

SECOND ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH LARRY WILSON

July 10, 2015

This interview was conducted with Larry to clarify and expand on information contained in his first oral history interview. It took place at his cabin on Kintla Ranch Road. Interviewer is Lois Walker.

Lois: Let's start with my Larry chronology. Born May 29, 1937.

Larry: Yep.

Lois: At home? In the hospital?

Larry: In the hospital, Kalispell Regional.

Lois: The old one?

Larry: Yes, on the east side of town.

Lois: Right across from Cornelius Hedges Elementary?

Larry: Yes. Dr. Malcolm Burns attending.

Lois: Were you the oldest?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: And you have a brother?

Larry: 4½ years younger.

Lois: Joe, is that his name?

Larry: Joe – Gerald actually is his name.

Lois: And you have a sister?

Larry: A sister who is like 18 years younger.

Lois: That's Wanda, is that her name?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Is she still living?

Larry: Yes. She lives in Arlee right now. She was a spring surprise.

Lois: A caboose baby, as we call it. You mentioned in your interview with Debo that you had gone to 13 different elementary schools. Is that because your dad was in the Army and this is wartime?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: What all posts was he on?

Larry: We started at Ft. Lewis, just south of Tacoma, Washington. And we went to—these are not in order necessarily—then Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Austin, Texas; back to Colorado again; off to Ft. Benning, Georgia. Back and forth, some of them several times.

Lois: Because he went in originally with the 163rd Infantry?

Larry: Right.

Lois: But then he got picked up by the 10th Mountain Division.

Larry: Right.

Lois: At what point did you come back to Kalispell? After he got out after the war?

Larry: Well, periodically we were back, and then when he went overseas, like to the Aleutian Islands, we came home to Montana. When he came back from the Aleutians where did we go? Back to Colorado again. Then when they he went overseas, we went back to Kalispell again.

Lois: When the 10th Mountain Division went to Italy?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Did you have grandparents in the area?

Larry: Oh yeah, I had both my maternal grandmother and both of my paternal grandparents.

Lois: I heard that your dad came to the valley first in 1916 or 1913?

Larry: 1916. He was born in 1913.

Lois: He graduated from Flathead High School, like you, in 1931.

Larry: Yes, and my mother graduated two or three years later. 1935, I think.

Lois: Also from Flathead High?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: So, both sides of your family are from the area.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Did your dad stay in the Reserves or the Guard after the war?

Larry: Yes. Well, they had no place for him in the National Guard after the war, so he was the commander of a reserve unit in Kalispell.

Lois: But he had been in the Montana Army National Guard before the war?

Larry: Right.

Lois: When you came back and forth to Kalispell did your parents own a house there?

Larry: Well, initially we rented, and then when he got to be a lieutenant colonel the checks were pretty good, so then we bought a house. My mother bought it while my dad was overseas, at 1011 3rd Avenue East. It's still there.

Lois: So that's why you went to Hedges one year?

Larry: Yes. I went to Hedges parts of several years, because when we would come home I would go to Hedges. The only elementary school I went to in Kalispell was Cornelius Hedges. Corny Hedges we called it.

Lois: Your dad mustered out in 1946?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: How did your parents come to buy Kintla Ranch in 1947? Did they know people up here?

Larry: My dad was looking for something to invest in, and he came upon Matt Brill and George Munro. Actually, Matt Brill had already sold Kintla Ranch to George Munro, who was an FBI agent.

Lois: That was really in the middle of nowhere at that time, especially to take your mom there. Your sister wasn't born yet then?

Larry: No.

Lois: Holy cow. Your poor mother. I've got to meet your mother someday. Your dad got his job as a game warden in 1947 also, or before then?

Larry: Yes. He did not have to leave the Army. He was a full colonel, and he got an offer because of his war record to stay in the Army.

Lois: Yes, they were desperate to keep people, because everyone was getting out.

Larry: They decided that they would stay in the Army, although my mother was not . . . Colonels' wives have a lot of responsibilities, and my mother was not wild about it, but she agreed to do it. My dad went to the courthouse on the last day that he had to sign the papers to get them notarized, and the courthouse was closed. It was after hours. So, instead of looking for another notary they just said, "Nuts, we'll stay here."

Lois: Because that would have meant leaving Kalispell again.

Larry: Oh yeah, for sure.

Lois: There's no fort around here. [Laughs] Serendipity.

Larry: In fact, he already knew where he was going to be posted. If he stayed in he would be posted at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. We had been there a couple of times, for him to teach at the Army War College.

Lois: That's a nice assignment.

Larry: Yes, and he was virtually assured of being a general then.

Lois: Oh boy. That would have been a completely different life for you guys, completely different.

Larry: It's funny how much at least I remember beyond Army posts.

Lois: You would have been a real Army brat.

Larry: Yes, then I would have really been an Army brat. My brother was born at Fort Lewis.

Lois: So, he decided to pursue a job here and ended up working for Fish & Game?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: I heard that he was district supervisor of Region 1, Montana Fish & Game, for 13 years. That would have been from 1947 until about 1960?

Larry: Yes. Then they wanted to move him to Great Falls to be the supervisor there of Fish & Game. He went there for a short time but didn't like it, and that's when he decided to run for [Flathead County] Sheriff.

Lois: I wondered what his motivation was to run for Sheriff.

Larry: That's what it was.

Lois: What would possess him to want to run for Sheriff?

Larry: Well #1, he and Dick [Walsh] disagreed on things when my dad was a warden supervisor, so he ran against Dick Walsh.

Lois: We'll get to that. So, you winters from 1947 to 1953, which meant going down valley in the winter to go to school.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: And you were up here in the summers. Then you said that in the summer of 1954, after you parents had sold Kintla Ranch, you worked as a caretaker for the guy that bought it.

Larry: Right.

Lois: That would have been your junior year in high school?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: You graduated in 1955, then you worked for the Forest Service from 1955 to 1960. So, that was the summers while you were in college?

Larry: Not until 1960—just the summers of 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1958.

Lois: Meanwhile, you were at school at the University of Montana.

Larry: Yes, I was in Missoula.

Lois: You majored in education?

Larry: I started in forestry and midway, about the third quarter of my freshman year, I transferred to education.

Lois: You wanted to be a teacher?

Larry: I hadn't really thought about it until then, except what got me was about the only options for a trained, college-educated forester was the Forest Service. There were very few. In fact, there was one private forester in all of Flathead County, a guy by the name of Bill Royer. And so, I thought I don't want to work for the government.

Lois: I used to say that, too.

Larry: So, then I went into education.

Lois: Okay. You graduated in June 1960. What was happening at Kintla Ranch while you were in college? Had somebody else had bought it?

Larry: Well, it sat empty. The year I was a caretaker there were two of us, both high school kids. We spent the summer at Kintla Ranch as caretakers. We didn't have a car; we had horses, and we would ride down to the Community Hall for the dances, the meetings on Saturday night, and we went everywhere, you know. But everything was at Kintla Ranch. The place was completely furnished yet.

Lois: But no guests?

Larry: No guests.

Lois: Just the two of you.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Such a deal.

Larry: Well, we would rent the cabins. Since they were all there, and there was still bedding and everything. And we picked huckleberries and made a big, big amount of money selling huckleberries for nine bucks a gallon. The going price in town at that time was six bucks, but we thought geez, we're spending all this time with the horses, so we charged nine bucks, and we sold all we could get.

Lois: These are *North Fork* huckleberries.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: You mentioned that's how you came up with enough money to think about buying this property from Tom Reynolds. You knew Tom back then, I assume?

Larry: Oh yeah. He was working for the Forest Service when I was, and then he sold this property to us that summer.

Lois: Who is Robert Gornick?

Larry: That was the high school kid who was caretaker with me.

Lois: All right. So, you own two parcels now—41 acres—but you bought one and then the other later?

Larry: Right.

Lois: You started teaching in 1960 in Columbia Falls, right? Your goal was to spend 183 days a year up here.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: At least half-time, if you could.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: It must have been hard when you were teaching.

Larry: Well, I didn't get it done the first several years either, because the first four years I was teaching I was also the park superintendent in Columbia Falls.

Lois: For the City Parks & Recreation kind of thing?

Larry: Yes; I ran the swimming pool.

