.

Lois: Spell Con.

Kay: C-o-n. I don't know if it was Conrad or Conway, Con and his brother Jerry Robinson.

Lois: I've heard the name Jerry Robinson.

Kay: He had two children. Paul, and what was the girl's name? I've never been able to remember her name.

Karen: Did she work at McFarland's once?

Kay: I think she probably did. They had owned a car dealership in Great Falls, and then they had a sister from Billings who was the third owner of this place, but Con was up there a lot. Jerry not very often, and the sister would come and then Con wouldn't be there, but he was there most of the summer.

Lois: So, a lot of girls worked as cabin girls at the McFarland Ranch?

Karen: And laundry and waitresses, and food. Merry O'Hare worked there.

Lois: Did she? Did Ann Hensen work there? Iola did.

Karen: I don't think Ann Hensen did, because Iola was older than my sister Beverly.

Lois: Do you remember the remains of what was the Hensen's store there by the Loop Road?

Karen: Yes. That was like this haunted house that I went past every day when I walked to town.

Lois: Really?

Karen: Oh yeah, and we would go in there and the walls were lined with old newspapers. I never went upstairs. It was a two-story deal, but I never went upstairs. I was basically a chicken sometimes.

Lois: I wonder if anybody has any pictures of that structure, also of the Wilderness Cabins that burned.

Kay: I have a picture that George took and gave to us. I had it framed because, of course, it burned, between the store and the ranger station. As you were going to the store it would have been on the right-hand side.

Karen: Yes, that's the old two-story. It was like a haunted house.

Kay: I have a picture of that.

Karen: Could you have a copy made?

Kay: Oh sure, I'll have a copy made.

Lois: Even Larry Wilson doesn't have a picture of it.

Kay: I always liked it, and so George [photographed the ruins].

Karen: You know who's got a picture of it? But it's a painting, Ted Ross.

Lois: Does he?

Karen: I saw it at his house, but it's a painting. Somebody painted it for him.

Lois: We've got to get back to him. I have a whole list of questions for him.

Karen: This is off the subject, too, but George McFarland, because he was a photographer, we have a picture of the old barn up at McFarland's dude ranch. It's black and white. He used lots of black and white.

Kay: Yes, my pictures were black and white.

Lois: I would like some pictures of the McFarland complex, since it all got scattered.

Karen: Disassembled and reassembled.

Kay: One thing Mary had, and I'm assuming George has, and she never cared for it, but somebody who stayed with them did, a picture of the old ranch. She said, "Well it's so stylized." I always just loved it. It's a watercolor. I wonder if George still has that.

Karen: We have a watercolor that Cecily McNeil did of our cabin with the washtub on the side of it. It's got the picnic table and the fire cache barn. And Tommy Edwards has one, because Cecily is very creative. She went through that watercolor phase. Carmen [Tom Edwards' widow] has the one of the old Logging Ranger Station.

And you know what I thought, Kay? When you said you went in 1960, that was probably the first year that Uncle Bert and Aunt Thelma didn't go up there, because that would work out about right. They were at Logging, and they probably quit going there in 1959, and you showed up and took over Logging in 1960.

Lois: 1961, she said.

Kay: Yes, 1961.

Karen: Then maybe 1960 was Uncle Bert and Aunt Thelma's last summer.

Lois: Yes, because I had some trouble getting stuff out of Tom about that, because he was older by then. He wasn't really involved in his parents' life.

Karen: When his parents finally quit coming, then he came out and stayed with us. We put a tent by the picnic table. Do you remember that, Kay? He worked, and he stayed in the tent because the cabin wasn't that big. He did some haying and stuff in the area. And Beverly ran with the Lawson girls. Do you remember them?

Kay: Yes.

Lois: What are their names?

Karen: Kay and Sharon Lawson. Only one of them doesn't go by her first name anymore. I talked to one of them to try to get some history, and I can't remember if it was Kay who went by a different name or if it was Sharon, but it threw me. One or the other referred to her sister by a different name, so it may be a middle name we knew one of them by.

Lois: There was a gal that wrote a book about one of the schools. I think she calls it *Moose Country School*, Sheri Lawson, and I wondered if that was any relation. I bought the book; I found it online. There was like one copy left. I bought it, put my nametag in it. I loaned it to Larry Wilson because he wanted to see it. He says he brought it back, but now I can't find that book for love nor money, and there aren't any more available on the internet. It wasn't really much about the school itself. She was writing the story of a lady who said she was the teacher there, and it's mostly pictures of the children, and they are not all identified. But when I saw that name Lawson, I thought hmm.

Karen: I don't think that would have been Kay or Sharon, because that would have been pre-them, I think.

Lois: Well, she was telling the story of the teacher. She had known this lady, and this lady had pictures, so she turned it into a self-published book.

Karen: Weren't the Lawsons from Sunburst, Montana?

Kay: Yes, they were from Sunburst. Isn't that where the Stonestreets were from, too?

Karen: Yes. I think they knew each other.

Lois: And Hazen was a superintendent in Eureka or up in that area somewhere?

Kay: Right on the border.

Lois: They lived in Missoula in their later years, and they both passed down there. I remember him riding his horse—well, I don't think it was his horse; I think it might have been Sharon [Costantino's] horse in the 4th of July parade. We were there for his 80th birthday, when they roasted the turkey. They used to have the picnics up at Bowman Lake, and he would roast a turkey and bring it.

Karen: We used to always have a picnic on the lake.

Lois: At Bowman, okay, back when there weren't a zillion people up there.

Karen: And Hazen used to take his friends. They would go over the pass from Bowman Lake and go over on horseback. They had said I could go, but Mother would never let me, but I got to ride the horses from their place to Bowman Lake, which thrilled me to death.

Kay: That would have been a thrill.

Karen: I really, really wanted to go over the pass, but my mom would never allow it, because really there were problems with horses and accidents. I was denied.

Lois: You were shielded as a child? Is that what you're saying?

Karen: To a certain point, because Mother had control. What she didn't know didn't hurt her.

Kay: [Laughs] As with most mothers.

Lois: You and the Edwards boys sometimes took off. How can you control three boys and three girls?

Karen: Well, Tommy was never involved, because Tommy always went for older women, so he was always involved with my sisters. I ran with Gary and Westy and Buddy. I was outnumbered for boys, but I could beat them in a race, and I could beat them up a tree. I was very competitive. I know that's hard to believe. [Chuckles] Kay and I were talking about how people have no clue what a wonderful childhood we had up here—I had up here—and getting to meet Kay and Keith.

Lois: What's the age difference between you guys?

Karen: I'm 69.

Kay: And I'm 80.

Karen: Eleven years.

Lois: When you came here you had just been married. How old were you?

Kay: 21.

Lois: You were 21, you were 10 or 11, so did you think she was cute?

Kay: Oh yes, she was. I always remember her as very brisk, always going someplace doing something.

Karen: And back then I would have had pigtails.

Lois: And you thought she was pretty cool stuff, huh?

Karen: Oh yes, I was just really impressed. Well really, to be honest with you, I thought her husband was cool—Keith, you know. Kay was always along for the ride.

Kay: I always think, "Thank God for Keith," because to Marian he could do no wrong.

Karen: Keith was just tall and personable, because I was just a kid. But he talked to you. He had time for you. Not that Kay didn't, but she just talked to my mom, you know.

Lois: I wonder how Adolph and Marian met and how they got married.

Kay: I never did hear that, because she was from Chicago. I can remember just being stunned, because I thought she was one of these tough western ladies you read about.

Lois: And the Opalkas are all over the place. In the old papers there are Opalkas everywhere.

Karen: Can you not find some history in the Opalka family that could catch you up on that?

Lois: Well, who is around, do you know? You say Adolph and Marian had two kids.

Kay: Two daughters, both of whom lived in eastern Montana, or southeastern. One of them I know lived on a sheep ranch.

Lois: But they have to be older than you.

Kay: Oh yes.

Lois: How old were their daughters when you were there?

Karen: I don't remember. They were battling their own in their own families.

Kay: I was going to say, they were probably in their 30s when I first got in.

Karen: But they might have kids.

Kay: Oh yes.

Lois: What happened to old family photo albums, if there were any, and that kind of stuff. Did you know the Harkers, the Sonnenbergs, the people down on this end?

Kay: I met them.

Karen: There was a divide between Polebridge, but there really wasn't when we were kids, other than the factor of distance. Like the Edwards' wouldn't come all the way up to the Community Hall, because they had to come from Logging. And the Walters didn't come from Bowman Lake. But we were centrally located, so we and the Evans' went both places. We went to the McFarland's dude ranch, and they did it every other weekend, because there wasn't enough to support both of them having a square dance at the same time. Somehow, the powers that be decided they would do it every other weekend, because Daddy had three girls and Mom and Dad danced, so we went there, and then we would go up to the Hall alternate weekends. Up there we had the Marx's, and there were people up there who wouldn't go all the way around to McFarland's.

Lois: What was the other family that was up there?

Karen: The Chrismans were there, but they weren't there the whole summer at that point in their lives.

Lois: Mary Maude Sherman, what was her maiden name [Brayton]? They went to the Ford schoolhouse.

Kay: There was a woman who gave George Walter fits. She was a busybody and was always nipping in to tell him something. He didn't like that; he didn't like her at all.

Lois: The Sweets bought the land that Madge Terrian had. She donated that little spot for the Hall itself, but the rest of the land the Sweets bought.

Kay: I remember meeting her.

