Coffee with Larry Wilson, June 12, 2024

Larry: I guess we should start. In thinking about this, it has always amazed me—and more and more as the years pass—how fascinated we are with the homesteaders. We think a lot about them, and we have nothing in common with them. We see the same mountains and the same trees, but the way they lived here was totally unrelated to the way we live here. When I came here, I bought this place for $10 an acre from Tom Reynolds. He bought it from the county for $1 an acre, so he was happy, too. The only structure left on the place was that little cabin behind us. This place was homesteaded by a fellow named Ed Rue. He moved up here with his wife and two toddlers. They must have stayed long enough to prove up, because they owned it. That's why I like to start here. This was probably one of the least successful homesteads on the North Fork, and we're going to go down to Kintla Ranch, which was one of the most successful.

Ed Rue expected his neighbors to help him. Up here that was kind of the way things went. They would have a barn raising or whatever, and everyone would show up to help. I'll tell you one of the funnier stories involving Matt Brill about help. Ed talked to Matt Brill, who had a team of horses. Ed wanted Matt to help him skid logs in to build a bigger horse. Matt said, "Sure." One of those logs still lays out here. You can't see it from here, but it's pretty rotten now, because this was in the 1930s. Matt was walking alongside the team, pulling a great big larch. He looked back and Ed was sitting on the log. Matt said, "You know, these horses are working hard enough pulling the log. They don't need you as added weight, so get off the log." With the second log, he looked back and Ed was on the log again. Matt just unhitched his horses and said, "You obviously don't need my help," and he left. And Ed never built the house.

There was a four-foot deep hole over here that he used as a root cellar. There's no water on this property except for a spring seep just over the hill here. You can't drink it—it stinks. I presume they used it for other things.

Lois Walker: What did they do for water?

Larry: He packed it, I guess, like I did when I came here.

Lois: Out of the river?

Larry: I usually carried it from Trail Creek.

Lois: Did he farm? Did he raise food?

Larry: Nobody knows. He was gone by the time any of us came, and this meadow in front of the cabin didn't exist. It was all aging lodgepole. We cut 12,000 lodgepole posts out of that meadow.

Bonnie Hankey: Is that where your business came from?

Larry: No, that's when I bought my business. Actually, we cut posts up here and sold them to the business that I then bought. We had chips down the middle of the road, when they brought their peeler up here. The chips were four feet deep, in a row, so you couldn't drive in. When we burned the chips, we activated the Forest Service for 100 miles around, because it was all green chips, and we had a row 200 yards long, putting a plume into the air.

Lois: If Rue proved up, there would be a record at the county of what he did in order to qualify as having proved up. So many miles of fencing, so many acres under cultivation, so many animals, etc.

Larry: It doesn't show in the property record, because I went down and looked at that. It went from the U.S. Government to Ed Rue, to the county, to Tom Reynolds, to me. I ended up with half of this homestead at one point, and I sold 40 acres to Lynn Ogle. So, I have 40 and he has 40. The other 80 now belongs to Gary Byers, and he will sell you 40 acres of it, with very nice buildings on it, for $2.5 million.

Lois: When did Bart Monahan come?

Larry: Bart Monahan was the homesteader at what is now Chrisman's. He was like many people today. He was retired when he came here. He was a Secret Service agent. He retired and wanted to get away from people, so up here he came. The Chrisman's little cabin was where he lived. He was a very interesting character and a favorite among the kids. When I came here I was 10, and he was one of the people you always wanted to visit, because he a great big spy glass you could use to look at the mountains. And he had interesting stories.

Jan Caldwell: Did he ever mention what timeframe he worked in Washington, D.C.?

Larry: No, he never talked about that. He wouldn't talk about that. He didn't want to talk about it. But he did tell other stories. He only changed underwear once a year, and the kids all thought that was really neat. He wore red long johns, ankle to neck. When he put them on, he sewed the front shut, so he couldn't get out of them. The trap door still worked, and the bottom button opened. He would do this on the first hot day in May. He would build a fire out under his overhang and throw the old underwear into the fire. He would take a bath and put on the new underwear. His little cabin was smaller than this one, really. It was a very small cabin, with a very small stove in it.

David Silverstein: Isn't that the one with the porch on it?

Larry: Yes, it had a big overhang, but Chrismans have turned it into an actual screened-in porch. When Bart was there, it was just an open area where he stacked his wood, so it was right available. But you didn't want to go into his house, because the only thing he burned was lodgepole, and he never washed. If you put your hand on his bedding, it was black. Everything was black. It was like the whole cabin was painted shiny black.

Lois: Needless to say, he was not married.

Larry: No, he was not married. He had a Model T truck. He used to walk through here to go to the mailboxes on the main road. Then in later years, he went straight over the hill to the main road to get his mail. He didn't care so much about the mail as he did that the mailman would bring him two bottles of booze every week. So, he filled garbage pits along the way with empty booze bottles. If you go out here yet, where the old dump was, you can probably find bottles.

Jan: They would be antique bottles now.

