

Ivan_Windsheimer_Fall_2011

This interview was conducted by Linda Nelson.

Linda: North Fork History Project. My name is Linda Nelson. Today is October 17, 2011. I am here interviewing for the first time Ivan Windsheimer. This interview is taking place at 437½ Maple Drive, Kalispell, Montana. This interview is sponsored by the North Fork Landowners Association and is part of the North Fork History Project. Ivan nice to see you again. Tell us about your early background, where and when you were born.

Ivan: Born in western Nebraska where good people come from. Ed [Denamen 00:00:41] came from there and went to high school there, joined the navy, spent 4 years in the navy, then went to Washington State, was there until 1964 and I came to Montana.

Linda: So you came to the North Fork in 1964?

Ivan: That's the first time I visited the North Fork.

Linda: Why did you come to the North Fork?

Ivan: A guy who was working for me on the dairy, Wally Nolan, a lot of people know him, some don't, but his dad and [ma] Ted Ross was running the store and he wanted me to go see the North Fork. So we drove up here and it was right after the '64 flood so it was interesting.

Linda: Interesting in did you see a lot of flooding in the area?

Ivan: Well the flood was over but just seeing a new part of the country, and it was pretty rural then, more so than now.

Linda: What are some of those early memories? How rural was it? What did it look like?

Ivan: Well there wasn't near as many people up here and it was at a time when you could still buy an acre or two or three, put a little cabin on it and enjoy the summer or the year around if you wanted to, which is all gone now.

Linda: How much would that...?

Ivan: A few hundred dollars.

Linda: For an acre or two or three?

Ivan: Yep, that's all, at that time.

- Linda: What was it like when you say not many people?
- Ivan: Well, there weren't as many people North. There were quite a few but there more people around the store I guess, activity around the store than there is now, especially in the winter, a lot of activity around the store year around. Of course the post office was there, but the people they were all friends and a lot of parties, celebrated a lot of birthdays, Thanksgiving Christmas. Any excuse to get together people had a little party.
- Linda: What would you do at the store when everybody came in? Have coffee? Visit?
- Ivan: I don't think we had coffee. No, it was just a meeting place, a special meal we ate, always a lot of people there, and the people at the store they were well-known.
- Linda: I'm curious, did people shop at the store? Did they buy things at the store?
- Ivan: Yeah, I think there was a lot more going on then, oh yeah. Well you know the roads weren't good. They weren't nearly as good as they are now, just people didn't just hop in the car and go to town.
- Linda: As you think back to that period what other North Fork residents made an impression on you? It sounds like the people in the store maybe could you tell us about what they were like?
- Ivan: Ted Ross one of the pioneers – let's see, I went up in '64, Ted got the store in the 50s and he sold it in '66 I think, but he was one of the real... He knew a lot of history about it and he really loved the North Fork. As far as people Tom Lidenberg was interesting.
- Linda: How do you mean interesting?
- Ivan: Tom was a little redneck but he was a good one.
- Linda: Any other residents up there that impressed you?
- Ivan: Well there were a lot of people there I don't remember.
- Linda: Did you know any of the original homesteaders?
- Ivan: Well Ann Henson was the closest homesteader I think. Her dad homesteaded that Hampton Ranch down there, he and some other people, but most of the homesteaders were gone. I met a few and I don't remember any of their names anymore.
- Linda: Ann probably had a lot of stories to share with you.

Ivan: Yeah, Ann had a lot of stories.

Linda: Do you remember any of those stories?

Ivan: I don't repeat them.

Linda: Well let's go back. What was daily life like and how was it different from life in most parts of the country?

Ivan: Oh it wasn't any different than anywhere else. It was quiet. People minded their own business but they did visit.

Linda: And now the social life in the North Fork. It sounds like people had parties.

Ivan: That was part of it, that was the biggest part of it. Mary and I used to play cards and we skied and the hostel was always busy. We had a lot of parties in the hostel, drives in the park, pick huckleberries.

Linda: Did you can those huckleberries or do you remember making jam?

Ivan: We didn't can them. We had a little freezer in the refrigerator and froze them but we ate them by spring. We didn't keep them.

Linda: I remember you saying something about the hostel celebrated...everyone celebrated their birthday.