Lois: I've heard you mention that. You were a busy guy. So, your dad was Sheriff from 1963 to 1971, roughly.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Your parents got divorced sometime in there?

Larry: Yes, 1969 or 1970.

Lois: Your mom finally had enough of all that?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: What a woman! Your dad remarried Katie Reese in 1972, but they continued to own land up here. I know they owned what became the [Joe] Kuzma place later.

Larry: Yes, which is now owned by [Tom and Betsy] Holycross.

Lois: Did your dad build there? Did he build the structure that was there?

Larry: Yes. There were no buildings on the place. When my dad bought it he put a doublewide trailer on a daylight basement, and built a Quonset hut shop. Then Kuzma did not change any of the buildings. Tom Holycross put a house where the doublewide used to be.

Lois: I remember being at a pig roast in that doublewide, once upon a time. Did your mother ever remarry?

Larry: No.

Lois: When did she move to Arizona?

Larry: Oh gee, she was 85 and she's 98 now. Well, she'll be 98 if she lives until September, and she certainly will.

Lois: Your brother Joe moved there, too?

Larry: Before that.

Lois: You two were in business together until like 2002, running Wilson Post and Pole operation?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: When did you go into the National Guard?

Larry: When I was in high school.

Lois: Did they have something like ROTC?

Larry: No. I joined as a private when I was a senior in high school.

Lois: Did you feel like you were expected to go into the military?

Larry: No, no, no. I had a friend in high school who was in the Guard, and he talked to me about joining up, and I thought yeah. When we were in the Guard he and I were the only high school students in the unit. Everyone else was a combat veteran in the unit that we joined, from World War II or Korea. And all of the battalion officers were guys who had been subordinates of my dad.

Lois: I'll bet you learned a lot from them.

Larry: Well, my drill instructor was surprised, because I was the only one who knew all the ranks of officers and enlisted people. That's the way I had been raised, around them.

Lois: Where did you meet?

Larry: At the Armory in Kalispell.

Lois: Was that up north of town, like it is now? Was it downtown?

Larry: I don't know what's there now. It was in the area where the B&B is in Kalispell. It was right across from what was at that time the city ballpark. That would be about 4th Avenue East.

Lois: Where all did you go for training?

Larry: At that time, we went every year to Fort Harrison, Montana [near Helena].

Lois: You were doing one weekend a month, essentially, the way it used to be in the old days?

Larry: Originally it was every Monday night, and then it changed to where we had one weekend a month.

Lois: Then you had to do two weeks in the summer.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: But you were working for the Forest Service, so you worked that out somehow?

Larry: Yes, I would go to camp and then I would come home and report to work.

Lois: What was your specialty?

Larry: I was commo. I was originally a radio operator. My first job in the National Guard was driving the battalion commander.

Lois: Well, that's cool.

Larry: Later, I became the commo chief for the battalion. Then I was an E6.

Lois: So, you've been around radios for a long time in other words.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: How many years did you serve in the Guard?

Larry: Over 10.

Lois: Did you get called up at any point for active duty?

Larry: Not for what you would call active, or what anybody would call active duty. I was activated twice, once while I was going to the University, because I did TDY with the unit in Missoula during the winter when I was going to college. And we were activated for the prison riots. I think that was 1953 or 1954.

Lois: At Deer Lodge?

Larry: Yes. I could show you the back of the ringleader's skull that I still have in a plastic bag, but I took it to town. And when I was teaching we were activated to go to the Warm Springs riots, or the Warm Springs strike. Let's see, there was the prison riots for three weeks, because some of us were allowed to stay until they transitioned. Most of the guards were fired, so we were there and National Guard officers became deputy warden. One became deputy warden, others in charge of other things, so we stayed there about three weeks. And at Warm Springs I think we were there a short week, probably five days.

Lois: Korea was already over?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Did your brother go into the Guard or have any military service?

Larry: Yes, he was in the Guard. I think he just did one enlistment, but he was not in the same unit that I was in.

Lois: The Sheriff's Department—when did you first become involved with the Sheriff's Office? Was that when your dad was Sheriff?

Larry: You mean when did I become a special deputy?

Lois: Well, I know you are a special deputy now, but I didn't know if you had other experience with the Sheriff's Department.

Larry: I was originally appointed to special deputy by Sheriff Rhodes during the Red Badge Fire. And I've been a special deputy since. When he appointed me, then we had a EDR. That was a pretty long training class that the under-Sheriff taught. But I've never had to do that since.

Lois: But you have real law enforcement experience.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: You taught social studies at Columbia Falls?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: You were also the wrestling team coach. This was from 1960 to 1974? Those are the years you taught?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: So, from when you were 23 until you were 37.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: How long have you known the Ogles [Lynn and Bonny]? Where does your friendship with the Ogles start?

Larry: When I was going to college, when I was a sophomore a fellow that lived in the dorm was a scoutmaster and he was – I don't know, a junior or senior and he conned me, because I had been in scouts in Kalispell is where he went, and when he found out that he talked me into being his assistant scoutmaster. Then when he graduated from college I became a scoutmaster. And when I first went there Lynn was the senior patrol leader.

Lois: This was in Missoula?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: I know Bonny is from Missoula, and she met Lynn when she was working as a waitress over in St. Elmo or someplace. But he's from Missoula too roughly?

Larry: Yes, born and raised. His dad was a railroad engineer.

Lois: Okay. So you met him when you were in college, but his dad - they had property up here, his dad did or he did, on the North Fork?

Larry: All their property they bought from me.

Lois: Okay.

Larry: Because when I started teaching I just had the original 10-acre piece that Bob [Garnig] and I actually still own together. And then Tom decided he was ready to sell the other 70 acres. Well that was the summer I started building this cabin, so buying both was just not in the cards, so I held on to 30 of it, giving me 40, and sold the rest. And all of the rest was sold either to my friend Gene Clark who died last winter. I think he bought 15 and all the rest was bought by the Ogles.

Lois: His dad?

Larry: Some of it his dad bought and some of it Lynn bought, and then Lynn later bought his dad's from his dad.

Lois: Did his dad build a structure at all up here?

Larry: No.

Lois: Nothing.

Larry: Never did.

Lois: So the original cabin the Ogles were in was one that was dismantled from down at Kintla Ranch and brought up there?

Larry: No. Originally they bought the trailer house that Greg Cooper was killed down below and moved it up here. Actually in the early years they mostly stayed right here. They would come up here in the winter and summer.

Lois: It was interesting, the interview with Pat Walsh, she said that his dad was good friends with Roy Cooper, that Roy Cooper was one of his best friends. I didn't know that.

Larry: Yeah. That's true.

Lois: All right.

Larry: And Tommy Ladenburg.

Lois: Yeah. So scouting you were in - was your mom ever a pack leader or anything?

Larry: A den mother?

Lois: A den mother, is that what they call them?

Larry: No. She got out of that. [Laughs]

Lois: You were back in Kalispell for good after the war.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: You got into a troop.

Larry: Yep.

Lois: They do a lot of camping or what all did you do in scouts?

Larry: Oh, we did a lot of camping. We did real camping and hiking, not like what they do today. Another scout and I earned our entire, or almost our entire hiking merit badge on one trip in the park.

Lois: Really?

Larry: I forget, I think you had to do five 20-mile hikes, and so many 10s. I forget the actual requirements, but I remember the five 20s.

Lois: I bet.

Larry: We did those all in one hiking trip.

Lois: Geez. Whoa.

Larry: We started at Kintla Lake and came out at St. Mary's.

Lois: Good land. How old were you at the time?

Larry: Oh, I don't know, 16 maybe.

Lois: You are an eagle scout, right?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: What did you do for your eagle project?

Larry: I thinned some property down on Kintla Ranch. I tractored timber, and David is now thinning it again. [Chuckles] Well, the south edge of it anyway.

Lois: This is Gary Byars' property.

Larry: Yes.

Lois: I know you adopted David shortly after he turned 18, right? What year was that?

Larry: Oh, I don't know. I acquired David when he was 13, and there was opposed to us adopting him, but he had no birth certificate and his mother was dead.

Lois: He was staying with his grandmother then?

Larry: He was staying with Bettie at Polebridge.

Lois: Bettie Jacobson.

Larry: And his mother was dead, his dad was in jail, a federal penitentiary for bank robbery.

Lois: Holy cow.

Larry: And Bettie had him.