Karen: She was always up here all summer by herself. She would bring her kids up, because her husband had a business that he couldn't get away. He would come up occasionally, but Rachel would stay the whole summer with the kids.

Lois: And other kids, too. I think Sharon Luke. The Evans kids said they were so glad, because Rachel took in other kids, too.

Karen: She didn't take in Sharon Luke. Her brother Floyd Luke married one of the girls Rachel brought up. They are still married. Her name was Sue.

Lois: That was the story.

Karen: Because Floyd was still with Frank Evans at that point. He was old enough to be out on his own, but he was still with Frank Evans. He met Sue who was with Rachel Sweet's group. Sue was her daughter's friend or something. They all came up here and they met and they married, just like Jack McFarland and Stephanie Funk.

Kay: He went first with Andrea. Yes, Jack went with Andrea Funk for a long time, and he shifted allegiances and took up with Stephanie.

Karen: Yes, and they had three beautiful children. They are very nice young kids. The youngest one, Jake, just graduated this year.

Lois: I still need to get that tape from her. She said she might have it. Evidently, Bob Funk at one point got all the old homestead men who were still living together at the Hall, got them drunk or whatever, and they talked for several hours. He got them on tape, but it was an old reel to reel tape. I'm trying to find the darn thing so we can convert it and transcribe it.

Kay: That would be really interesting.

Lois: Supposedly Stephanie said she might know where to find it.

Kay: Were you there when I was telling about the land, the seals?

Karen: No, that was prior.

Kay: One of my favorite stories, and of course I'd better not use names, but I already did. When our friends bought their land, Frank kept a careful tally on the land sales and what people paid.

Lois: Frank Evans?

Kay: Yes, he was really a busybody, and so one of our friends and the people they bought from got together. Apparently for each thousand dollars of purchase price there was a seal. And they cost so much per seal.

Lois: At the county land office or something?

Kay: Yes. So, they got their heads together, and they bought a plethora of seals and plastered them all over the deed or whatever, knowing what would happen when Frank came to check. Sure enough, they kept hearing about this fantastic amount of money they paid for their lot. [Laughs]

Lois: I'm just glad that the land stayed in the family after he passed away. Although they were divorced, Edna still felt an affinity for that place and helped them move the house, put a new foundation under it and all that.

Kay: Frank was very good to Keith and me. We had no quarrel with him. Like the one winter we lived in West Glacier and were not permanent Park people. When you don't have any status, it's a lot better. In the Park Service there was that hierarchy, and the rangers didn't talk to the plumbers, who didn't talk to others. We had a cocktail party New Year's Eve, and we had friends in all these divisions. People said, "Oh God, Kay, you can't do that. It will never work." Well, it did. Four or five years ago Chuck Riebe and his wife got ahold of me. They were out here, and we spent a day together. He said, "You know, I still remember that wonderful party you had." See, he was an engineer, and he had never been at a party with rangers. But we didn't have any status, so it was okay.

Lois: You weren't breaking any social rules.

Kay: Yes, and it was kind of that way up the North Fork. We weren't landowners, but we had friends in all of these areas, so Frank was really good to us. We could not complain at all. He would have us over for dinner.

Karen: You just never knew what he was feeding you.

Kay: Well, yeah. Fish head stew was a little much.

Lois: He was eccentric in his cooking?

Karen: He would pride himself in feeding you something and then telling you what it was.

Kay: Afterwards, yes.

Karen: He liked that, you know. "Well, guess what you just had to eat?"

Lois: How clever he was.

Kay: He and Edna were, of course, incredibly frugal. That's why they lost the hiking franchise, because they were taking hiking groups in, and they didn't provide enough for them, so that was unfortunate.

Lois: Where did you stay in West Glacier?

Kay: We rented one winter. I was telling Karen that Cecily had wanted to rent that same place the next year, but it belonged to the man who was president of the Havre campus of the University. Then at the ranch we stayed right at the Bar X Six in one of the houses on the ranch.

Lois: In the winter?

Kay: Yes. And, of course, that was one of the nicest winters of my life. Now the Blackfeet, the land had been stolen from them, my gosh, but they were so gracious, and we just had a wonderful year there. We were there eight months, I think.

Lois: But once you're there for the winter, you're there, right? You couldn't come and go.

Kay: But the snow blows right off over there. There was no problem. That was a wonderful winter, and Keith did carpentry work for Edwina, because she was planning to retire there. One of the warehouses that they had from when they had all the horses, he fixed that up. I remember he worked so hard and got it straightened up. We had a chinook, and it held.

Lois: It must have been quite a complex.

Kay: Oh, it was! Yes, there were many warehouses.

Karen: Well, just feeding them, because when the wind blows there's no food for the animals to get to.

Lois: I bet they bought hay from everybody, too. One story—I forgot who told me this—when you're out on Big Prairie there's all that sagebrush out there. How did it get there? Somebody said one winter they brought in a bunch of hay for the elk or something. Anyway, the hay that they brought in had the sage in it, and that's how it got started out there. It has since spread all over.

Kay: Well, I told a story to Rachel Potter, the botanist, at her book signing.

Lois: Jack's wife.

Kay: Yes. We were all so shocked when somebody came to Mary McFarland one day and wanted to take samples on her land, and she said "No." That was so un-Mary. She was not very gracious, and we were really shocked. This woman, I don't know if she was a botanist or what, but after she left we said, "Mary?" She said, "Think about it. We've been bringing hay in. Half the invasive species in the North Fork came from the McFarlands." [Laughs] So, there you are.

Lois: Could be. You're right.

Kay: Anyway, that explained that, because normally she would be, "Oh yes, please." She would have fed them and watered them, so we had a good chuckle about that.

Lois: Well Kay, thank you. It's been wonderful, and Karen, too.

Kay: It's like a tennis match.

Lois: Did you ever bring any pets with you when you came?

Kay: No room in the car.

Karen: Yes, my grandma and grandpa had to keep my cats while we were gone.

Lois: And the telephone service. You talked about Opalka keeping that service going.

Karen: Two rings, wasn't it, for Polebridge?

Kay: I don't remember, but I do know, of course, that it was kept up. And I remember when Bob Paul fell. He was in his 70s, and he was up repairing that phone line.

Karen: I want to say either Polebridge Ranger Station was two rings, or the store was two rings. I remember the two rings for some reason.

Lois: Larry [Wilson] said they used it up at Kintla Ranch, too. It was interesting because they had two boys and two adults, and their phone signal was two longs and two shorts. The McFarlands was two longs and three shorts, and they had two adults and three boys. It was just ironic that it worked out that way.

Karen: But I think that's what kept Marian Opalka happy, too.

Kay: I was going to say, she listened to every call. And if I needed something and Adolph—you never knew how he would greet that—I would casually mention it while talking to Dorothy, for instance, and it would appear. Marian would say, "You know what Kay needs up there?" [Laughs] But Bob Paul fell and shattered his leg, and he was in his 70s. I know we went to see him in the hospital, and of course he was in incredible shape. He healed beautifully and was back working the next year. But Mary, being a home ec person, was so appalled at the hospital food she took all of his meals into the hospital so that he would heal properly.

Lois: What year did your sister die, Beverly?

Karen: No, my sister Beverly is still alive.

Lois: Paula. How old were you when she died? Do you remember?

Karen: I would have to think.

Kay: Did she have cancer?

Karen: No, she had a form of leukemia.

Lois: Well. I'm going to say goodbye and thank you.

Kay: You are certainly welcome. We'll have to get together just for fun sometime.

APPENDIX 1

LETTERS WRITTEN BY KAY ROSENGREN
Numa Peak Lookout, Summer 1958

Note regarding these letters:

These were given to Jean Tabbert, Glacier National Park Curator in 2019 by Ann Fagre, volunteer with the Northwest Montana Lookout Association.

Any use of this material should include the following attribution:

“Copies of Kay Rosengren’s letters were provided by Kay to the Northwest Montana Lookout Association, as part of the Association’s ongoing work to preserve lookout history.”

See below for Ann’s thoughts about future use of this material.

From: Ann Fagre

To: Jean Tabbert

Subject: Two Questions for you

Date: Thursday, September 03, 2020 9:06:52 AM

Hi Jean,

I really wish you could have met Kay Rosengren as she was a delight. I honestly think she would have been pleased to have excerpts of her lookout letters shared in a Glacier Park podcast. She was so forthcoming during her interview and follow-up with giving her letters over to FFLA and saying that NPS was welcome to them as well. She and Keith (her husband who died before she did) had no children so there would be no objection from offspring for quoting her letters.

Ann

Note: These letters are undated, but all were written during the summer of 1958.

Dear Mom and Dad Rosengren,

Well, here we are in Glacier National Park and loving it!

Before I go on, it is only fair that I clear something up. I am not pregnant, as I gathered you thought when we told you of our very modest and hurried wedding plans and you said...tersely...that you supposed that was the way to do it when “you have to get married.”

The reason we mobilized so hastily was because we didn't know until three weeks ago that I would have a job, too. Did you even know Keith had a job out here? Did you know we were engaged? I suspect not, as your son is not much of a communicator.

Anyway, this is what happened: Jim Olson was hired as aerial observer for the park and suggested that a job as fire lookout sounded ideal for Keith, so he applied and was told to report for work here early in June.

In the letter Keith received, there was information that some of the lookouts were manned by couples. He wrote back in his usual to-the-point way, "If I get a wife, will you hire her?" The answer was no. All of the positions for couples had been filled.