Ivan: Well not always at the hostel but yeah, that was pretty much the case. The bigger celebrations were Christmas that I remember and they had a few other things. John Frederick can remember what they were.

Linda: Would you celebrate at the hostel or at the hall?

Ivan: The hostel.

Linda: So it sounds like the hostel was the center of the community.

Ivan: It was down there, yeah.

Linda: Down in the meadow?

Ivan: Yeah.

Linda: Okay. Were you a member of any organizations in the North Fork?

Ivan: North Fork Improvement Association.

Linda: Tell us about that.

- Ivan: We went up just to visit people and get to know other people and by some quirk somebody nominated me to be on the committee and I was on the committee for 3 years. Didn't accomplish much but it was interesting just to talk to people. Used to argue about people coming up here. Even then there were some of the new people didn't want anybody else coming. But, and I remember especially Tom Lidenberg telling a guy, he says, "You know when you come up nobody shut the gate. Now you want to shut the gate on everybody. What right do you have to do that?" He was a lawyer but he didn't have an answer. [Chuckles] Everybody knows who he is.
- Linda: So you spent 3 years on the North Fork Improvement Association. What was the North Fork Road like?
- Ivan: Bad.
- Linda: How bad?
- Ivan: Well there were parts of it that really had water sitting in it almost all summer from snow run-off and rains, and Larry Wilson used to call part of it the big ditch, which was true, and it was rough. Sometimes it took a lot longer to get to town. The pavement was there but from there on it was bad. Then when they finally graded the road from the pavement up to where it goes into the park...
- Linda: Camas.
- Ivan: Camas, yeah, that part was good and the rest of it improved. The other parts that was really bad was out in front of Lidenberg's before they put the oil pavement in there. In the spring you could hardly get through there. ...Boils, when the water went out and the frost boils would come up and without a 4-wheel drive you could hardly get through there. People complained about holes and oil but I'll tell you it was a lot better than before they did that, a lot lot better. And the County Commissioner had enough guts...people then didn't want it paved but he said we're going to pave it and they did.
- Linda: How about the winter driving?
- Ivan: Well, the winter was like it is now. The road is the smoothest in the winter time. You know they plowed it. They plowed it more often probably than they do now. They used to have great big trucks plow it and there were two of them. They would clear to the water and back in a day. And they didn't use a grader usually very often until ice built up to where the trucks couldn't take it off I guess, but that was in the spring. But they plowed to where we lived and Mary used to bring out pie and coffee for them.
- Linda: For them? I bet they loved that.
- Ivan: Yeah, they called her the pie lady.

- Linda: The pie lady. [Laughs] How did you communicate with other North Forkers?
- Ivan: Well we had a CB that we could reach some of them. Up a little farther North they had...what did they use in the navy? Otherwise you just went and saw them.
- Linda: You would just go and visit them?
- Ivan: Yep.
- Linda: Stop in?
- Ivan: Yep. We played cards with quite a few people.
- Linda: So for fun it sounds like you had a lot of fun. What kind of cards?
- Ivan: Well Mary and I played with people who played pea knuckle mostly, and in the winter time they did have a poker circuit. I don't know if you knew about that.
- Linda: Poker?
- Ivan: Poker circuit. They would go to different places each week and play poker.
- Linda: Oh.
- Ivan: The women played... The women and men were separate. The women would go to one place and the men another, but the women gossiped more they played is what my wife told me.
- Linda: So would the women go to one house and the men would go to a different cabin?
- Ivan: Yep.
- Linda: Sounds like a good idea. You also talked about skiing. That was fun.
- Ivan: Yep, cross country skiing. Well just back and forth. I used to go up the river when it was frozen. I skied up and down that river for miles. It was just so quiet you couldn't hear... There wasn't a sound sometimes.
- Linda: Wooden skis I'll bet. Cross-country skis?
- Ivan: I snowshoed some too. I used to use snowshoes more than I used the skis then.
- Linda: Tell us about any of the major fires or floods or ice storms or any other major events.