Lois: And Karen is his aunt.

Larry: Yes. Karen never liked him, so he had a pretty tough life at Polebridge. But the summer he was 13 I think – yeah, every time I would come to Polebridge here would come David running out with a big smile wanting to... He was lobbying. I used to have a crew of about 20 up here every summer and they would camp around, but we would cook all here, and we would hire a cabin boy we called him. And he was really a bull cook and swamper and cleaned the cabin. And normally we hired a 15 or 16-year-old to wash dishes and that kind of stuff, in the house – clean, and Friday was clean-up day, scrub the floors and vacuum and dust. David wanted that job and I told him, “No, no, we hire 16-year-olds.” Because with a 16-year-old when they weren’t working here they could go out with one of the [00:28:13 Sawyers] and [00:28:11 limb] posts for them or something.

Lois: And they could drive by then too.

Larry: Yeah, but mostly they didn’t. We didn’t have ones that drove up here. Finally, when I was coming up the weekend before I was moving the crew up, just to clean the cabin, I told David, “Okay come on, this weekend you can work anyway.” God he was just a terror at cleaning house, because the people that had had him before he lived with Bettie really used him as a babysitter for their young children and housekeeper, whatever. Geez, he was in here, I said, “Well we’re going to scrub the floor and I have a list of this stuff we were going to do.” He had a bucket of hot soapy water, he was scrubbing the floor on his hands and knees wanting to know where the wax was.

Lois: So he had been in a foster home before that?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: What year was he born, do you know?

Larry: 1971 I think.

Lois: That gives me a timeframe. I knew it was in the 80s. And you have a daughter, Janice, who was born in ‘70, unbeknownst to you at the time?

Larry: Hmm.

Lois: That would have been while you were teaching. She is now married and lives in Missoula?

Larry: Well, actually they live in Clinton. She works in Missoula County.

Lois: And you have grandchildren and a great-grandson?

Larry: Yep.

Lois: Cool. How old is he now?

Larry: He was a year old on my birthday.

Lois: He was born on your birthday?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: Even better.

Larry: So he's a year-plus now. They will be here Saturday night.

Lois: Okay, cool. Back to World War II, so it struck me when you went to Hawaii and you went out to see the Missouri. You were 8 years old when VE Day and VJ Day happened. What are your impressions? How much was registering at that point, that the war was over, what the mood was? What were the conditions like where you were living? What do you remember about those days in particular?

Larry: It's funny, the most vivid memory I have is when Roosevelt died.

Lois: Oh, I bet.

Larry: Because we were in Kalispell at that time, and that was just a major deal you know, because the war was not over. My dad was gone. He was in Italy then. The big then watched were telegrams, the fear you know, because when they delivered telegrams it was mostly not good news. It was always the War Department regrets to inform you. And in our class at school our big thing was coloring pictures of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Douglas McArthur, and Franklin Roosevelt. We didn't do the typical Washington Lincoln stuff that they did before, and I guess now again too. So yeah, it wasn't like I had any idea what combat might be like, but I knew a lot about what Army life was like on a post, because when my dad became a battalion commander then he had a lot of get up and go. I could go and ride in his jeep with him on post.

Lois: Just old enough to do that.

Larry: Yeah. And a guy that I didn't know personally until 15 years ago, he had asked him, "Who is that little bastard in the back of the Colonel's jeep?" [Laughs]

Lois: So he didn't have a little uniform for you or anything?

Larry: Yes, oh yes.

Lois: Did you?

Larry: I had a little uniform and I was always one rank under my dad.

Lois: [Laughs] when your parents bought Kintla Ranch Matt and Mata stayed around? I mean they didn't live the area?

Larry: They were living in Kalispell and then in Hot Springs, but he retained 160 acres. He didn't sell the whole ranch, and that was right at the bottom of the hill down here.

Lois: So they helped out there on Kintla Ranch?

Larry: Oh yeah, and they came every summer.

Lois: Did Mata cook?

Larry: She and Matt were master chefs. They could make a gourmet meal out of nothing. Mata would get all the women guests and they would go out and pick wild strawberries for the jam for the next year. And if they didn't help pick strawberries they didn't get any of the strawberry jam from what had been picked before.

Lois: That's labor intensive too because they are little strawberries. What was your job? What was your brother's job? Did you have chores to do?

Larry: My brother never had chores to do I don't think.

Lois: He wasn't old enough?

Larry: Well, if I was 10 when we came here.

Lois: He was 5½.

Larry: He was 5 you know, so he didn't. My chores originally were build, building fires, I was good at that, and when it was cold rainy weather and the guests were out fishing or whatever, then I would build a fire in their cabin, and I had to wash dishes. Dishes for 30 people is a horrible thing. Well we mostly had a cook, what was her name? Ma Burke, and she was an old-fashioned cook. She believed that the cook was responsible for washing their own pots and pans, so she took care of all the pots and pans and all I had to do was the plates and cups and silverware from the actual dinner.

Lois: Did you have cousins that came up and helped out?

Larry: Yeah. I had one cousin that came and spent most of one summer. He was a year younger than I was. He came the year I was 14 I think.

Lois: Where did you sleep?

Larry: Upstairs in the lodge.

Lois: Did they add or modify any buildings while they were there?

Larry: Well, part of what my dad did to buy the first half – he bought half the place first and that was in exchange just for building the lodge, because the guy who owned it was George Monroe. He was an FBI agent and he had hired a manager the year before, '46, and at the end of the year the lodge burned down and the manager disappeared with the proceeds from hunting. So my dad got half the place for building the lodge.

Lois: Who helped him do that? I know you mentioned somebody built the fireplace.

Larry: Well Matt Brill's original fireplace was mostly there, but of course there was a fire that damaged all the outside stuff. My granddad rebuilt it.

Lois: Oh, he did?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: On your dad's side?

Larry: Yes. My granddad built my kitchen table too, for the lodge, there were two of them.

Lois: That's neat. How did your mom feel about all that? That was a lot of work for her if your dad was working.

Larry: Well my dad was working as a game warden. My mother ran the ranch. The only time my dad was there was two weeks' vacation in the summer.

Lois: I mean to keep that place running, reservations and keep everybody fed. You mentioned going down to Belton to get groceries. What kind of vehicles did you have or what kind of car was she tearing down the road in?

Larry: She was tearing down the road in our Nash car, and she and Ruth Sondreson were the terrors of the North Fork.

Lois: Didn't have a pick-up or anything?

Larry: No. We had a pick-up that we used just around the lodge, to pick up the garbage. That was also part of my chores. When I was 10 helping the handyman pick up the garbage and haul it. We had our own dump. We would haul it to the dump and he taught me how to drive.

Lois: I was going to ask how you learned to drive.

Larry: Yeah, he taught me how to drive when I was 10, a stick shift pick-up and I had to have something to sit on. I was half standing [chuckles] and we worked on it without telling my mother.

Lois: That's best.

Larry: And then we came back from the dump one day and the dump road comes up through right in front of the barn through the corral, and we went right in front of the lodge and around behind the kitchen to put the garbage cans back, and he sat on the tailgate while I drove. That was how my mother found out I could drive.

Lois: She saw that?

Larry: Oh yeah, it was all done for her. And she was a North Forker too. Fred Rader was his name.

Lois: Oh, I've heard the name, yeah.

Larry: Yeah, Elliott. Well our first cook was Lu Rader, so Fred and Lu. He was the handyman and she was the cook. Then we hired two, my mother hired two high school girls to do housekeeping and wait tables, but it was not a kitchen style at all, family style. What you got for dinner was what everybody got.

Lois: That's still a lot of work for her. Was your mom happy up here? She liked it, she enjoyed it?

Larry: She seemed to. I never heard her complain about it.

Lois: What's your mother's name?

Larry: Louise.

Lois: So that's why you called Lulu and her Louise?

Larry: No, Lulu was her actual name.

Lois: Like L-u-l-u?

Larry: Yep.

Lois: What all was involved with cleaning and opening up the camp each summer when you came up? That must have been a real job.

Larry: Oh, my mother is a clean freak.

Lois: That's too bad.

Larry: 14 cabins and the lodge and they scrubbed the walls and the rafters and the ceilings and the floors.

Lois: Oh for Heaven sakes.