Two weeks later he was sent a letter by someone with a sense of humor which read: "You'd better get that wife because she has a job." Apparently a couple had backed out; and so here we are.

Keith will be on the payroll five days a week and I will work two days a week.

The whole idea of doing this is exciting and will be daunting, as my outdoor life has been limited to a few walks in the tame woods. Your son, of course, is Minnesota's own Daniel Boone.

The challenge now is to learn to cook. I can boil water and scramble eggs, but beyond that am completely ignorant. I will try to not starve or poison Keith.

Your daughter-in-law, Kay

Dear Family,

Before I write anything else, I want to thank you a thousand times for arranging the wedding so quickly and so well. What with final exams and getting the license there was simply no time for anything else. We couldn't have done it. And eloping, while a seductive option, would really have messed up what (scant) rapport I have with my in-laws. I do suspect, however, you would have been fine with that.

Where to start? The trip out was wonderful, if fast. We came across northern Montana on Highway 2. Jim Olson's offer of a ride West as a wedding gift was generous beyond words, what with our having no wheels of any kind. Without his largess, we might have had to hitch hike.

Jim's mother came with us; we took her to Spokane and then came back to Glacier.

When we arrived here, the only accommodations in the area that we could afford were less than favorable for a honeymoon; in fact, they were impossible. We bunked (and I use the word advisedly) in a dormitory-type room at the Desert Mountain Ranch. Not at all what we had envisioned as a start to our marriage. Jim has a lot of fun telling people about "our" honeymoon.

On to cheerier things: The water here is clear, clear, clear. I almost tumbled out of the car when I stuck my head out to marvel. Growing up on the banks of the Red River of the North led me to believe that water in the out-of-doors came only in brown, and oozed rather than flowed. And

you would not believe the variety of colors rocks come in out here, and they can be seen as the water goes over them. Remarkable!

That's all for now. I will write after we have gone to Fire School.

Love, and in gratitude,

Kay

P.S. Keith has been put to work, so I am free to roam. Until we go up to Polebridge Ranger Station, and then up to the lookout, we are staying at what used to be a motel in Apgar Village. We are just a few hundred yards from Lake McDonald. We are surrounded by beauty. Can this be heaven?

I have somewhat overcome my fear that there is a bear behind every rock and tree, but I don't stray far. I spend a fair amount of time at Eddie's Cafe, it being the only place to perch hereabouts. Eddie Brewster and his wife Dorothy are very vivacious and do not indicate any impatience while I nurse a cup of coffee I can ill afford. (That first paycheck can't come any too soon.) Keith's dad gave him \$75 for a ring, but that is going for groceries. Ks parents have no idea that my wedding ring is one of Woolworth's finest gold plated.

We roam on foot in the area when Keith is not working. One such march found us foolishly trying to cross nearby Fish Creek. STUPID! The water is snow-fed and fast (who knew water could be fast?). The rocks are slippery and painful; our first mountain lesson.

K.

Dear Folks,

Fire School was interesting...and scary. We were told we would receive just forty gallons of water every two weeks. And those gallons will be for everything. These precious drops will be delivered by mule ("pack train" to you dudes). The words leave me imagining Keith in buckskins and me in calico and sunbonnet, while "The Grand Canyon Suite" crescendos in the background.

As you can tell, I'm trying really hard, but not successfully, to resist the romance of the Old West.

However fanciful my image of life on a mountaintop is, there was one young wife at Fire School from Chicago whose grasp of reality is even shakier than mine. She asked me what kind of washing machine there will be in their lookout. At first I thought she was joking, but then I realized that she either didn't hear, or chose to ignore, "no electricity" and "water by pack train." I didn't tell her there was no Maytag in her immediate future, lest she cut and run right back to Illinois.

Fire School was really instructive. The emphasis was on map reading and correctly identifying as accurately as possible the places where lightning strikes hit. To track the lightning, a fire finder is used. It is a large round wheel with a map in the center. It has a metal rim that can be moved. Through the middle of the contraption is what looks like a ruler. When a storm threatens, we are

to place a piece of paper on the map, and draw a line along the metal piece on the paper to indicate the line of sight from the lookout to the lightning strike.

The whole lookout, as I understand it, will be windowed, so a 360-degree sweep is available when watching the whole area for incoming storms or smokes or strikes.

We were told to record strikes until storms are so close the hair on the backs of our necks stands up, at which time we are to retreat to the "safe" corner. The fire finder is metal, as are our cots and the stoves, which means only the corner with the wooden table and chairs is "safe." Keith assures me that cowering under the table during the fireworks is not going to happen. We were also told that lightning strikes might smolder for up to two weeks before flaring up. Scary.

Another newsy bit: The lookout is cabled into the mountain. The reasons are for safety during thunderstorms, when the cables conduct the electricity into the ground, and to keep high winds from blowing the structure into the void. As most of us had not thought of either possibility, there was some eye rolling among those of us facing the unknown.

One of the rangers at Fire School looks like a Basset Hound. He spent most of the morning looking down and I thought he was bored, or possibly even sleeping. Silly me. He was studying the names of the lookouts and the fireguards and our destinations when we first got to the training hall. By the end of that first morning he knew who each of us is and where we [will] be for the season. His name is Don Barnum, and I suspect he is going to be one of my favorite people.

Love,

Keith and Kay

Dear Ones,

If there are friendlier people than most Montanans, I haven't yet met them. It amazes me that these Westerners simply hold out their arms and invite one to be a friend. The assumption seems to be that almost everyone is a good person until he or she proves otherwise.

On our way out here, we stopped at a Dairy Queen (I think it was in Malta) and as there was a line and we had to wait, the woman behind me asked where I was from, why I was in Montana, if I had ever seen a working ranch, etc. She then asked all of us...Jim, his mother, Keith and me to follow her out to her home. It was only forty miles south of Malta, she said, and a wonderful chance for us to see "the real Montana."

We were tempted, but because Jim had to report for work in Glacier before we did, we refused. She seemed genuinely sorry we couldn't accept her invitation. I was really touched that she assumed we were nice folks. And it would have been really fun to see an operating ranch.

And now that we are here in the park, even though many of the employees are not native to Montana, they seem to have adopted those same values; "Ya'll come" isn't just a southern thing, it seems. So many Montanans are of Scandinavian origin, but seem to have shed the standoffishness which still prevails where we live. I am getting used to being spontaneously hugged, and I am loving it.

The friendliness of everyone involved in teaching us the ropes in fire school was in keeping with the whole Montana “thing,” and it made learning easy.

Will write soon.

Love, hugs, and kisses, Keith and Kay

Dear Mom and Dad,

We are at Polebridge, which is on the North Fork of the Flathead River. There really is a pole bridge. Keith was picked up in Apgar by someone on his way to the ranger station and whisked away while I finished packing our meager belongings. We were told that we were going to the “backcountry”; and it was said in the same tone people no doubt used when they warned mariners: “There be dragons.”

Right on time, my ride came. There was a knock on the door and a tall, mostly unsmiling, man introduced himself as Adolph, our boss at Polebridge Ranger Station. He then proceeded to loot the kitchen. He grabbed butcher knives and pots and pans and utensils, all the while assuring me I would need them in our cabin up north.

I was appalled and sure the inventory police would charge us with theft, and maybe see to it we get jail time.

The trip north was endless; endless trees, endless ruts and potholes, endless anxiety on my part that there was no way back to civilization. I considered throwing out some of the ill-gotten kitchen equipment, but those items were in the back of the pickup beyond my reach.

It didn't take me long to realize that I was riding with Adolph without Keith so that Adolph could size me up and decide if I was going to be an asset or a nuisance in Life in the Backcountry. Keith had already proved he was competent and no greenhorn when working in park headquarters; I was the unknown quantity.

Our cabin here is basically one room, un-insulated, with a sink with a cold-water tap. The stove is much like an old-fashioned wood stove, but it uses oil.

There are several of these cabins, along with a larger one for the fireguard (who doesn't guard fires, he instead chases and extinguishes them). Adolph and his wife live in the largest cabin. There are other buildings, and outhouses. We in the small cabins share one, the fireguard has one, and I assume Adolph and spouse have facilities indoors.

Oh, by the way, Adolph was right; those items he “lifted” were needed in our tiny bide-a-wee.

Before we go “up top” to the lookout, there are luxuries here; there is a washhouse with a shower. We share the shower, but who cares?

I met Marian, Adolph's wife, my first morning here. It was AN EXPERIENCE. She came in asking: “Where's the coffee?” I had no coffee, never mind a clue as to how to make it. She sniffed, then snorted, then left. I get the feeling ours is not going to be a beautiful friendship.

We are restricted to taking walks out around the station, what with our lack of transportation. We have seen no bears, except those I imagine are lurking behind every tree. How did I grow up never hearing the words “grizzly bear”? Now that I have heard about them, I am sure I don’t ever

want to meet one, especially since Keith points out that I will be the one “et” if the bear is smart and goes for plump and juicy, as opposed to tough and stringy.

It is remarks like his which lead me to wonder if the honeymoon isn’t over.

Love, Kay

Dear Leah,

Did I properly thank you for the wonderful bridal shower you hosted for me? I hope so, but if not, please know how appreciative I am. Given the haste with which we had to get ready to take off for Montana, I’m not sure what I did or did not do.

I’m not sure if I can adequately explain life in the ranger station. That will have to wait for fall when we get home.