- Ivan: Well the '88 fire was the biggest one for us.
- Linda: The '88 fire?
- Ivan: Yeah.
- Linda: Why? How did that affect you?
- Ivan: Well it burned everything but our cabin. We had two nice sheds and a garage and a lot of lumber that I was using and I planned to use for different things. It burned all that and we had one shed... We had a lot of things stored, things from Christmas and pictures and a lot of things we collected through the years. Of course that all burned, but they saved our house. There was a country fire truck. He had a 5,000-gallon tank and he parked down there and sprayed our cabin with water and without that it would have been done. The tree in front of the house was burned on one side and it wasn't 10 feet from the house, and all around the house within 15 to 20 feet it was black.
- Linda: Were you there during the fire?
- Ivan: Part of the time, yep.
- Linda: You stayed there and watched the fire approaching?
- Ivan: Yes we did. Well at first it went around. It went where the store was through that way and then it came back along the river. That's when it burned our place and it stopped right there. That's when they put some retardant and stop the fire there.
- Linda: In '88. How about floods?
- Ivan: Well the big flood was in '64 and that was before we came, about the first year we went out there, but there wasn't any big water then until '95. There was water but never very high, never got in our cabin until when was it, '95 or '96 when they had that big flood up there? That's when it got in the cabin but I wasn't there anymore.
- Linda: Ice storms.
- Ivan: I don't remember any ice storms. We had a lot of snow at times, had as much as 4 feet in the yard.
- Linda: I remember you telling me a story once about in the winter and you and Mary would go and sit out on the porch.
- Ivan: We did. We used to go out there and bundle up. When the snow came straight down, it didn't blow much there. She used to go out and feed the birds at least

twice a day and we didn't walk it three times or four. I could just see her. I had paths to the birdfeeder and to where we parked our cars out by the road, but I could just see her head bobbing through. [Laughs] And the deer cleaned up under the birdfeeders for us. They were around the year. The mule deer in the winter time and the whitetail in the summer. They changed. There are a lot of mule deer and we would see a hawk every now and then. There were quite a few. They all used to go through towards the river. I don't know where they went but we hear them more than we could see them.

Linda: Are there any other important events that you remember from those days up at the North Fork? Any special event or special Christmas or special birthday?

Ivan: We spent our anniversary up in the Northern Lights. Karen Feather always cooked us a nice steak and brought it to us. Yep, that was a...

Linda: Would that be every anniversary?

Ivan: No, only a few of them.

Linda: Nice. Leadership.

Ivan: The people that I knew that I liked, Lee Downs and Tom Lidenberg and Bob Olsen, Ted Ross, Ann Henson, people that I know.

Linda: Were they considered leaders of the community?

Ivan: Well to some extent.

Linda: In any particular way? How would they be a leader?

Ivan: Well Lee Downs he had some connections with the police force in town. Still does I guess.

Linda: Now we all know there have been a number of characters up at the North Fork. Can you tell us and give your recollection of some of the North Fork characters that have either passed through or lived there? Ivan again some characters of the North Fork, there have been many characters who have either passed through or lived there. I remember you telling me sometime about one in particular that lived down in the meadow. Can you tell us about that character?

Ivan: Well, he married a doctor's daughter that owned the land and the first time I met him I walked over there because they were just a young couple and we decided we would see if we could be friends with him and he was not civil at all, but we became pretty good friends afterward and they came over and we played cards with them quite often. We had told them the first year they were there they were living in the old cabin. They hadn't built that house and we told them they ought to plug the cracks in the cabin because it was going to get

cold. And she said, “Well dad they don’t want us to do anything to it.” Well I said put cardboard in the inside at least, but I don’t know, they might have covered it up some. But that winter was the winter it got down to 40 below 0 for 4 days in a row. After the first night they came over and they wondered if they could stay with us because it got colder, and she said about midnight the first she could hear all the jars, the canned food starting to crack and break. But anyway, they stayed with us a couple of nights and went to the hostel one night. Yeah, he decided to be a minister. He went to some convention and come back, put up a tent and there used to be a few people there. We went once or twice. Karen Feather went. I know I saw her there. Anyway, one night it burned. The wind took the tent down and it burned and all candles was scattered everywhere. Of course he was the one that eventually...I guess he said he did it but we all knew that he did.