Larry: In '48 we had a flood that flooded the river cabins. We had four river cabins. They were housekeeping cabins. Four cabins and a mess hall down there, because every year all of the Coca-Cola dealers in Montana had their convention at Kintla Ranch.

Lois: Really?

Larry: And we didn't have to cook for them. They brought their own cook and they had the mess hall that they ate in, and rented all the river cabins.

Lois: That's nice.

Larry: Yeah, McFarlands' was a dude ranch. Matt Brill called and we kept it the same, called Kintla Ranch a guest ranch. And the customers, we didn't have to do any advertising really because the people had been coming there some of them for 30 years.

Lois: Mostly fishing?

Larry: Fishing, yeah. We had horses and they used them sometimes. They went on pack trips just to fish.

Lois: What kind of fish were they after primarily?

Larry: Bull trout and cutthroat. Dave Wedum's dad was one of them, Dave Wedum or Carl Wedum, Al Lucke, Charlie Buhler came every summer. Al Lucke was a fly fisherman and only fished for cutthroat.

Lois: L-u-c-k-y?

Larry: L-u-c-k-e.

Lois: Okay.

Larry: And Carl Wedum met his wife up here. She was a guest also apparently, and so all of their kids didn't get to come, the years that we were at Kintla Ranch Carl's wife Janet never came. But when the kids got old enough he would bring them. And Dave Wedum, the game warden is my age, and so when he started coming at age 14 I had a fishing buddy always.

Lois: Did the women fish too or just the men?

Larry: Well they were all bachelors that came. This was their guys' deal. The same thing with Dick [00:42:05 Cleary's] dad. He and his buddies came and rented a river cabin two weeks every year, the same two weeks every year and they referred to those places as that's my cabin. They stayed in the same cabin every year for the same period of time.

Lois: So did they dry the fish, smoke them, can them?

Larry: They smoked them. Well they ate a lot of fish, that too, because you know, fisherman are here to fish.

Lois: That's meat.

Larry: They like eating fish, and so my mother and the cooks would always fry fish but never with the heads on. Some of those guys used to do fish with the heads on. My mother didn't like those eyeballs. But she didn't tell us it was because she hated the eyeballs, she told us because she needed space in the pans to cook enough for everybody. [Chuckles]

Lois: That's a lot of scaling of fishes and cleaning.

Larry: Yeah, oh boy. Well see, the reason Ruth and my mother were the terrors of the North Fork, because we had the old crank phones then, and each of them would call in their orders the day before.

Lois: That must have been a heck of a grocery store in Belton then.

Larry: The same as it is today.

Lois: The little one that's there now?

Larry: Yeah, the Belton Merc, and the roads are about even Steven, because at that time if you had driven an inside road it's as it was then, and that's the way the lower North Fork was too. And so it was about 6½...the other, which way you went, inside road or

down the North Fork Road. And so they would go either to Kalispell or Belton, depending on where the prices were best at the time. And like I said, they would order it, and they would then feed breakfast in the morning and leave as soon as breakfast was done and race to town to get the groceries so that they could back in time for the prep for dinner.

Lois: A Nash isn't a very big car.

Larry: The back seat in the old Nashes made into a bed, so if you took the mattress out yeah, you have a pretty big car.

Lois: Okay. They have a garden? What kinds of things was she buying?

Larry: She was buying everything. We didn't do a garden, like the Brills did a big garden, we didn't.

Lois: She would buy everything huh?

Larry: And I had the pop concession.

Lois: What kind of soda?

Larry: Got it at the Coca-Cola bottling plant. In those days it was no cans, it was all bottles and we bought cases at a time.

Lois: Heavy bottles.

Larry: Yeah. Well I had an assortment.

Lois: Grape Nehi and orange and root beer.

Larry: Cream soda was my favorite.

Lois: Cream soda, yeah.

Larry: And we kept it in the root cellar. We had a refrigerator, a big refrigerator, but she didn't have room for that.

Lois: No ice, yeah.

Larry: So the pop was kept in the root cellar and in the summer time lots of time the women would play cards in the evening. Canasta was a big thing in those days, and whoever lost playing canasta had to buy pop for everybody at the end, so I had a moving business every evening.

Lois: I guess. Did your mom rely on the merc for anything at all? They would go down there and get stuff at the merc?

Larry: No, no.

Lois: Tell me about hunting in the fall. Was your dad an avid hunter?

Larry: Oh yeah.

Lois: Who did he hunt with?

Larry: Well, my dad hunted with...his best friend he had hired as a game warden. My dad's hunting mostly was in the South Fork when he was a game warden, because in the South Fork hunting season opens earlier for September. Early season it's called, and so they would get elk and deer there before they ever came up here for hunting. But in those days, up here on the North Fork on the American side there was only deer. Nobody got an elk. There weren't any elk up here. But my dad got the concession like probably Matt Brill had it before in [BC]. And so our hunters from Kintla Ranch would come here and then they would go up and camp in tents in Canada to hunt. And there they could hunt moose, elk, goat, mongoose, deer of course.

Lois: What do you mean by a concession? How did that work?

Larry: Well in Canada they gave exclusive rights for hunting to large areas.

Lois: Really? Hmm.

Larry: And you paid them. But what had happened, in Canada you would pay a very small fee for a hunting license, then when you killed things you paid trophy fees. So if you killed a deer you had to pay I think it was 20 bucks extra for the deer. An elk and a bear, grizzly bears are the most expensive.

Lois: I bet. Were there limits back in those days, bag limits on how many animals you could take?

Larry: Oh yeah, yeah.

Lois: They do all their own butchering at that point? You're not going to haul that animal, to where? They clean them themselves, right?

Larry: Yeah, but they didn't cut them up. They would haul them to a butcher in town mostly. A lot of these guys who came in and paid to hunt didn't want the meat. They wanted the trophy. And so they would take the trophy to a taxidermist and my dad would take the meat to a butcher and then either ship it to them or it became part of our meat supply for the next summer.

Lois: Did they smoke meat too?

Larry: No. They didn't smoke meat, just the fish.

Lois: So his area of responsibility was a lot bigger than just the North Fork?

Larry: He had the five northwest counties.

Lois: Holy cow. He must have been busier than a one-armed paper hanger.

Larry: Oh yeah. You've seen the Fish and Game Headquarters in Kalispell?

Lois: Yes.

Larry: Well my dad became the warden supervisor. He was the only game warden in the five counties, and the district headquarters was on our front porch, a little file cabinet and a small desk on an unheated porch.

Lois: How much can one person do? I mean really.

Larry: His biggest problem was the paperwork, the writing. And then over time of course it got more and more and bigger and bigger. My dad, they moved out to the place where the Fish and Game office is today, but first it was into a big Quonset hut that they had there, and now they've built that big museum.

Lois: It is something isn't it? I took my granddaughter there for her birthday to see the pelts and the animals. So is Kintla Ranch the beginning of your love affair with the North Fork? Would you have ever had a place up here if that hadn't happened?

Larry: Probably not. You know, how would you have otherwise met people like Tom Reynolds?

Lois: Do people in Kalispell consider this a really remote way out there kind of...?

Larry: It was, yeah. If you really pressed, you know, it took my mother driving as fast as a road would allow.

Lois: Which is not very fast.

Larry: Two-plus hours to town and 2-plus hours back.

Lois: Yeah. That's a rough road.

Larry: But normal people it was about 4 hours up here.

Lois: Better than the days when it took a week to get up here in a wagon.

Larry: Oh yeah.

Lois: Tell me more about those summers that you worked at, did you work at Ford all four summers that you were there? What other stations were there up here? Moran.

Larry: Moran was not open then. The buildings are still there, but it was not open. There was only Big Creek and Ford, and when I first came to work I was assigned to Big Creek to a brush crew. It was a neat place, but you had to make your lunch before 7:30, because breakfast was at 7, 6:30 to 7, and you made your lunch before that. When you walked in that big building that is there today was the mess hall. When you went in the front door there was a white taped line around the outside edge and you had to stay between the wall and that white line around to where the lunch stuff was laid out, make your lunch, go back outside and wait for the gong for breakfast. And the reason you had to stay in that white line is because they were setting up the tables. And boy we had a handy cook. His name was Bill Anderson and he was there forever and ever, and he was a great cook. Then you got on the pick-up. We went to work in a pick-up, the crew in the back and the straw boss and his assistant in the front seat. And the first week I was there you start at 7:30 in the pick-up in the yard, the theory being that you

went to work on your own time, start getting paid at 8 o'clock. So load up and leave at 7:30 and we were driving down the road and then up Canyon Creek Road, that's where we were working. We didn't get to the worksite where we ended up driving until 10 o'clock, because the straw boss was...the road was dusty and rough, so it took until 10 o'clock to get there and that's break time. So we took our 15-minute break. Then we sharpened our axes and then we hiked up the mountain to where we were working.