Last Saturday night was chock full of excitement. We went to a square dance at the McFarland dude ranch a few miles up the road, looking forward to meeting North Forkers (that is what those who frequent this area are called) and to socialize. Because neither Keith nor I had ever actually do-si-doed with serious folk, we didn’t realize that it is a contact sport if you don’t know what you are doing.

No quarter was given us, neophytes or not. We should have excused ourselves from the start; we were the only people there not clothed in real square dance attire. Keith tells me one woman literally picked him up and threw him offside; I didn’t see it as I was busy defending myself.

We met a lot of people, but not the way we would have hoped. It was what I imagine being the new kids on the school bus might feel like. I just hope we get a chance to visit with these same people under less stressful circumstances.

Monday we hike up the mountain to clean the lookout and to melt snow (that’s another story I’ll tell you in the fall). However arduous that may be, it can’t be as tough as dancing with the locals.

Mail leaves here two or three times a week (I’m not sure which), so I will get this to the ranger station office to be sent off.

Again, thanks from your bruised but unbroken friend.

Kay

Dear Mom and Dad, Mary and Jerry,

We will be hiking up to the lookout for two or three days to melt snow for enough water to get us through the summer. We were misled: they told us in headquarters that we would be getting

groceries and water every two weeks. Not so. Adolph told us that the schedule headquarters sets up doesn't apply in his fiefdom. He feels that pack trains every two weeks are a frivolous use of personnel.

This also means we will have to somehow get to town to stock up on enough groceries to last us until the middle of the summer when we will get another pack train. I think we have enough money for that.

Marian appeared at my door this morning after Keith went to work; she came in, slapped down a pound of coffee, and said, "You owe me three dollars. Now, where's the coffee?" She showed me how to make a pot of coffee, we each had a cup, and I managed to not cower in the corner or flinch when she assured me that if you give an Easterner an inch, he/she will take a mile. To a Montanan, everyone east of them IS an Easterner.

We visited for a bit. Marian said "dudes" several times in a way that made it sound as if being one is a nasty and irreversible condition; one suffered by North Dakotans in general and me in particular. She, however, has nothing but good things to say about Keith. Is it because he is not a Nodak, but a Minnesotan? He looks, of course, as if he was born in a log cabin with an ax in hand. And he doesn't talk a lot, so if he isn't quite with the frontier program, no one can tell. Given to prattle as I am (as you well know) broadcasts my "dudism." Is that a word? Keith winces and kicks me under the table when I wax ignorant.

We have been treated to rude North Dakota jokes by several people; the Montanans' way of saying, "Howdy, Dude."

We have a lovely neighbor (Maxine [Maas]), who tells me that Marian is just toying with me to see if I have what it takes to survive in this remote place. She also says I will get used to her baiting me, the newest dude on the block (or in this case in the compound). Maxine and her husband Paul are from Illinois, which makes them dudes in my book; but they square dance very well, which apparently makes them bona fide backcountry people.

The North Fork of the Flathead River runs just behind our cabin, and its sound is the most glorious kind of music. I am drunk with the beauty of the river and the mountains we see in all directions, and I'm told the best is yet to come when we go up top to the lookout.

I will write a full report when we come back down from the lookout. Keith will be fine; he can hardly wait...but wish me well.

K.

Dear Mom and Dad Rosengren,

We just arrived back at Polebridge Ranger Station after a few days up on Numa Lookout, where we melted snow and strained out twiggy bits and bugs and God knows what else before putting the water into huge casks. This will have to do us for the three months or so we will be on the mountain.

It is a very good thing that I now know how to make coffee, as the water has to be boiled before we use it, and I imagine it tastes awful, in view of what has lived in it. Your son is happily oblivious to whatever may have been in the snow and just slurps it up.

The hike up here was beyond my powers of description. Suffering of that sort is not noble. We were accompanied by a man name Carl Hinderman. He was with the 10th Mountain Division in the second World War, so he is undaunted by altitude and unmoved by sniveling. And he was stern about stopping: less than three minutes or more than thirty, as one doesn't want to "damage heart and lungs" or allow legs to revolt. He seemed to feel that I might make a break for freedom and bolt down the trail. Hah! I didn't have the energy to walk and breathe at the same time, let alone bolt.

Imagining horrible deaths for Keith and Carl entertained me as I struggled those six and a bit more miles up, up, up. I also noticed a talent for churlishness. And snappiness. And a complete loss of the sense of humor that once made me proud.

Your son (you may notice the change from "my husband" to "your son") found my faint heart did not make me a fair maiden (ok, I know that's an erroneous use of the quote, but it is apt in this context). He arrived up top all eagerness to explore the mountain and the lookout, while I languished on the lumpy-mattressed cot.

I cleaned and straightened and tried to tell myself that bug bodies aren't so bad. There were no mouse droppings, thank God.

There is a decent kitchen stove up there, a wooden table and two chairs in the "safe" corner for cowering during lightning storms, two metal-framed cots (not safe during storms), and a firefinder in the middle of the 14 by 14 foot floor. The structure is cabled into the mountain, which means it is thoroughly grounded (one can but hope).

The basement boasts an orange crate with wire mesh ends suspended from the ceiling; it will hold our bacon and eggs and anything else which should be kept cool and safe from creatures lusting after our food. I'm told a vinegar soaked rag will help keep bacon from molding itself into oblivion.

The basement also boasts pack rats, which Adolph assures us deserve only to die.

The outhouse has no door, nor should it have! The view from it is too good to be shut out, and there is nothing in front of the building but drop-off, so voyeurs are not a problem.

There is an ancient, but serviceable, wind-up phone, so we will be able to talk privately to others on the line up here in the North Fork; and we will not be using our precious two-way radio batteries. Adolph, our boss, is very proud of his phone system, and tells us the less Headquarters knows about it the better.

There are a lot of things, it seems, that make this whole North Fork an entity quite separate from the rest of the park, with its own rules and customs. We hear a lot of, "They don't know that in West Glacier, of course; but they really don't care about us up here."

And we have been assured that the outlying ranger stations stand around waiting for things they need, with about as much chance of getting them as Keith is of becoming a chatterer.

I have saved the best for last: The view of Bowman Lake below us is sublime. The water is emerald green with a touch of turquoise, and when it is still, the surrounding scenery is perfectly mirrored. The whole area is so lovely that I get teary at times. As we have no camera, our memories of this awesome splendiddness will have to suffice.

I could go on and on, but won't; more another time.

Love, Kay

Dear Mom, Dad, Mary and Jerry,

When we came down off the mountain after melting snow and cleaning, we stopped at the Bowman Lake ranger cabin and met George and Dorothy Walter, about whom we had heard wonderful things, all of which are true.

George is a Lawrence College professor (in Wisconsin), and Dorothy is a wonderful cook and homemaker. They are both gracious and welcoming, and made us feel right at home. Every year they bring a trailer full of good Wisconsin beer, which they give away to friends and new acquaintances like K. and me. The beer is labeled George Walter, which North Forkers assure us is his brewery.

The Walters tell us this is not true, but they enjoy the exaggerated tales of their fortune from beer sales.

George is a very interesting combination: an extremely muscled and fit middle-aged man who exudes strength. He played and later coached football. His master's thesis was on the poet John Donne.

The Walters have two sons, Dave and Pete; they have grown up spending summers here, and apparently love it as much as their parents do. David is about 16, and Peter 13 or 14 years old.

We mentioned the luxury of the Polebridge station having gas refrigerators, and George told us an interesting story, one which explains a lot about this place and its very special ranger (read Absolute Ruler). One day G. was dispatched to headquarters to pick up supplies, and Adolph told him there was a refrigerator on the warehouse loading dock and that he was to put it on the truck and bring it up the North Fork.

George did as he was told, and upon his return Adolph chuckled and said, "You stole that, you know." We were assured that a lot of the perks up here are as a result of Adolph's cunning and resourcefulness, because the backcountry is always the last to get the goodies, so he uses sleight of hand and trickery. And he loves the intrigue; his chortle is a dead giveaway.

Buying groceries was really challenging. After the initial pack train, I will be baking bread. We stocked up on Spam, canned beef, tuna, and peanut butter. Keith drew the line at Vienna sausages (I've always had a secret passion for them, maybe because when I babysat for people who had cocktail parties, they served them. To my young mind they were the height of sophistication.)

We head up the mountain soon, and once we get settled I will write and hope someone appears to take the mail down to Polebridge.

Wish us well.

Love,

Kay

Dear Flatlanders,

When I wrote about our treks up and down the mountain to Numa Ridge Lookout, I forgot to mention how worldly goods needed for our stay were carried. (Even in the backcountry, clean underclothes are a must, at least for me. Keith seems to find the fact that I am finicky quaint and out-of-keeping with our status as Real Outdoor People.)

Each of us was issued a backpack called a Trapper Nelson. If I ever have occasion to meet Mr. Nelson, I will tell him what I think of his namesake. The frames are wood pieces about 1"x1", comfortable if you are built as Keith is: no rear end, no hips. But if you are overly endowed in those areas, as are most women, the framing pieces dig, dig, dig into delicate flesh and leave bruises. I'd be willing to bet that Trapper is skinny, skinny from hiking, hiking and doesn't know that his name is taken in vain every time some of us don one of his contraptions.

There is canvas attached to the frame to form a sack big enough to lure the unwary user to pack it with a lot of "stuff." When the bag is full, the canvas straps holding the contraption on, in keeping with the discomfort level of the rest of the tote, dig, dig, dig into shoulders.