Then when they started another church up, there was a building right at the end of Skyline Drive and started one in there and it wasn’t long and it burned down. It was about 4 o'clock in the morning and [Sheppie] came around to alert everybody. They lived right near there. We looked at each other and I says you know what, are you thinking what I’m thinking? And [Upton 00:17:49] says [yeah] and we all felt that he did. [Chuckles] Yeah, he did a bunch of crazy things and killed a bunch of...[00:18:01] John Fredericks. He said the bear killed him but he was the culprit. I don’t know if John ever got anything out of that or not. He made life interesting for a while, 2 or 3 years anyway.

Linda: Was he there long?

Ivan: Not too many years. After he left, he went down to Texas, he left his wife high and dry. He took the money out of bank and went to Texas, back to where he was from. And a year or two later I was at the store and a guy from Texas came in and he asked Chris he says...he wanted to know where this fellow was, and she said he’s gone. He asked a few questions but she didn’t really want to give him much information I guess. He went outside so I says, “Did you know this guy?” He says, “Yeah. I worked at a [00:19:02] pump with in Texas.” Well I said that’s interesting and he said, “I heard he was kind of a firebug.” I says, “Well I guess he was. I know before he got here he burned a trailer down in Washington State.” He said, “Well I believe it. When he was working at the [00:19:22] pump plant we had a high conveyer and it had a net underneath but we told everybody don’t touch that and be real careful when you’re up there.” He says, “One morning here was this guy down there laying on the floor. His back was hurting and hurting so they sent him to the doctor and this doctor says, “Well you know, you really can’t always tell how bad a man’s back is hurt,” but he says, “I can’t find one single thing wrong with this one.” So they kind of confronted him with it, “Well it’s getting better.” So he went back to work then he said little fires began to creep up here and there and

everywhere and he was always the first one there to put them out. Pretty soon they finally caught him. He was setting the fire to get attention I guess.

And he told a story about a wife and 2 daughters that burned up on a river in Texas. They found out that was all bogus; it never happened, but he was telling everybody the story. Then he was telling a story about he had a broken pelvis that never healed and her dad, his wife's dad was a doctor but he would never let him examine him but when his father-in-law wasn't there he could walk pretty darn good, but when he was there he had quite a limp. [Laughs]

Then he was working at a meat facility, a packing facility in Washington and he told everybody a cow stepped on his foot and tried to get insurance. And he almost got in real trouble. The name he was using, and it escapes me now, the FBI came to see him one day and he was using a guy's name that was in trouble with the IRS. [Laughs] So he had quite a time explaining himself out of that. He had picked the wrong name. Larry Wilson can tell you... Well not Larry, I guess Lee Downs can tell you a story how he did a lot of funny things around the new cabin, but yeah, it was interesting. He was probably pretty famous for a while.

Linda: Any other characters come through?

Ivan: Oh I don't know. Some people thought Tom Lidenberg was but I liked Tom. We visited not a lot, but he and my wife were good... My wife and his wife were real good friends and we visited quite a bit and she used to go down and see her, but Tom was really good when I sold my place and had to move out of there. Didn't have place to put a lot of the things I had. He told me bring them out and put them in the barn and he wouldn't take a nickel for it. We were...and he gave me support when my wife died. He and Karen Feather and Robin Cox. Nobody would have thought probably they were the people that would support you, but I got more support from them than anybody else.

Linda: How many years did you and Mary live in the North Fork?

Ivan: Well, '64...

Linda: You came in '64?

Ivan: Well that's when we moved up here. We had been building the cabin for years, and until 1991 I guess.

Linda: She died in...?

Ivan: '93, but we moved. We spent a year there and went to Washington for a year and came back, spent a year. Spent a year there in our cabin and then moved out, sold it and moved down to the valley in order for her to get better treatment. She had cancer.