Lois: You were doing trail maintenance mostly?

Larry: No, we were cutting brush and throwing it into skid trails to reduce erosion. We had to leave, and of course noon is lunch time, so we barely got up there and got started then we had to hike back down to the truck and eat lunch. And then when lunch time was over with back up. We had to leave there at 2:30 to get back to the truck by 3, because it took us 2 hours to drive back to Big Creek.

Lois: How big were these crews?

Larry: About six of us I think.

Lois: They ran how many crews out of there?

Larry: I don't know, it was a long line of cars and trucks every morning, because there were brush crews, there were trail crews, there were survey crews. There were look up, the packer and his crew that packed on the lookouts. There were like 40 or 50 men.

Lois: The Forest Service had a lot more money back then obviously.

Larry: Yeah. And I worked there for a week at Big Creek, just one week. And I asked the straw boss I guess, I must have asked, how do you get assigned to Ford? Well he says, "All you've got to do is say you will go," because nobody wanted to go to Ford, because when you got off work Friday night it was 5 o'clock and you had to be back there loading in the truck at 7:30 Monday morning, and it was such a long nasty road. So especially the young guys wanted to be at Big Creek, so they could go to town for the weekend. So I asked one day and the next day Jim Hutchins, who was a big honcho then, says, "You want to work at Ford?" I said, "You bet!" He said, "Get your gear." So he came up and of course by the time we got to Ford the crews were all out for the day, so he kept me with him and we drove up and they were building the road from Tuchuck Campground to Graves Creek.

Lois: Wow.

Larry: We stopped and he's looking at the road, inspecting that and what they were doing and then he had me back at Ford and we ate dinner, got assigned a spot in the camp and then I was on a brush crew at Ford.

Lois: So you lived at Ford?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: Even though you had your place up here?

Larry: Well, my place was pretty ugh.

Lois: You just had the cabin, that little homestead cabin.

Larry: Well then my dad bought Kintla Ranch back, but it was empty. It wasn't operating. He was just kind of patching up cabins. So the last year I worked at Ford four of us would stay at the cabin down at Kintla Ranch.

Lois: 58.

Larry: Yeah, 58. And it was funny because none of us had a car so we would walk from Ford to home at night and from here to Ford to be there by 7:30 every morning.

Lois: That's crazy.

Larry: We had a great time with it really.

Lois: You didn't take the road or you short-cut?

Larry: We short-cut across to the Trail Creek Bridge and then walked the road, and sometimes we would get a ride. Sometimes Tom Reynolds would be going to his place and we could all jump in the back of his pick-up like Fridays. And he would loan us his pick-up on weekends if we wanted to.

Lois: Because he worked at Ford too?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: Okay. You talked about playing softball at Moran. The two camps would meet there and play ball?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: And according to you the Ford crew always thumped the team from Big Creek?

Larry: Damn right. They were a bunch of wusses. [Laughs]

Lois: [Laughs] You mentioned this boys camp that you had. That was here at your place, right?

Larry: We had several. My dad started a boys' camp. Actually we started it at Flathead Lake, and my dad organized that and started it. And I had been to the Boy Scout National Camp School at Tillamook, Washington, or Oregon, I don't know. Where is Tillamook cheese from? Washington?

Lois: That's Oregon isn't it?

Larry: Is it? Wherever it is that's where the Boy Scout Camp was too. And so the first year we only had five boys, so we didn't have a staff. My mother did all the cooking. I was the head counselor and only counselor.

Lois: This is at Flathead Lake?

Larry: That was at Flathead Lake.

Lois: When was that? How old were you at the time?

Larry: Oh, that was when I was a freshman in college, and Bill Meeker and Jim Neil were two of the five boys.

Lois: Okay.

Larry: And each of them came for three summers.

Lois: What were you teaching them or what were they there to learn?

Larry: They were there to have fun.

Lois: Oh.

Larry: That's what we did, we had fun. And those are the best years, when there were just five, because I was in charge. My dad was working. He was a game warden and so we did whatever we wanted.

Lois: How many weeks did they come?

Larry: Six.

Lois: Six weeks, but you were working up here too?

Larry: No. I would do the boys camp stuff and then I would come up here and finish the summer at the Forest Service, and we did well. I was a water safety instructor, so we did junior lifesaving for all of them. They all passed it in the end. We did water skiing. We went camping. We went hiking. Anything we wanted to do we did.

Lois: Wow. Where was Bill from? He's not a local guy.

Larry: No, no, he was from California, from LA.

Lois: Okay.

Larry: Jim Neil was from the LA area too.

Lois: LA? Huh. I didn't know that.

Larry: And we did some craft stuff.

Lois: Craft, [chuckles]. Oh yeah, because you had to do the Indian with the little plastic strips?

Larry: No, no, we didn't do that. Bill Meeker made this when he was 15 [a strip of cottonwood bark with his name carved in it, hanging in Larry's front window].

Lois: Very nice.

Larry: I've got Jim Neil's there and mine. [Laughs]

Lois: Oh, that's special.

Larry: I tried to give it back to Bill, but he said, "No, no, that belongs in your window."

Lois: Did your brother Joe get involved in doing that too?

Larry: Not really. He was an irritant more than a help. [Laughs] He waterskied with us.

Lois: So then you had a boys' camp up here too later?

Larry: Yeah. Then later when I was teaching school at Columbia, well the boys camp at Flathead Lake then we moved to Foy's Lake. My dad sold the Flathead Lake property and moved to Foy's Lake, and then we had 80 kids.

Lois: Wow!

Larry: Well now that's not fun anymore.

Lois: You're right, absolutely not.

Larry: And I was a head counselor. But oh God that was a horrible thing. I hated it. My mother got to where she hated it. Those kids mostly did not come from California, they came from Wisconsin. I can't remember how it happened, but somehow my dad in the winter you know would spend time trying to get sources for boys and kids came. Oh, it was horrible.

Lois: They just stayed in tents?

Larry: No, we had cabins.

Lois: Why do you want to write this book? What's the impetus for this book? What do you visualize?

Larry: I'm not sure I want to write a book.

Lois: Okay, that's a good start. [Laughs]

Larry: I've been badgered by people to write this book.

Lois: I see. People think you should just because you had the column and you've got all this accumulated stuff?

Larry: Yeah, all this stuff, yeah.

Lois: You've seen the article. I mean your columns that we've printed out fill four 3-inch binders. That is a lot of material.

Larry: Yeah, and there's more now.

Lois: I know. I haven't printed it out in the last year and a half probably.

Larry: I haven't filed them all either. [Chuckles]

Lois: Uh-oh. I count on you to do that.

Larry: I've got them.

Lois: I just print them out from the website. I don't clip them anymore, so if you've clipped them I'm glad.

Larry: Well I haven't clipped them either. They are still stacked up.

Lois: Another job for Becky. I like that. [Laughs]

Larry: No, I do those. I organize the papers in order and then I start clipping through and put them in the book. That's the only time I read the columns usually.

Lois: Well, so many other people, your neighbors and other people have written their North Fork story, and most of the time they are quoting you on things.

Larry: Yeah, I almost wrote Joe Novak's book. If you read it. And actually, that's part of the motivation that I finally agreed, because like have you read Joan Lang's book?

Lois: Yeah, I have.

Larry: You know, and Joe's book, and they have their... The only one I don't like is Don Sullivan's book, because it's not truthful, but theirs, both Joan's and Joe's are truthful, from their perspective how they came here and what they enjoyed.

Lois: Their little piece of, yeah.

Larry: It's just a shame that no one now living remembers the way things were up here really. The History Committee just drives me crazy. I think why would anybody interview somebody like Ivan Windsheimer? Not because he wasn't a nice guy, because he was, but he's such a Johnny come lately.

Lois: A limited experience.