As you have no doubt guessed. My Hero carried a lot more in his backpack than I did. I stuffed mine with toothbrushes, toothpaste, underclothes, etc. Hero got the canned goods and the cleaning supplies and anything else heavy I could sneak into his pack when he wasn't looking.

When we undertook this adventure, it never occurred to me that carrying my own gear was part of the bargain. I suppose...scarred by romantic movies...I thought there might be native bearers or seven dwarfs or Park Rangers who sang lustily while they carried my "stuff." Self-reliance seems to be what we're aiming for here. In the words of The Little Engine That Could: I know I can, I know I can, I know I can.

Love from those of us who tote,

Dear Lois,

Most of the time up here on the mountaintop I look like Ma Kettle on a bad day. But thanks to you and the personal shower you organized, I have that wonderful nightgown and robe you and my other friends gave me. Every night when I put them on, I convince myself that I am not a lost cause.

It is the one luxury I have up here and it is lovingly hand-washed every few days, never mind that it takes some of our precious water. Again and again, THANK YOU!

We don't have many visitors up here; it is a long hike up here, and an often hot and buggy one, so not many people attempt it. (My first hike up here found me ready to cry uncle and head back home. The second trip was a breeze and made me wonder what all of the fuss was about. And Keith was happy to not have to listen to my puffing and snorting—okay, and whining.)

Most of our visitors are from the dude ranch in the valley below us, and none of them is fancily dressed, so we don't have to feel too bad about our disarray. They are a lot more interested in the "romance" of our living here, and are full of questions about what we do all day and how we do it.

If anyone had told me before we signed on for this job what life up here would be like, I would have cut and run. A bare-bones description would have sounded grim and impossibly austere. What it is, instead, is an adventure and proof that much of what we prize in the way of possessions and comforts is expendable. Both of us would like, however, a warm outhouse seat. Hitting a cold one of an early morning is a wakeup call we could do without.

If my timing is good, I can scurry into the place as soon as Keith vacates it, thus sharing his warmth.

We brought a few paperbacks (not luxuries, but necessities) and previous residents have left theirs, as we will. Someone who lived up here was a Science Fiction fan. I was not, but am slogging through them anyway. One or two authors have made me an almost-fan. Keith, however, is much more intellectual than I, and hasn't been desperate enough to read that stash.

One of our visitors asked how we could read when we were supposed to be looking for smoke. We explained that by just glancing up from time-to-time, we immediately spot anything even remotely out of place. Dust from a road dozens of miles away fairly screams: I'm not a usual part of the landscape.

We have contact with lookouts on the other side of the North Fork (of the Flathead River); they are employed by the Forest Service. The two departments...Interior and Agriculture...cooperate.

Canadian lookouts, too, are occasionally in contact with us on this side of the international border. We all look out for one another. (A little feeble word play there.) Distances are deceptive up here, so we're not sure how far into Canada we can see.

Enough for now. Enjoy your summer.

Love, Kay

Dear Ones,

If I could be granted one wish while I live on this mountain, it would be that we could somehow communicate the beauty of the place and the exhilaration of breathing the air and the reverential feeling we have as we go about our daily chores.

Mornings, especially, are magical. I find myself holding my breath, as if the very act will break the spell and we will be sent below to live among mortals. It is not hard to see why the Greek mountains inspired talk of gods and special beings.

This a.m. dawned with just the peaks of the surrounding mountains (and us) above clouds, which were white and perfect and looked solid enough to walk on into infinity. It is a picture we will treasure always.

And the magpies! There is a very small lake several hundred feet below us, and between it and us there are magpies swooping and screeching, making a wild kind of music and reminding us of dancers in the air. They are so cheeky; I love them. It would be interesting to know why they prefer to play in the air above Akakola Lake, rather than between us and Bowman Lake. In any event, they are endlessly fascinating because they are so free.

When we arrived up here, the outhouse was fallen over and it was Keith's task to right it and make it more-or-less whole. He did a good job, and the view from it is breathtaking; each of us tends to dawdle when in it. Who needs television?

We have had our first visitors. They are all staying at the McFarland Dude Ranch, and came up on horseback. We gave them glasses of juice; our water is precious and not really very tasty. It was nice to have someone new to visit with. The wrangler is Gene Hensen, whose parents own a place across the river from the ranger station. He looks unflappable and definitely is not a dude, even though he lives in California in the winter. And Marian approves of him.

Keith and I remain friends because except for work-related things we rarely talk during the day. After supper we chat and play cards. Perhaps the no talk rule during working hours is what made us especially happy to visit with the horse party.

Twice a day we turn on our two-way radio; we check in at eight a.m. and at four p.m. Once in a while we are expected to report to headquarters or to the lookouts on Apgar Mountain in the evening. We have a little box up here containing some instruments and duff (pine needles, etc.) to simulate the forest floor. In doing this we get the Burning Index (BI), which gives us a fair idea of how dry the forest is and how quickly a fire might spread. It is shocking how fast the numbers escalate after a day of rain followed by some dry days. Each day we pass on our BI to headquarters.

During fire school we were taught to assess the kinds of clouds we have, their stages, etc. The results of this semi-scientific perusal also are passed on. Scary. We keep speculating that all of the other lookouts in the Northwest are as unsure as we are about what they are seeing (Keith and I often disagree), and we shudder to think that our collective ignorance might be taken as gospel and weather forecasts made from it.

So far we haven't had any torrential rains, so keeping our eyes on the clouds is important. We may have fires this season. One thing I can tell you: If there is so much as a puff of dust from a road, or smoke, in the vast area we overlook, we see it. I forgot to mention that we see way into Canada, as well as to the south and west...it is a wonderful view in any direction, and it is OUR view. We have become very territorial.

It is time to go make lunch and to hope someone shows up to take this down to be mailed.

Love,

Kay

Dear Mom and Dad Rosengren,

Perhaps the biggest challenge up here on Numa Ridge is learning to cook. I clearly remember pledging to not poison your son. There are days when I feel as if that was a promise made in haste. I am not, however, poisoning Keith, but am presenting him with some really marginally edible fare.

I must bake our bread, as we get just those two pack trains this season; there is no way bread can be kept here. There is no freezer, never mind a refrigerator. So...had my first foray into the wonderful world of baking bread: it was heavy enough to be a doorstep, it was gray, and it quivered.

Thank god for the wind-up telephone; the entire audience on the park's radio system wasn't treated to my admission of failure, but Marian was. (She has become my "go to" person when I mess up. Forget what I said about her being mean; she is a lifesaver.) She said two magic words: altitude adjustment. Did you ever? So now I know. Fargo is maybe 800 feet above sea level, hardly preparation for bread baking at 7,000 or so feet.

As you know, one of Keith's favorite things is split pea soup. Ever the eager-to-please bride, I said I would make some. I opened the package and put the whole thing to soak. The peas began to grow ... and they grew and they grew and they grew until there wasn't one more container in the place to hold them. Keith may be cured of his fondness for that particular delight.

Spam is a staple for us, and we are both sick of it. But K. has devised a sauce that kills the taste of the stuff, not to mention our taste buds. I am grateful.

I am also grateful for a small, stained booklet that goes with the place. It is a basic cookbook, written with bachelor lookouts in mind. It has become my bible. The recipes are simple and clearly explained. On the cover it says it was compiled by some wives of Forest Service personnel. Bless them!

Back to bread baking: Those days I summon up the courage to tackle the job finds the entire 14' by 14' place dusted with flour. Everything else we do up here is fun and an opportunity to learn, but being responsible for every bite of bread we eat is not what I signed up for. Your son just laughs, and, bless his heart, eats without complaint what I produce. He is a good person.

Best regards

K. and K

Dear Earthbound relatives,

A father and son hiked up from the Bowman Lake Campground a couple of days ago. The son appeared to be about 16. He asked me what I missed most while living up here. I told him there were days when I would kill for a coke.

Yesterday he hiked up again to present each of us with a bottle of coke. That has to be one of the best and most touching gifts anyone ever gave us.

You're not going to like this, Mom; I know how you feel about rodents of any kind...but our pack rat is our friend. He (she? it?) is an engaging creature. And he could tell immediately upon our taking up residence here that he was in no danger of being transported to the great beyond, or wherever it is pack rats go when they die.

At night the critter peers in at us from the windowsills, its little nose pressed to the glass. This is after he jumps from cardboard box to cardboard box in the lower level of the lookout. We think he enjoys the noise...and he knows that the din gets our attention.

He also sits and watches us when we go into the lower level to get anything. He definitely is a member of the family, as long as he doesn't get uppity and thinks he can move upstairs.

Keith is his favorite; he runs up Ks pant leg and into his pocket to see if he has anything interesting in there. We have left shiny objects below the catwalk to interest him, but he prefers foraging in Keith's pockets.

I must also add that he is just flat-out cute. He looks as if the Disney Studios drew him first, then ordered Mother Nature to do what she could to duplicate the artist's sketch.

Ranger Adolph wouldn't understand our tolerance for the little guy, so we cross our fingers when anyone visits that he doesn't appear or thunder around among the boxes down below so that we have to explain his still living here.

Perhaps we are so fond of the little guy because we see very little in the way of wildlife up here. We were expecting more. Keith did see a grizzly (from a safe distance) when he went up the mountain behind us. He said it was in the saddle between that peak and the next. Much as I would like to see a bear, I would prefer to observe it through field glasses.