- Linda: It sounds like you had some good friends who were there to be with you.
- Ivan: Well Ed [00:23:48] and Lee Downs and Tom [Sutter], Robin Cox, they were people that would come around any time and they knew I was alone so even in the winter time somebody would show up every now and then. And when...well there were a few other people, but they were the ones that kept track of me. And as far as that goes Paul [Rikeri] did too. He used to come up a lot and he...ate a good many meals at his place, many many many.
- Linda: Whose place was this?
- Ivan: Paul [Rikeri].
- Linda: Oh yes.
- Ivan: Yeah. But they were up there every month for years and I saw them all.
- Linda: Now when you mention some of these people I think about you caretaking. I know you spent a lot of time caretaking in the North Fork after you sold your cabin.
- Ivan: Well in the winter time I stayed at the one that Robin [00:24:56] owned and what's the guy at the store? At John O'Hara's cabin would have been in the winter time and Ann Henson's place in the summer time. And Ann Henson's place of course was quite remote but I really liked it there and Tom came by quite often. They all did to see me and it had some real [00:25:23] there but the thing... It was so peaceful and so quiet I used to stay about 5 or 6 months. One year I stayed until...I was going to stay until Thanksgiving time and a day or two before it started to snow and I thought well I'll go out tomorrow, but the next day the snow was too deep to get out. But Ed [00:25:50] and Morris came down they chained up...had chains on all four wheels. They got in there and made a good track and I followed them out, but I had been in there a long while without someone coming, but they knew I was there so they helped me out.
- Linda: You mentioned animals and you had some close encounters at the Henson place with bears?
- Ivan: Yeah, more encounters with animals than I did humans. One of them was at the cabin we lived in. One night it was noisy outside and we always heard some noises but didn't pay any attention, but it became more consistent and finally I told my wife I better go out and see what that is. It was dark. I took a 3-cell flashlight with me and I opened the kitchen door and we had an enclosed porch that was screened in. A black bear had his head through the door, the screen door. So I hit it over the head, hit it over the nose with my flashlight. Well he backed off and we had a little deck out there. He sat on the deck and I thought well what am I going to do with him now? But I had a little pellet gun

there that I was shooting gophers with so I pumped it up and he just sat there. I hit him in the belly and all he did was grunt, but he walked off. Mary says, "Well what happened?" I said, "Well he's gone I think," and I told her what I did and she looked out of the kitchen window and the lights in the kitchen window went to our birdfeeder, and here he was eating birdfeed off my birdfeeder. So I got my 22 and she says, "You aren't going to shoot it are you?" I said, "No, but I'm going to scare it." So I just cracked the kitchen door open and I shot across his head as close as I could. That bear took off. We were several hundred yards from the river but we could hear it clear through the brush, we could hear it when it hit the water in the river. [Laughs] It made a lot of noise. I don't know, I might have skimmed it, but I know that bear never came back. But anyway, I hit him over the head...in the nose with the flashlight.

Then another black bear encounter we had one night we could hear screaming and it was just like some children screaming really loud, and just a little ways from the cabin. We went out and it took us a long time, but here were two cubs, black bear cubs up in the tree and they wouldn't come down, so we told the fish & game the next day and they came and got them, but they sounded just like some kids screaming.

But anyway I had a mountain lion encounter. Mary and I were walking down through and there were some deer. You know how they will snort and dig with their feet when they are excited and a couple of doe were really raising cane and the rest of them ran off. Well we decided we would go down and see what... We figured there was a bear in the woods. We went down to see the bear I guess. We were on the old North Fork Road. There was a trail there and we were on that and there was a tree right at the end of it and I went around one side and the mountain lion met me on the other. We were probably not more than 6 or 7 feet apart.

Linda: Gee.

Ivan: I don't know how big he was. He looked really big. [Laughs] I looked at him. I said, "Well you better get the heck out of here," so he just trotted down that other road and I thought oh, Mary is coming down there, now what am I going to do? But she was right behind me and she gave me the dickens for not keeping him there so she could take a picture, and I guess she expected me to rope him, but... Anyway, then we had another mountain lion that was around one winter and we only saw her once or twice, but we saw the cub quite often. But the tracks were there every time there was new snow. She had been around, but she didn't bother anything, didn't break into anything. I don't know where she was dened up at, but we saw her tracks a lot.

And then another time my son and his wife were there and the kids were probably 2 or 3 or 4 years old. We were sitting on the porch in the evening and

they had just got there. It was just dusk. At the end of the driveway there was a mountain lion ran across and it was a big one. They were out there and I thought boy that's pretty... We talked about it. The next morning Sam says, "All right, we're going home," and my wife says, "Well you just got here, you've got to stay a few days." He says, "We're not going to stay with animals like that around," [laughs] so they left.