Larry: And he was never involved. That's what irritated me most when they talked about the life membership thing and then decided to drop it. Because they were saying, "Well there's a lot of people like the Pittmans." The Pittmans never did anything with the Landowners Association. Yeah, they sponsored the ice cream social every year. Big deal.

Lois: Well, like he says they've been coming up here, what did he say – 52 years.

Larry: Yeah, whatever. Now they've been here a lot of years, but see to me you wouldn't even consider somebody like that. They were never key in the operation of the Landowners Association which was giving out these life memberships. Cecily now should be a life member.

Lois: I agree. That's what my motion was.

Larry: They have been, for over 30 years members of the Association. She's a past president. They've always been involved in the issues. And see and that's what irritates me the most about the Landowners, it's a social Goddamn club. If you have a Landowners Association but you don't ever talk about the issues, then.

Lois: Well a lot of the hot issues I suppose have...

Larry: It soured people. It soured a lot of us, me included. I was right on the bandwagon when they said, "Well let's stop this crap fighting all the time," because you can't do it with that either.

Lois: Well you've said often that your most popular articles have been the ones about the homesteaders.

Larry: The old-timers, yeah.

Lois: There's not many people left that remember them, except, 'Oh yeah, I met them. Yeah, I met the Holcombs once,' or something, but they didn't know them really. So we're talking about the old North Fork. A lot of the topics, and there's the draft outline we came up with. A lot of it has to do with what makes the North Fork the North Fork.

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: And then we have the road, the river. Organizations on the North Fork and the Inner Local. The North Fork and the park, the North Fork and the Forest Service, the North Fork and the fact that we're so near the border. Then the merc, saloon, the community hall, the hostel, Kintla Ranch.

Larry: Well some of these things could put a little bit together couldn't they? Like when you're talking about North Fork homesteaders you could put in most of the school stuff.

Lois: Yes, that's true.

Larry: Because there hadn't been a school since those days.

Lois: The early days, right.

Larry: Except for Tamarack Springs.

Lois: Also mail delivery.

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: These are just the subjects of your columns. That's how this kind of got built, but fires and fire lookouts, floods and floodings, that kind of stuff. I like the thing about North Fork locations, all these names. Where is [01:08:04 Barrels] Corner? What is Junkins Corner? Where is Plasser Point? These kinds of things. But yeah, and then we have all the issues concerning the North Fork. We get into land use planning.

Larry: Bear and the road.

Lois: Protection of the North Fork.

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: But you know this book could be 800 pages if we even begin to do this.

Larry: We don't want to do that I don't think. We don't want to do that do we?

Lois: I don't think either of us will live long enough to do that.

Larry: Well we can't compete with war and peace anyway. [Laughs] Although it's close.

Lois: And I have a feeling we will get started and it may morph into, kind of taking on a life of its own and it may turn out to be something different than what we think it is.

Larry: My biggest interest in it is the history of North Fork. I don't think there's any real big advantage to taking all the different side views that are currently argued about or whatever. Might end with a paragraph, the end is what does the future look like? Are we going to love it to death? Probably. Who would have thought we would have million dollar houses up here? Who would have thought we would have a \$100,000 house up here?

Lois: And rafts three deep coming up the road. Well, last week I printed out...

Larry: Football night, now that we have TV.

Lois: And the poker games. But the homesteaders I've got here towards the back. All those individuals. I have two pages of individuals.

Larry: Paul Maas wasn't a homesteader.

Lois: Yeah, that's true. When I was first doing this I was just feeling my own way.

Larry: Actually neither was Tom Reynolds.

Lois: I think there's two different lists. There's one homesteaders and then there's one that just says 'people'. Homesteaders is ahead of people. It starts with Abbott. I didn't know what Paul's wife's name was, Paul and who Abbott.

Larry: Yeah, I don't know either. But I bet if we went to the county courthouse the property listing should have the wife's name. Maybe not though.

Lois: It's pretty old.

Larry: It's old and he sold.

Lois: You said you've got a map of all those original homesteads.

Larry: Yeah, I do.

Lois: We're going to want to refer to that because this list is just based on what was in your column and what I happen to know, and there's a lot of people missing I'm sure.

Larry: Oh yeah.

Lois: Okay, looking down that list, Abbott, Adair, Beebe, Burn, Micky Burn, Bemis. Tell me any that are not homesteaders so I can take them out of there.

Larry: I don't think Ralph and Esther Day were homesteaders. She was the daughter of a homesteader.

Lois: That's true.

Larry: The same thing with the Gaffaneys. They weren't homesteaders. I don't even remember who Frank Goeble was. Oh, I do too, he's a Canadian trapper.

Lois: But it was Florence Gaffaney's parents who were up there?

Larry: No. Actually none of them were homesteaders. The Hoiland property was homesteaded by Austin Weikert's father who died up here. It took them a week to get his body out. And then taxes weren't paid. Austin Weikert didn't, during the depression didn't, couldn't, wouldn't, whatever, and so they bought it on a tax deed. And Mid Connelly is Austin Weikert's daughter, and she comes up and hassles Naomi every year.

Lois: She's amazing, those tiny little hands of hers, but they look like loggers' hands or something. Is it Liebig or Leibig?

Larry: Leibig.

Lois: So it should be L-e-I?

Larry: Yep. Yeah, and he was a ranger up here before there was a park.

Lois: And McFarland is it Mac or Mc?

Larry: Mc.

Lois: That's what I thought.

Larry: With a Quarter Circle MC.

Lois: Bill McAFree, we talked a bit about Bart Monahan. The Sansaveres or Sansaver, however they say their name, they showed up in those early clippings, 1918 to 1920.

Larry: Sansavere.

Lois: You know Pat Walsh got all those old newspapers scanned and that was 1891 to 1920-something. I started looking at them. The first time I saw mention of an actual North Fork column was around 1915. For a while there was Upper North Fork and Lower North Fork. There were two columns. It's going to be a task to go through and find all of it. It gives names. Usually it's so and so went to town.

Larry: Yeah, all that kind of crap. There were some interesting things about the schools though, that they had a meeting at the school or a Christmas party or whatever.

Lois: They always had a play, the kids had a play. I guess I should do that. I guess I should make an attempt to find all those columns, because all we have is ones from 1918 to 1920, but it was a family that was only printing out columns that mentioned their family name. It's not all of them.

Larry: Oh yeah, I have some of those.

Lois: You do. I scanned all those and I have those, but there's a lot missing.

Larry: Well, and some of my early columns I went and got North Fork information from the same place that Pat did. And mostly that was at the establishment of Columbia Falls and they were talking about coal and the railroad coming up.

Lois: How great this was going to be, pretty amazing stuff. All these homesteaders, if you wanted to go into depth on a lot of these we're not going to get that from your columns. I mean it's out there. People have published stuff about these people.

Larry: Some of them, yeah.

Lois: We don't want to do all that research really.

Larry: No. I think when you talk about the homesteader thing it's not so much their individual lives as their collective effect on the North Fork.

Lois: Did you know Hoolie Stine?

Larry: Uh-uh. He was gone before I was here.

Lois: What's his story, you know?

Larry: Yeah, and it must have been a neat story, because without a doubt he was a bootlegger. He bought so much corn and so much sugar by the 100-pound bags that you know he wasn't eating it.

Lois: How was he selling it and distributing it, bottling it?

Larry: Well he was the one that carried stuff up for Adair, freighted stuff for Adair and for people up here, and then Frank Wurtz would pick it up at Polebridge and bring it up to deliver it to others. In the days of wagons that made sense that it would be a freighter rather than every individual going to town.

Lois: Yeah, liquid is heavy. I will print out all the history of the North Fork things. I will bring those things to you this evening.

Larry: This evening?

Lois: We're going to [01:18:25 R... 's], right?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: I will just bring them to you. I think as we start doing it will...

Larry: It will come together, and it will either become a snake with ten heads.

Lois: It will be, you know it's like eating an elephant, just one bite at a time.