Enough for now. Supper to fix and cards to play.

Love, Kay

Dear Mom and Dad Rosengren,

It has been a memorable week. Keith asked to go down below to help fight a fire and received permission. (It has been a dry summer, and fires are being spotted in the area. We have yet to have one in our vicinity, but it probably is just a matter of time.)

In any event, he took off with the same enthusiasm a kid would have when unexpectedly let out of school. He couldn't wait.

Meanwhile, I was left to doing the usual chores, which is no big deal, except that when Keith tried to teach me how to light the Coleman lantern, I only half listened. So...there was no light in the lookout. I know he will be none too happy that I didn't listen.

The first night he was gone I woke up about four a.m. to a scary, scary scene. Just outside the window over my cot was an enormous golden eagle. He was perched precariously on the top of a pole and wildly flapping his wings. I was transfixed. I knew he was looking for something

smallish and tasty to eat, but I couldn't help but think that he could break the glass and snack on me if he was so inclined.

I didn't sleep the rest of the night.

The next night was even worse in some ways, as Keith called from the Walters' cabin to inform me he was going to come up in the dark. The Walters and I tried to dissuade him, but to no avail.

I fumed and called him awful names and prayed and paced and cursed him for a fool while I waited. I'm not sure what time it was, but I heard a faint voice down the trail asking for water, something to eat, and a flashlight (his had gone dead). I took those things with me and prayed some more that there were no grizzlies out playing in the moonlight, ready to eat both of us.

He was puzzled about the lack of light in the lookout. When I explained, he was none too happy.

I think it is safe to say that Keith will keep a low profile the next time there is a fire to fight. He came home completely exhausted. He is resting right now.

Our best to both of you,

K.

APPENDIX 2

RANGER LOG, NUMA RIDGE LOOKOUT, 1958

1958 Season
Keith & Kay Rosengren

All log entries made at approx. 8 p.m.

15 June – Wednesday

We arrived at approximately ¼ of 2 p.m., accompanied by Carl (temporary Polebridge Ranger). I slept while Keith and Carl removed shutters, etc.

Found outhouse blown over and down hill.

Carl left around 3:30 p.m.

Keith and I melted snow. To bed, I'm pooped.

26 June – Thursday

Keith melted snow to H₂O which we will boil to drink and use for other purposes. Very little snow left for this time of year.

I cleaned all day, washed all dishes, window sills, etc. Again pooped.

27 June – Friday

We leave today to return for good next week. If the next hike is as rough on this dude I may not go down all summer. General cleanup this a.m.

Looks like a storm coming—we will hit for timber pronto (11:30 a.m.).

2 July – Wednesday

Again we're here—this time for the season. Adolph Opalka and Jim Lambert (fire guard plus mules Gus & Canary and horses Apache and Paint accompanied us). This hike a snap for me. May even willingly do it again. Nice to come to a clean lookout. Temp 49° cold, blowy. Fog patches to west. The men set up weather station. Two visitors.

[Signatures] B. Neal and D.N. Neal, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Charming people. Very broad British-Canadian accents. Radio weak but audible to the Howards on Apgar (they manned Numa in '55). Can see lights in Bowman campground, fish jumping in Akakola. Little rain. B.I. 26¹

3 July – Thursday

Cold again (45° at 7 a.m.). Clouds high overhead and very low clouds below. Most of surrounding low country obscured. Windy. Keith alternately cursed at and repaired outhouse all

¹Burning Index

a.m. Looks much more sturdy and presentable. Chipmunks in the incinerator. Clouds finally cleared somewhat and sun half heartedly shone in afternoon. Some clouds still in evidence late p.m. We must have B.O.! Chipmunks, rats and a few rabbits our only visitors. Carried H₂O from snowbank in p.m.

4 July – Friday

Started out a beautiful day—except in valley where clouds hung until about 11 a.m. Wind, rain, thunder (but no visible lightning) in afternoon. Keith carried more water from our fast-disappearing snow bank. Caught some rain water in all available pans about 1:30 p.m. Wind changed direction 3 or 4 times, but storm clouds came in from SW as per usual. Cloudy all evening. 10 boats on Bowman at 7 p.m. Had .09 precipitation for day. B.I. 22

5 July – Saturday

Cloudy. Again, trace of precipitation, few clouds in back of lookout on mountains. Very quiet day. No big animals yet—although there is a most furtive and even bold rat who nonchalantly followed me out of the basement this p.m. Misty this p.m. Many fish jumping in Akakola. Keith climbed to top of mountain in back. Says other side is a steep cliff. Keith cleared and rearranged basement this a.m. The outhouse is now a marvel of compact contracting—all Keith's. He got a telegram and a letter today—both job offers for next year—but both in English! We'll probably hold out for Social Studies—but all I ask is a job for him. I want to finish that last year of school! B.I. 12

6 July – Sunday

Fair it is not today! And it hasn't been all day. No view at all! Just clouds. We can see down to a line going around the L.O. from about the outhouse and that is all. Rain (.41) and cold, cold, cold. Swiftcurrent L.O. says it had snow. We got one five gallon canful of H₂O (plus some other ill assorted pans full). B.I. is 4.

7 July – Monday

Clouds all a.m., but they finally gave up the ship about noon. Chopped wood for the stove in the basement in afternoon. I helped Keith wield the saw. Nothing out of the ordinary today. Adolph called to say he would be up with the F.S. man this week. B.I. 9. Took baths in p.m. Ummm. Fixed duff bed, etc.

8 July – Tuesday

Thunderstorm 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. today. Recorded several strikes, but what with the rain (again, ye gods!) no fires seem to have resulted. (We got several gallons from the eaves drippings). Washed all of our windows inside and out. Adolph & Forest Service radio man due up tomorrow if rain manages to stay away. We had .35 rain this afternoon. Clouds again all afternoon and evening. B.I. 3, humidity 100.

9 July – Wednesday

[Signatures] Ned & Lamona Helphenstine, Idaho Falls, Idaho

Two visitors about 3:30 p.m. They cleared out in a big hurry—a storm coming. Thunder and lightning from 3:30 to 4:30—only one fairly close lightning bolt.

Jim Lambert, Bert [Burt] Edwards (Logging Creek) and F.S. packer (George) and F.S. radio man Jim Hutchins were here from about 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. They brought mail, food, water, etc. and took our mail down. F.S. radio now in working condition. Lightning strike fire near Apgar, leftover from yesterday. Saw a moose on Akakola. B.I. 9.

10 July – Thursday

Saw moose, calf and deer on Akakola—fish jumping up a storm. Worked on profile map for approx. 3 hours. (Paper just came yesterday.) Huckleberry had lightning fire in snag. Drowning or some such reported on radio tonight. Nothing else very unusual today. B.I. 17. Hot and buggy today—our first really rainless period of over 8 or 10 hours.

11 July – Friday

Nothing unusual again today. Washed clothes, worked on profile map. Sunny and warm. No rain, no lightning. B.I. 28. Radio reported that man died of heart attack near Avalanche campground—not drowning as I thought last p.m. Temp at 4:30 p.m. 74.

12 July – Saturday

Baked my first batch of homemade bread. Heavy but rather (just) edible. Windy—‘specially p.m. Whole L.O. shaking. Cloudy toward evening. Something has been eating our toilet paper every night. B.I. 28 again.

13 July – Sunday

Cold today. Sunshiny in a.m. Snow, sleet p.m. (afternoon). Rearranged L.O. for more room, convenience. Lost wind direction indicator in last night’s wind. Keith found it this afternoon. Sunset beautiful beyond description tonight. Everything gold and midnight blue. B.I. today 30—highest in park. (We missed the rain everyone else got.) Keith sharpened all of our tools today. Busy boy.

14 July – Monday

Sunny a.m. By afternoon very cold. .11 precip. The McFarlands dropped some very welcome Sunday papers from their plane. Much snow on Guard House Mt.; a little on Rainbow. B.I. = 7.

15 July – Tuesday

Beautiful sunny day—little or no clouds in the sky. We took baths and washed our hair. Oh, it felt superb! I like to died ‘till I got my hair clean. The stove pipe—with no provocation whatsoever fell down—hitting a pan of water and spraying said H₂O all over the area. Keith wired it up—it looks inelegant but ‘twill suffice. Moose in Akakola this p.m. B.I. = 22. Worked on profile, etc. Telephone fixed.

16 July – Wednesday

Beautiful a.m. Clouds, smattering of rain in afternoon, early evening. Gusts of wind up to 50 m.p.h. in evening and cold. Keith has been carrying snow H₂O every day—snowbank chuste about gone. I may hike down for mail tomorrow. B.I. 21. Precip. .04.

17 July – Thursday

Talked to Mrs. Walter [Dorothy] on phone—no mail down there (Bowman) yet. Mr. W. [George] will pick it up today—so down I go tomorrow. Weather permitting. The patrol plane buzzed us at (ugh!) 6:30 a.m. today. Jim Olson cheerily shouted at me (making the radio jump and further sleep impossible). Keith crawled around the roof today, to make sure everything is secure. Our yard looks better. Keith raked all of the paths the other day—we also chopped all dead wood up around place and piled it up. Flying ants going 60 per yesterday and today. So far Keith has practically completely rebuilt the incinerator and the outhouse, cleaned the basement, cleared the paths and dead wood, changed the radio batteries, climbed the mountain (all over it) in back, made a fish pole, helped me, carried about 100 gallons of H₂O, etc. I just seem to be an extra to feed and play casino with! Oh, and he re-grounded the beds, fire-finder, etc. I picked about 1½ qts. of huckleberries today—down around the trail junction. McFarland's due up tomorrow, so maybe I won't go down. Mist or smoke or something this p.m. Very eerie.