But anyway, one of the encounters when I was staying at Ann Henson's I had just come home from town one evening and there's a little road that runs between the house and a grove of [aspen 00:31:03] and I had parked across the far side on the road. I carried one sack of groceries into the house and come out for another sack and Robin Cox drove up. So we were standing not far from my car talking, heard a sound in the brush and looked over and Robin says, "There's 3 cubs climbing a tree there." The trees in... aspen they were pretty big. He says, "They're grizzlies." I said, "Well I don't think they're grizzly climbing a tree." He said, "They can until they're 2 years old." But anyway, we watched them a minute and then the old [sal] stood up and I took one look at her and I thought well I can't make it to the house if she wants me but I think I can make it to the car. She woofed and the cubs came down and she took off, they followed her. I looked over at Robin and I said, "What was you thinking?" He said, "I sure hoped your car wasn't locked." [Laughs] We weren't 3 car lengths from her. I mean she was close, not more than 25 or 30 feet and she was a good size. And she lost all those cubs by fall. Fish & game says one of them was run over, somebody shot one, and I don't recall what happened to the other one but they said she had lost them all by fall. Not too often they have triplets, once in a while. But they had her, called her and said they knew who she was.

And then another grizzly one evening came up to the cabin and my wife told me, "There's a grizzly walking up here." We'll watch and we'll see. That's when we had all the flowers out in front. So I went to get my 22 and I said, "I don't care what he does, but if he touches those flowers he's minced meat." [Laughs] Well she went out on the porch. She wasn't 10 feet from him and took a couple of pictures, but when he heard the film advance, the little noise he took off and went to the road out in front, not very fast. But as it turned out she didn't have film in the camera and boy was she mad. It would have been a picture...but he just sniffed the flowers and he left. [Laughs]

Oh this is quite a story. Karen the mail lady, I don't know what her last name is anymore, but the gal that delivers the mail.

Linda: Yes.

Ivan: She's got a place up there not far, where Kent used to live.

Linda: Two doors from Kent, where Kent used to live, yeah.

Ivan: She didn't have it then, but it was that place. The only thing there then was a travel trailer somebody had up there and it had dog food in it. Well a grizzly had broken in there a couple of times and ate the food and wouldn't leave the trailer alone anymore. So they called the people up there that monitor the bears and so they decided they would tranquilize the bear. So a couple of them got up on top of the trailer and tranquilized the bear but the bear went out in the woods at least 100 yards or more before it dropped and it was a pretty good size. Well they couldn't do nothing with it and they didn't want to leave it there. So Tom [Sutter] and I were having supper with Carey Fowler that night, or [Fowler Carey] and he was doing the cooking. He was just getting ready to put the food on and the 3 guys with the fish & game I guess they were came in and they said, "We need some help to get that grizzly out of there." They told us what happened, so we all [00:34:54]. Went up there and had a tarp and we rolled this grizzly, he was still tranquilized, onto the tarp and if you think grizzlies don't stink, you probably heard did, this one did. Boy it was loud. But anyway, we couldn't quite carry it but there was 6 of us so we drug it. We got to this little trailer and Fowler says, "Well go get your pick-up now." And he says, "Well you've got a gate to put here. We don't care to come in here with that gate shut." So we had to drag it another 50 or 100 yards down to the pick-up. Well we finally got it into the pick-up and they had some old pulls and we got it in there.

Well then they had a bear trap setting down on Ann Henson's place. He says, "Well you guys go down there and we're going to put this bear in the bear trap. So we got down there and the darn thing started to come to. [Laughs] So they had to tranquilize it. We had to wait and we got it loaded into the bear trap finally. We had supper at 11 or 12 o'clock at night and we had supper at Fowler's, all 6 of us. We really had a good time.

Linda: What a story. Ivan can you share a little bit about the hostel? I know you had some stories about how it started or how it got there.

Ivan: Well, when we was getting buildings from the old MacFarland Ranch and part of it was what he built the hostel with. Wally moved at least 4 different buildings from there. But anyway, at the time that I was building my cabin that's when John Fredericks came up and bought the hostel from Wally. But Wally built it... The main part was there first then he moved another building and made the kitchen part and added onto it.