Larry: Well my long-term goal was to write a history of the North Fork. I thought about that for years. I collected all this stuff to write a history, not to give a blow by blow of

- every homesteader or every newcomer either. But we have had people, individuals have big influence during their period here like the Holcombs who influenced all the homesteaders, and Matt Brill, and more recent John Frederick, who has had a major influence on what's gone up here in many ways, and the McNeils. You made a motion to make Cecily a life member?
- Lois: I made a motion two summers ago to extend life membership to Ed and Cecily. I said, "Please. He's not going to be with us much longer," to the Hoilands and to you. And I said, "You know we're taking these people for granted. And as much as they've done for the organization." Well they didn't... They would have to go back and see what it said about that. They weren't sure if it was a vote of the membership. They would do some research and they would get back with me. So they bring it up at the next meeting. The conversation just sort of nattered on and they weren't going to do anything. They just weren't going to do anything.
- Larry: And they didn't. Well and then Larry Kinsolving's argument about, "Well, they got to still own land up here. Oh, they've still got to pay dues."
- Lois: This doesn't have to do with [01:20:39], it really doesn't. I suppose you might have one.
- Larry: I gave some thought last week, and I kind of just said well I don't want to start another fight with them. I was just making a resolution that they have to vote on. No.
- Lois: I said, "I move that," and I had somebody second it. Now did that get into the minutes? No. It wasn't in the minutes the next meeting.
- Larry: Really?
- Lois: Yeah. I figured the only way to do it is to do some campaigning ahead of time because there weren't that many people. It was like at a June meeting, and I thought well the time to vote is when the big members, because it says in the bylaws that it's a vote of the membership. So if I did it when I knew there was going to be a lot of people there and I told them, I just say, "I move." "I second." Let's have a vote and that's about the only way to push it way.
- Larry: Now since Larry brought up all these things about dues and still owning land up here, I was going to say, "Where at? Cecily McNeil has been an active member of the community and the North Fork Landowners Association for over 30 years, and where at? She was the organizer of the North Fork Compact and supported it for all of her time, and whereas she was a former board member and president of the NFLA. Therefore, we give to her a lifetime membership with dues and landowner requirements waived."
- Lois: Life member is life member. I mean what's to not understand? [Chuckles]
- Larry: But I think you've got to have it in there that the dues and this stuff is waived. I can't understand it. Only a lawyer could have closed that off that way. But I decided I'm not going to promote them.
- Lois: I have to drag myself to the meetings.

Larry: I do too.

Lois: I really don't want to go.

Larry: I paid my dues in protest to myself. [Laughs] I'm kind of like Bob Grimaldi, he said, "Well if you think because I'm losing all these votes I'm going away, you're crazy. I'm going to be here."

Lois: Yeah. All these interviews they've done they just kind of go down this list of questions and brush over things, and all of them I'm reading them and saying, "Well why didn't you ask them this? Why didn't you ask them that?" They need to go into more depth here. So almost all of them require a second interview to say, "Okay, now expanding on what you said last time."

Larry: She said she was going to interview me again sometime.

Lois: I heard that I was going to be doing this for the book and that we would go through these different subjects we would be talking about. I would record it so I didn't have to sit here and write and we would get that done. I said I would interview Karen. Karen doesn't want to be interviewed, blah blah blah.

Larry: Karen McDonough?

Lois: Yeah. I said, "I will do your interview." "Okay." So we need to get her. They didn't start coming until the '60s.

Larry: Well, and that was her folks. She was a kid up here, but they were never involved with the Landowner Association really until after they bought up here, and they were no longer working in the park.

Lois: I know she has memories of the people because she met them, but her memories of Ruth Sondreson teaching square dancing on Saturday nights or something like that, but at least she has some memory of them. Not an everyday work a day what life was like for them. You know what's her name, Sharon Randolph did that series of four books on the North Fork. There is some good stuff in there. I scanned you all four of them and I kind of made an index of things where she talked about the North Fork, but that's because she worked in the park records and there is good stuff in the park records. But I'm sure you have files full of stuff that I don't know about, stuff you've collected.

Larry: That's the problem, it's just stuff collected and put in a pile.

Lois: Does it need to be organized? If I went in as an archivist and created file folders and set up a filing system so you could find things easier would that help?

Larry: Well yeah, because it's just piles of stuff now and it's scattered everywhere. Some of it's here. I think I've gotten everything out of the North Fork pretty much.

Lois: I could do that. I know how to do that kind of stuff.

Larry: Although I just brought a book up that I picked up just kind of by accident, *The First Ranger*, and this is mostly about Frank Leibig. And for a long time I had his [log], a copy of it. His original was written in German because he was a German.

Lois: But his is mostly park stuff?

Larry: Yes and no.

Lois: Did he had a homestead up here?

Larry: No. His ranger district...

Lois: He was just a ranger?

Larry: Yeah, was the park and he was a Forest Service. When it became a park then he lost his job or lost his district and then he came out here. But he was there at the same time that Fred Herrig, was that his name, Herrig?

Lois: I mean I can work more efficiently at my house, but I mean if you brought me boxes full of stuff I can...

Larry: You could work at it.

Lois: I can turn them into a...

Larry: Yeah, Fred Herrig.

Lois: H-e-r-r-i-g?

Larry: He was the North Fork Ranger at the same time Frank Leibig goes in the park. Fred Herrig was in his early days had worked for Theodore Roosevelt on his ranch in Medora and was a member of the Rough Riders, and got his appointment as a ranger, got fired once and he appealed to Ted Roosevelt and Teddy Roosevelt had him reinstated. It's kind of interesting because of Herrig. Frank Leibig described Herrig as an imposing figure. He was a big man, not extra tall, but broad with powerful shoulders. He generally rode a dark bay horse decked up with a silver-studded bridal and martingale. He wore mostly high-top boots, a big 44 strapped on his belt, and carried a 4570 rifle and a scabbard on his saddle. He wore the ranger's badge always in plain sight, and Bruno, a big Russian wolfhound was his steady companion.

Lois: Wow.

Larry: And it talks about how they met the Cree Indians in the inside park, yeah, in the park.

Lois: This is Herrig, H-e-r-r-i-g?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: What was his first name?

Larry: Fred. And Frank and Fred ran them back into Canada.

Lois: What year roughly?

Larry: I think it says in here what happened. That's why I brought it up here. I was going to pull that out and make a column out of it here.

Lois: You need some little stickies like this that you can mark the pages you want to remember. Somebody is going to have to organize all that stuff eventually, even if it's just to create the Larry Wilson collection when you're gone, so we might as well get started on it. I have to do that for John too. He's got that house and under the house and then the barn. The stuff is of no use to anybody if it doesn't get organized where you can find it.

Larry: I saw Freddie Meaner. He was here.

Lois: Oh, Meaners? Fred Meaners?

Larry: Yeah.

Lois: Eventually a lot of this stuff can be put online.

Larry: I think Leibig's cabin at Lake McDonald is still there. He killed a grizzly bear once with a single shot from a single shot 22 rifle, just downstream from where Hungry Horse dam is now.

Lois: So we will focus on the history of North Fork first and see where it takes us from there. Because your columns, I said eventually we can just create a webpage and put them up there, and if people want to search on a particular topic they can search on a topic. But you know, it's like me concentrating on history. There are many things I could do on the North Fork, but I might as well do the things that I can do that nobody else can do. You might as well concentrate on the things that are.

Larry: This is a quote from his log. "The first 4 to 6 years as a ranger brought me more excitement than the last 25 combined."

Lois: Who wrote that book?

Larry: C. W. Guthrie.

Lois: It's called *The First Ranger*?

Larry: Here it is. The Cree, Herrig and me, 1902 or 3. I sent word to Ranger Herrig stationed at Moran to meet me at Round Prairie near Bowman Creek. I also took F. Geduhn, a homesteader from the head of Lake McDonald and we all met at the place mentioned. Well to make the story short we found nine teepees north of Kintla Creek, near a big Willow Flat and we found plenty of meat over some poles with a fire underneath. Geduhn held my horse while I walked up to the teepees where three or four Cree Indians were cutting up some meat. Ranger Herrig rode just 50 feet behind me, his rifle all ready for action. I had my rifle in my hands too. When we got close to the camp we were met by about 20 or more dogs. Men came from everywhere and all the squaws and kids ran into the teepees. I hollered for the chief to come out. Finally a diseased-looking Indian stepped out and made himself known as the responsible party. I told him he came across the line and not to kill anymore moose. He said they had a fire across the line which drove all the moose into the United States and they

were hard up for winter food. I told him that they ran all the game out of the country with their dogs. Some of the Indians didn't want to go. I told him they had to break camp the next morning or we would kill all the dogs. The Indians could not exist without the dogs. These dogs were trained to surround the moose and hold him until the Indians came up and killed them.