18 July – Friday

[Signatures]

Gene Hensen, Fontana, California.
Jacky Kennedy, Phoenix, Ariz.
Walt Miller, Cave Creek, Ariz.
Betsy Shepler, Pittsburgh, Penna.
Josie Queneau, Fairfield Conn.
Anthetta Covert, Fontana, Calif.

Party from the McFarland Ranch – came on horseback about 1 p.m. Ate their lunches here. Brought mail and a new speaker for our radio. We sent letters down and old speaker. Some lightning in area 'bout 2 p.m. or 2:30. No strikes recorded. B.I. 32. (Got first weather report tonight at 8:30.)

19 July – Saturday

Has been misty (some say it's smoke) all over our area for past three days. Lightning activity in area again today. Otherwise clear and warm. Baked a huckleberry pie this afternoon. Wrote letters—am optimistic enough to think some tourists may come to take them down. Humidity up a little today—due to slight rain about ¼ of 4 p.m. B.I. 17. (Rain took the B.I. for a downhill ride.)

20 July – Sunday

Wrote more letters this a.m. Clear this morning, but cloudy with thunder in distance by noon. Adolph called up to ask about thunder and possibility of storm. 3 visitors about quarter to one. They stay at Bowman every summer. We kept them here until storm had gone SE of here (they

signed next page). They left about 2:30—and at 3 p.m. we had a doozy of a rain and wind (about 40-50 per). The wind blew rain in around windows and under the door.

[Signatures]

Eugene T. Merryman, Bethesda, Maryland

Charles H. King, Bethesda, Maryland

Alfred S. King, Bethesda, Maryland

Tourists took my letters down—glad I got them written. Little clearer this p.m. B.I. 16.

21 July – Monday

Found a slow leak in the gas line to the stove last night. Note: To find leaks take thick, soap solution and spread on pipe joints. If soap bubbles there is a leak. Check joints upstairs to both heater and stove—likewise downstairs. We also checked the fire extinguisher. Note: There is a slip of paper behind ext. that should be signed when it is checked.

Visitors about 5:30. They were here when Gordon McFarland dropped the Sunday papers. (Gordon called this evening to see how far off the mark he had been. (It was way in back and down to the west.) Keith was going down today to cash a check but had no way to get to Polebridge—so will wait until can get a ride. We sent some mail down with the Smythes. Baked bread today. New recipe—this batch not quite so reminiscent of buck shot. B.I. 28.

[Signatures]

Gwendolyn S. Smythe, Middletown, Ohio

Wayne Smythe, Middletown, Ohio

Lenore (?) Smythe, Middletown, Ohio

22 July – Tuesday

Keith spent the a.m. trying to clean up the yard by rearranging rocks, etc. I washed windows and scrubbed. (Wanted to get the really dirty jobs out of the way b/4 our baths.) Took our baths in evening. Keith is going down tomorrow—weather permitting. B.I. 34. Black clouds to west, north tonight.

23 July – Wednesday

Storms from 23:30 last p.m. to 0200 this a.m. Saw 1 big flare up this morning about 1 a.m., 3 or 4 fires in distance. Lightning really pounded in all around us. Storm was too close to record strikes—of which there were many—lightning pounded into ground to west and SE of us particularly. No fires this morning that we could see. We informed fire cache of storm, possible fires. There was .49 rain (some hail) with the storm. Keith went down to Polebridge this afternoon—left here about one—got down to Bowman about 2:15. Walters at Bowman took him to Polebridge Ranger Station where he got a check—got it cashed at store. Bought some cigarettes for us, also some meat, etc. Patrol plane came over about 3—could find no smoke or fires. Keith returned about 9:15—ate supper and collapsed. Swiftcurrent reported fire. Will send trail boys in tomorrow. B.I. 14

Commented [LW1]:

24 July – Thursday

Swiftcurrent's fire last p.m. was the moon reflecting on a log in the pond near them. Trail crew went back home. Beautiful cloudless day. Keith regrounded fire finder—should get maximum efficiency now. B.I. 33. Still gorgeous tonight—cloudless sky. Washed all the white clothes, windows (some of 'em—again!) today. Walters fished in their raft on Akakola tonight.

25 July – Friday

Cloudy all day, fairly coolish. Rain this evening. B.I. 35. Spent afternoon working on profile map—it's been so misty (or smoky) that we've not been able to get readings on any F.S. mountains for map. Running really low on food—pancakes (ugh) for lunch to make food stretch. Very quiet day, about the quietest yet.

26 July – Saturday

[Signatures]

Bruce Boyd, Milwaukee
Steve Helmick, Pullman, Wash.
Hugh Helmick, Pullman, Wash.
Paul Helmick, Pullman, Wash.

Four boys up here this noon—left about 2:30. Brought their lunches, ate them here. Uneventful day for most part. Pack rat in basement. He is cute and not very shy. B.I. 20

27 July – Sunday

Fair to middling day. Thought we might have a fire spotted but didn't. Beautiful tonight. About the mildest p.m. we've had so far. Could see (just barely) Huckleberry light. Lightning to the east of us over Rainbow. Moonlight on Bowman full force. Our pack rat is given to stamping his foot when we're in the area. We will leave here about August 25 or so. B.I. 26

28 July – Monday

[Signatures] Marilyn Oliphant and Ronald Oliphant

Well—a big day. Ron and Marilyn are from school and honeymooning in the park. They are spending the night with us. Got here about 7:30 p.m. with Keith who walked down to meet them. They brought 2 enormous T-bones which we all consumed. Also huckleberries for a pie. Much to talk about. Cloudy today. B.I. 26

29 July – Tuesday

Ron and Keith hiked up to top of Numa today—they saw a bear. Ron and Marilyn left about 1:00 p.m. Much gossiping, etc. 'tween Marilyn and I while the boys hiked. Cloudy this a.m. Thunder, lightning, rain this evening from about 6:20 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. AND our first fire, which we couldn't even see! F.S. lookout (Crevice) up in Canada saw it and reported it to Ford Station, who in return gave us the details. Jim Hutchins from Ford went and got a good look at it and gave us particulars. It was in (or rather, is in) S14 T37 R22—just out of our sight behind the ridge to our NW. We reported it to Polebridge and Fire Cache. Jim Lambert and Don Grimes (Don's in trail crew) will tend to it in the a.m. B.I. 11

30 July – Wednesday

Jim and Don were all morning looking for fire. Not until the patrol plane came did they find it (and then with no little difficulty, principally b/cuz Crevice told us it was in a valley). We told them this only to hear from Jim Hutchins that when he saw it last night it was on a ridge—we tried to get Jim and Don on the radio, but their pack set wasn't working so they didn't get the new info. Hence the mix-up. They are staying out tonight to make sure the fire is out. Cloudy all day and chilly. Windy tonight. B.I. 19.

31 July – Thursday

Keith talked to Adolph last night and our grub comes up Sunday—thank goodness! We are down to the left unedibles. Keith left for civilization at about noon—he's coming back Sat. when Jim Lambert will bring groceries (instead of Sunday). Beautiful day—no clouds, but windy. B.I. 32

1 August – Friday

Beautiful cloudless day, but again windy and hot. Good fire weather. Watched Quartz Ridge like a hawk—lot of strikes there Tuesday. B.I. 51. I'm down to coffee and soda crackers. Ugh.

2 August – Saturday

Again hot, dry, windy but clouded up about 3 p.m. Jim and Keith got here about 11:30 a.m. We could feed the 5th Army with the groceries we got. This should do us until we leave. We'll drive home with Jim Olson (aerial observer) about Aug. 25th or so. I go back to school, Keith teaches. Clouds brought B.I. down to 40.

3 August – Sunday

Miserable all day, cloudy, rainy, and cold. .06 precipitation. Extremely hazy tonight—can barely see Bowman. Learned a LESSON today—always clean L.O. pronto. Didn't make beds or sweep cuz of cold, etc. I was sure no visitors would be up. Ha! 3:20 and two men came up. Very embarrassing. However, they're from Minnesota and since Keith is they excused us. B.I. 32 Forgot to get them to sign.

4 August – Monday

Chilly today, calm day with one notable exception—a mule deer paid us a visit (just now, about 8 p.m.). We made a salt lick and he happily ate it all. He is quite unafraid. Sunny today. B.I. 38 Baked bread.

5 August – Tuesday

Warm, dry, windy again. Washed clothes, windows, cabinets, and the floor. B.I. 40

6 August – Wednesday

[Signatures]
Everett A. Bauman, Apartado 889, Caracas, Venezuela
Ricky Bauman
Jonathan Bauman

Visitors came about 3:30. Mr. Bauman and sons are staying at Bowman—he's with Standard Oil down in Venezuela. Nice day, sunny and warm (and of course dry). Wind still blowing. B.I. 42

7 August – Thursday

Hot, dry, windy—things are getting tense. Keith left for fishing at Kintla with Jim Olson. 3 railroad fires in F.S. (Kootenai Forest). Found out that what I assumed was a strange cloud was smoke—about 2000 acres burning over there. Quiet today. B.I. 57

8 August – Friday

Clouded up about noon, trace of rain about 3 p.m. Windy again. Keith due home tonight. Went on plane today.