Linda: Wally had a family, correct?

Ivan: Yep. He had 4 kids or 5 kids I guess.

Linda: You knew him at the time?

Ivan: Oh Wally was a real good friend of mine. We were close friends. He worked for me on the dairy.

Linda: Tell us about the dairy a little bit. You had a dairy?

Ivan: I managed what they called the [Grosswilers] Dairy for 14 years and Wally was one of the people that worked for me for a long time. We had at that time the largest dairy in Montana. We had up to 750 cows, dairy cows. I started a milking time that other people had never tried before and we milked at noon and midnight, and I had a good reason. By milking if I started in the morning if anybody had gone out on the town they didn't come to work and I had to round somebody else up to get the cows milked or do it myself or help them do it. So I decided well it would be a lot easier if I had them come at midnight and at noon and it worked out real well. We did that for quite a few years.

The last few years I had 5 girls working for me milking the cows and they did pretty good. They weren't probably the best milkers I had but they were the most reliable ones. They were there every time. I didn't have to worry about them. But it was quite a...

Linda: Where was the dairy?

Ivan: West Valley, about 7 miles or 8 miles out of town.

Linda: Out of Kalispell. Ivan can you tell us a little bit about huckleberry picking?

Ivan: Yeah, a couple of things. [Babe 00:39:03] went picking a few times and we were up there one time and we had gone up to the notch where the lookout was anyway, and you know we started to pick. We had gone down this old logging road first and we had gone up on the side picking and [00:39:26]. Finally we had our buckets about full and we decided time to go home. Babe says, "Well you know we're in the right place, this is the road." So we started, we didn't go very far and I says, "Babe this isn't the road we came up on." "Oh yes it is." I said, "Well I did not climb these big logs." He looked at them and he says, "Well you're right, we didn't," and he stood out there and we looked around a minute. He says, "Well I know where we are, this is where I got lost yesterday." "What?" He says, "Well I did." He says, "This is where I got lost. I know where we are. We cross over [00:40:01]. We come down to that road and it will lead us up to where we left the car." It was quite a walk but we made it. [Laughs]

Mary and I went up there about the same vicinity huckleberry picking one fall and we each had a little whistle we could alert each other if we needed to. Once this whistle went off and I could hear her yelling. Oh man she must have run into a bear or something. So I got over there and she had stopped on a rotten log. Her bucket was clear full of berries, but she had stepped on this

rotten log and spilled the berries and she was mad. And I'll tell you she picked up those berries and I'll bet there wasn't 1 or 2 she didn't find. She found them all. She says, "I picked them; I'm going to take them home." [Laughs]

Linda: And then you had another story about you and Ned's dad. Not sure about that one? Ivan I'm not sure if you want to share anything about your navy days?

Ivan: Not particularly.

Linda: I'm sure you've seen a lot of changes in the North Fork over time. Is there anything you want to share about those changes?

Ivan: Well the roads got better.

Linda: Yes.

Ivan: A lot better. Didn't always [00:41:31] a lot better. I'm one of the people that wanted that road paved. A lot of people...not a lot of people, but some of them thought too many people would come over, but they come up anyway. I don't think it would have made any difference, but it sure would have been a lot easier on the cars and going back and forth. And the people that came up in later years were people that were able to build most of the time nice houses and a lot of them brought up all the conveniences they had in time – washers and dryers and dishwashers. The only thing that was any different they didn't have people going down up in front of the house I guess. But that was their right to come, but I've met some really nice people too, a lot of them I knew and some of them I didn't. But the big change is you can't buy an acre or two of ground anymore. Maybe that's good. I don't know.

And the one thing I did not like after we sold our place they wouldn't let us vote in the association anymore. I didn't particularly like that because there were quite a few people up there that lived there. I didn't own any land but that's all right. It's a different environment now. The people that are around the store don't seem to visit with the people up North. A lot of the old timers are gone now – Ann Henson, Tom Lidenberg, the MacFarlands.

Linda: Well Ivan I want to thank you for sharing your North Fork memories with us. I truly and honestly appreciate the time you've given us. The stories will be remembered by all of us, all the new folks that are there. I think we treasure your memories more than you'll ever know and we appreciate that. Thank you again.

00:43:53

[End of recording]