We went to their camp the next day about the middle of the fore noon and there were no signs of their breaking their camp. This time Indians were hiding behind [canson] trees. No squaws in sight, but plenty of dogs. The old Indian chief was there to meet me and said they couldn't move for a week, until all their meat was cured. The first thing three or four shots crashed out and a couple of dead dogs rolled on the ground. Ranger Herrig couldn't stand it any longer and wanted to mop up all the dogs. I got ready for action also thinking the Indians sure would get even with us. So I hollered to Herrig and Geduhn to hold their fire for a minute and see what the Indians had to say. Everything was confusion in the camp and I thought lead would be flying in our direction any second. Then the chief hollered and told him they would move immediately. The lodges went down and in 3 hours they were on the trail up the North Fork and across the Canadian border. We hung around for several days, but the Crees stayed away."

Lois: Spell Geduhn.

Larry: G-e-d-u-h-n.

Lois: G-e-d-u-h-n, okay.

Larry: I think. Let me get back here and find it again. G-e-d-u-h-n, yeah, a homesteader from the head of Lake McDonald. I thought I would make a column.

Lois: Great. Yeah.

Larry: Maybe that's what we've got to do, tourists from California. [Laughs]

Lois: Well, we'll make a start.

Larry: I've got to write a column yet.

Lois: If I'm down valley or sometime when you're there we can look at what you've got, so more people can ask me, "Lois, what the heck do you do up there all day? Why are you still sitting in front of your computer?" Oh, I had three questions from the interview with Debo. One was the original homesteader that had your property. It sounded like you were saying either Lou or Rue.

Larry: Rue I think was her name, R-u-e. [Land was homesteaded by Edward W. Rue.]

Lois: R-u-e, okay. And when you were talking about construction you said you dragged all the logs with a tractor and set up a gin pole?

Larry: Pole, yeah. G-i-n, I think.

Lois: P-o-l-e?

Larry: Yes.

Lois: Or pull?

Larry: Pole. It's a single pole. We dug a hole out back of the cabin and the pole leaned kind of over the cabin site with a pulley at the top. And you bring the log in underneath, attach one end of the cable to that log and the other end to the tractor and pull and swing the thing up and it would swing out over the cabin and put it in place.

Lois: Cool. And you were talking about your dad buying moccasins from Ella Wurtz. You said it's what he would wear, socks, then the moccasins, then his packs?

Larry: P-a-c-k-s.

Lois: Packs, which is like boots?

Larry: Yes. And there are the last pair of moccasins.

Lois: Oh, that's sweet. Look at that. Those are well made.

Larry: Oh yeah.

Lois: I can tell.

Larry: Ella made great moccasins and gloves. We're not sure where she got all the moose hides.

Lois: You know Chris and Monica Graff paid for someone to transcribe all those interviews, which is quite a job, but the person that did it didn't know how to spell names and things like that. So I've downloaded those transcripts, and I'm cleaning them up now and I will give them back to Patty and let her repost them. I wanted to correct those things. Actually, I can give this to you and let you read over it, and if there is anything else that is not correct or in the meantime say, "Oh, that's not what I meant," just mark it up as you want and I won't give her the thing to post until I've..."

Larry: Oh, I've never read this. I've never looked at it online either.

Lois: That's the transcript of your interview. Make it say what you want it to say and I will do it.

Larry: Well you can't tell. I might have said a few things just to set her off.

Lois: I could tell that. [Laughs]

Larry: I had a gal come here one time, it's been years ago now, talking about the North Fork, and boy I had her so mad by the time she left here. She was a rabid environmentalist.

Lois: Well, Debo has been around so long it's harder to get her goat than it used to be.

Larry: She's learning.

Lois: She's caught on, yeah.

Larry: I got her goat yesterday again though. Somebody said, "Oh, you're retired now?" She said, "Yeah." And something how hard, you know she was an educator for 25 years before that and I said, "Well everybody knows educators don't work." She was, "Well I was a principal, you know they work." I said, "Yeah, we had a principal once and he got 600-bucks a year extra over a teacher's salary and he always said that was just so he could afford to pay for the magazine subscription so he would have something to do in his office." [Laughs] There was a gal there yesterday that Julie Waylon knew. I was wondering if it was Amanda Walters.

Lois: Oh, Cornelius? Is that her name now?

Larry: Whatever it is, yeah.

Lois: Yeah, there were three of those Walter girls.

Larry: Two I think, Emily and Amanda?

Lois: And then there's Elizabeth.

Larry: Oh really?

Lois: Yeah, there's a third one.

Larry: Was she older or younger?

Lois: I don't know. Younger I presume. I came across her name somewhere and though oh, I guess there were three.

Larry: Emily and Amanda were the ones that were beneficiaries of Tom Reynolds. You know I'm really upset with the things I keep hearing that they've said about how Tom Reynolds' nephew cheated them out of money that they were supposed to get, and it's plainly not true. Of course Karen gets very defensive because she's pretty close with them. She gets really defensive. I said, "Well you know I'd talk to those girls any time and tell them," because it was not a matter of will, of his last will and testament. He had two bank accounts created with his name and Emily Walters with Right of Survivorship. And the other one was Tom Reynolds and his nephew with Right of Survivorship. That money went to them automatically. There was no will involved with them getting what he had intended for them. And he obviously didn't attend for the one that his name and his nephew's to go to the Walters' girls. There was no other money. That was his two big savings accounts. Although he had \$140 in his wallet when he died. But I'm thinking, you know he kept a certain amount of money for buying groceries and stuff. Sullivans always thought he was starving, but he wasn't.

Lois: Did he draw Social Security at all?

Larry: Yeah, he had Social Security and he had a Forest Service retirement. He wasn't rich, but for living up here he had plenty.

Lois: They didn't do direct deposit on those days.

Larry: No. The checks came to him and he would mail them to the bank.

Lois: That works.

Larry: Remember the last time he went to town, he had been up four or five years without being to town, and I think Baird Chrisman's sister took him to town.

Lois: Garnett, is that her name?

Larry: Garnett, yeah. He wanted to see a McDonald's, because he had all kinds of magazine subscriptions from Playboys to National Geographics. He came back from down there, I said, "Well, how was the trip to town?" He said, "Well, I guess it was okay. There's a lot of people down there." I said, "Well what did you think? Did you get to McDonald's?" "Yep." He says, "Now I know why they advertise so much." [Laughs]

Lois: Yeah. I remember those 15-cent burgers. My family lived in Columbus, Ohio, but my mother and father's family were both from Portsmouth down on the river, Portsmouth they called it. When we would go down three or four times a year we would go to the McDonald's and get either our 15-cent burgers or our 19-cent fish sandwich and that was our treat, and eating in the car on the way down to the river.

Larry: Yeah, old Tom was kind a character.

Lois: I'm sorry I didn't meet him, because he was still living when we were coming up here.

Larry: He stayed pretty well to himself. John Frederick called him a hermit in one of his columns and boy that got him upset. He didn't like John Frederick. But he was easily offended too.

Lois: But he was a musician. I would have liked to have known him just from the musician side and the British military side and some of his past histories.

Larry: I have a cassette of obo music that he recorded.

Lois: Really? An oboe is not one of the easier instruments to play.

Larry: No. That's what he was, an oboe player.

Lois: They can sound pretty awful if you don't know what you're doing. I have a friend in Columbus who is a bassoon player, and he teaches bassoon and he teaches classes in how to make your reeds and he really gets into it. And nowadays they play bassoon and you know how you do an electric guitar? They put a little thing there and put it out through the amp and they play jazz music and they do incredible things on bassoons that you never thought you could. My family we were musicians, but we had a bunch of musician jokes, like what's the difference between a bassoon and an oboe? The bassoon burns longer.

Larry: [Laughs]

Lois: And what's the difference between a bassoon and an onion? No one cries when you chop up the bassoon.

Larry: [Laughs]

Lois: An oboe or an onion. No one cries when you chop up the obo. Yeah.

Larry: Bill is going to be here at 4 and I'll pick up Becky on the way out, and we will go to [01:45:36].

Lois: We are going to [01:45:40].

Larry: Yeah, because that's where everybody else is going.

01:45:42 End