10 p.m. George Walter called just now to say Keith will be home about 1 a.m. B.I. 34. Our mule she deer hasn't been back.

9 August – Saturday

Sun trying to make a showing today but not very successful in view of cumulus clouds. I hiked down to the trail junction today to pick up the canteen and pack board Keith left last night—there are millions, literally, of h. berries! Picked about 3 qts. worth, hot work. B.I. 32

10 August – Sunday

Woke up this a.m. in time to see another mule deer (this one with antlers still fur covered and, of course, male). Eating salt off the step. Sunny and our hottest day (79°)—clouded up about 5 p.m. though. Storm clouds and lightning flashes to W, S, and E of us, but nothing here. B.I. 43

11 August – Monday

Was sitting in outhouse this a.m. with door open when male mule deer came up for a chat. Ate salt and stared at me (I was on catwalk) for about 15 minutes. Keith threw bread for him—which he ate. Then Keith hit him, accidentally, with a piece and he (the deer) with an anti-people and injured air daintily left us for parts unknown to the north.

[Signatures]

Paula Maas, Granite City, Ill.

Bryce Meck, Granite City, Ill.

Bev Maas, Granite City, Ill.

Karen Maas, Granite City

Tom Edwards, San Carlos, Calif. Logging Range Sta.

Gary Edwards, Calif.

Maxine Maas (Polebridge) 4110 Maryville Rd., Granite City, Ill.

Mrs. B. (Thelma) Edwards, Logging Ranger Sta., San Carlos, Calif.

Many, many visitors today—left at 2 (or ¼ to 2 p.m.). Had a storm from 2:15 to 2:25 centered over Logging Ridge area. We saw a smoke about 3 or thereabouts at 164° 50' but Cyclone had already reported it. He could see the fire itself. Fire Cache dispatched jumpers to the area but another storm prevented their going into area until later this p.m. Second storm (5:05 to 5:30 p.m.) caused fires on Logging, Quartz, and Dutch Ridges. We spotted fire at 284° 16' on F.S.

side. Reported fire and got T, R, & S stat from patrol plane. F.S. sent crew in about 8 p.m. Kept on radio until 11 p.m. Went to bed but kept radio on. B.I. 39

12 August – Tuesday

[Signatures]

Charles Nicholson, South Milwaukee, Wis.

Jim Nicholson, South Milwaukee, Wis.

Bruce Boyd, Wauwatosa, Wis.

George Nicholson, South Milwaukee, Wis.

Mr. & Mrs. R. W. Nicholson, South Milwaukee, Wis.

Busy, busy, busy today. Bruce Boyd (above) came up for the second time this summer. The first time he was up here I mentioned how much I wanted a coke. Today he came with two! About 11 a.m. Mike up on Crevice (Canadian F.S. Lookout) called to ask us to report a smoke up on the U.S. side of the border—a single snag. We reported it, but by one o'clock it was 5 trees, by 7 p.m. 60 acres. The smoke is pouring out tonight—there are now about 30 men on the fire and 40 more will be going in tomorrow. We will be staying on the radio all night as any radioeing must go through Crevice and then we must deliver messages—out of fire area and in. Most of Park fires well under control today . . . patrol plane has been dropping food, etc. into Park fire guards. Patrol plane (park) also guided F.S. crew into fire we discovered. That fire is now out. Both Keith and I have scratchy voices from so much radio work. It's going to be a long night, but F.S. man Jim Hutchins hasn't had any and won't get any sleep until he drops. B.I. 43

13 August – Wednesday

We were up all night last night. Today at 1:13 p.m. spotted a smoke at 155° 53', on Logging Ridge, S 30, R 19, T 35. Reported it in and the patrol plane came to check it. Was burning good, so 6 jumpers and an 8 man crew went after it. Men jumped at 4:20-4:35. About 5 minutes after we reported our smoke Loneman called in smoke near Coal Creek. That fire, by tonight, is about 600 acres and still expected to move. Fire camp is being set up there tonight. Huckleberry reported a smoke (after Cyclone spotted it) in McGee Meadow. A crew is on that one. Red Meadow in F.S. (and threw smoke this afternoon and p.m.). The Frozen Lake fire up on the border is still going strong. We called F.S. (Glacier View) tonight to tell them we'd stay on radio again tonight but they said "No," get some shut-eye. B.I. 61 today. Cloudless, hot, windy, dangerous weather. Belly River has a fire too.

14 August – Thursday

Our Logging Fire is throwing up just a little smoke today. The crew will finish mop up today. Cyclone called us about a fire which we couldn't see, so we asked patrol plane to check. He found it and we sent info to Cyclone. Coal Creek is a big inferno now, between Frozen Lake (still burning) and Coal Creek was barely able to see for smoke. Huckleberry called us to report a "maybe" fire. Sent patrol plane over there, too. Hot, windy, again! I spotted smoke at 12:15—173° 40', S 22, T 35, R 20. Not a very big one. Keith went down about 12:45 to help fight it. About 2:30 p.m. the Coal Creek fire blew up. All radio traffic, unless emergency, has been halted. B.I. 61. Two jumpers went in on our fire . . . it's on Quartz (lower) ridge, or rather behind it from us.

15 August – Friday

Cloudless, hot, dry, dry, dry again! 14th – Fire in Slifer’s Meadow broke out again. Plane found it. Bert Edwards (Logging) on it.

Carl and crew on Quartz fire. Expect to finish mopping up by this afternoon. B.I. 65. Today, but no new fires. Patrol plane combed area thoroughly! but found nothing. Frozen Lake still burning but is under control and almost out. Cave Creek has been bombed with borate all day. Keith called (it is now 8 p.m., other written this a.m.) and is on way up. He’s pooped. F.S. radio wonderfully quiet all day. Park radio maddenly busy and noisy.

16 August – Saturday

[Signature] Don Christensen, Flushing, Michigan

Visitor came just as were getting record of smoke puff—so he wasn’t treated too royally. Came at 12:30 and stayed till four though. Our smoke came up clearly on Logging Ridge for 10-20 minutes. Then nothing. It was on the 6 jumper fire spot. Two theories on it; it either was ashes blown by wind or part of the old fire puffed up, but what with lack of fuel went out. F.S. patrol plane found nothing there. We thought we saw a puff up on Lower Quartz Ridge too, but again F.S. plane said, “negative.” Very hazy today. Coal Creek fire asserting itself. 100 Zuni Indians from N. Mexico being flown in tonight to do battle. Frozen Lake fire busy again about 5 p.m. B.I. 65 today. More heat, low humidity predicted.

17 August – Sunday

Quiet, hot day. B.I. 63. Coal Creek fire still going good. Likewise Frozen Lake. No smokes today. Thank goodness! Deer eating out under catwalk tonight, licking the toothpaste off the rocks. We fed him bread and made a salt lick.

18 August – Monday

[Signatures]
Margaret Wood, 923 Oregon Trail, Wyoming 15, Ohio
Wm. & Catherine Wood, same
Bert Wood, same
Stefford Wood, same

Above people arrived about 2 p.m. Stayed until 3:30 or so. Cloudy a.m. B.I. down to 40. Cave Creek still blazing.

19 August – Tuesday

Adolph says he has a replacement for us and can pack us down on Sunday next. 2 storms today, but not in our immediate area. Huckleberry had a fire on Dutch, Loneman had one above Harrison Lake. B.I. 44

20 August – Wednesday

Nothing unusual again today. B.I. down to 36, what with lack of wind, etc. Warmish a.m. Cloudy p.m. Our radio has been acting up for a week or more. We put old batteries in but still 'tis showing off. Adolph thinks it's the set and not the batteries.

21 August – Thursday

Had 2 young deer here tonight, one male, one female. The male wouldn't share the salt, so Keith put it all around so the female could have some too. Phoned our replacement at Logging today. He will buy some of our leftover canned goods and we gave him a list of other stuff we're leaving so he won't purchase them. Washed clothes today. B.I. 47

22 August – Friday

Quiet day. Coal Creek fire still going. We're in process of thoroughly cleaning whole L.O. Washed all windows (Keith did outside, I inside), all window sills, etc. Not too warm today, but neither was it cool. B.I. 35

23 August – Saturday

Warmish today, until about 3:30 when there was a storm and rain. B.I. down to 19. Fire for us by river, to west at 273° 36' / -3° 50' / S 18 T 36 R 21. F.S. lookout reported it, too. Small stump. Lambert says can finish it tonight. Scrubbed all woodwork, stoves, floor, cabinets, chairs, etc. today. Baths tonight and down we go on the morrow, unless there is a rash outbreak of fires tonight. Apgar reported fires on Howe and Dutch Ridges, Swiftcurrent had one on Flattop Mt., and Loneman had one in F.S. land. Busy day!

24 August – Sunday

Today's the day. Dave, our replacement, arrived 10:30 a.m. We instructed him as best we could. Mist over lake, river early this a.m. Hot now with a few clouds. Jim Lambert arrived with his father about 1:45. Zp. u. and away we go. Good luck, Dave.

Keith and Kay Rosengren, Thief River Falls, Minn. and Fargo, N.D.

Dave Kubach (which is me) arrived puffing and steaming to replace Keith and Kay. I might as well shift to the first person from now on.

The day in this region was warm and terribly hazy, so hazy in fact that Logging Ridge was dim to the eye. There were no new smokes reported in this area, although Numa Ridge acted as a contact between Coram R.S. and the fire crew working on a fire in the Nyack area on the ...