Lois: Did he have a car or a vehicle?

Larry: He had a car. It was in the barn locked up, and he never drove it when I knew him. He was too old and crippled, I think. It was a major deal to walk out to get his mail.

Lois: How did he get his food?

Larry: The mailman. That's how the mailman really made his living, bringing stuff for the people who were living up here. You have to remember that this road was not plowed. If

somebody got sick, like when Austin Weikert's father died up here, it took five days to get his body to town. They loaded him on a dogsled and went in stages to town.

Lois: And didn't Matt Brill had appendicitis at one point?

Larry: Yes, but he had enough airstrip space down there that they landed a small plane with skis and took him out. But you can imagine how tightly locked up this country was. When you think of the kind of cars that they had in the 1930s, and the kind of roads there were, which were not plowed at all. I can remember when I was in college we would go to visit Madge and Ollie Terrian at Moose City at the border. They had a winter's supply of food all in the house, and they had to have it in there by October 15, because it could snow anytime after that. Some years it didn't, but some years it did. You could hardly get up the stairs to their second story, because there were bags of flour and beans and sugar.

Lois: The North Fork Road wasn't completed to the border until 1920. So, there was no road in the early days. So, why were there so many homesteaders up here in the north end of the North Fork? All the people out on Trail Creek and up to the border.

Larry: Homesteading in the North Fork came in two waves. There were the early ones who came around 1910, and I really didn't know any of them. They had died or sold out by the time I was up here.

Bonnie: Where did they come from?

Larry: They came from all over for free land. That's why people homesteaded. Matt Brill showed up here with a double-bitted axe and $2 in his pocket from Milwaukee. That's what he had when he got off the train at Columbia Falls. They came here for free land, and the early homesteaders all homesteaded inside what is now Glacier Park. It was really logical. It was all open land. Big Prairie was prairie land then, too. You didn't have to do as much work to prove up. When the second wave came in the 1920s, like Frank Wurtz—his place was all full of big timber. He had no chance of clearing the land to meet the requirements, so they forgave them and he didn't have to do it. He had a garden and a lot of stumps.

Lorna Rittenburg: What did they have to do to prove up?

Larry: The original requirements were that you had to clear so much land and live for so long on the property. You could be here in the summer and leave in the winter, and that's what the later homesteaders by and large did. You had to build so much fence and show that you really wanted to live there.

Lois: You had to farm so much land, or have so many acres under cultivation.

Larry: Yes, but on the North Fork there was no farming, really. They tried different things, but the only thing that really grew up here was hay. Then when you had hay, the next logical crop was cattle. Try driving a cow from here to Missoula and see how profitable that works out to be.

Lois: That's why they shot every bear or predator that came on the property.

Larry: Yes, the original homesteaders shot every predator—birds, wolves, animals.

[More people arrive]

Larry: Okay, shall we start again?

Lois: I would like to know more about the three brothers who came up here—Ed, Emil, and Axel Peterson.

Larry: There's not much more to tell about them. They all homesteaded north of here. Their homesteads all became part of the [Helen and Orville] Foreman property. They had a place on Mud Lake, a place overlooking the river, and I forget where the third one was.

Lois: Where did they come from, I wonder?

Larry: I don't know. If you think about it, all of the homesteaders who came here were poor as dirt. They had nothing.

Lois: Peter Moore's uncles, all four of them, came out here together from Minneapolis. They had all served in the Army in World War I, I think. But for some reason they came, and the three Peterson brothers came. Like you say, looking to make their way with the free land.

Larry: Some came to make a living, but most of them were unlike us. We're mostly retired folks. They were coming to get free land and hoping to make a living. Try making a living up here.

Joyce O'Hara: We all have tried!

Lois: And not much chance of meeting a woman up here.

Larry: There were certain limitations. In the case of the homesteaders, Matt Brill started a guest ranch. The [Jack and Mary] McFarland ranch didn't become a dude ranch until after World War II. Other homesteaders made a living up here, either working for somebody else in town during the winter and working on their place up here in the summer, or they failed.

Lois: Or they worked for the Park or the Forest Service.

Larry: Yes, the first homesteading group, as we mentioned, settled in what became the Park. After it became Glacier Park, the Great Northern Railroad set up a series of big hotels to promote rail travel. Those homesteaders did very well, because they organized pack trips for the new tourists who were coming out on the railroad. If you go the archives in the Park, you'll see there were camps way back in the back country. With tables and linens and amenities. There were no paper napkins at those tables.

Joyce: They were entertaining dignitaries.

Larry: Yes, they were.

Lois: People who could afford to come here on vacation.

Larry: Those homesteaders who first came promoted Glacier Park, like Grinnell and Vaught. Did you know that L.O. Vaught was a Foreman? Mount Vaught at the head of Lake McDonald is named for him. He was one of the early ones who came to Kelly Camp.

Lois: Uncle Vaughty, as Helen Foreman called him.

Larry: Yes, Uncle Boppy. The Foremans bought the Peterson homesteads in 1947. Uncle Vaughty was still alive at that time. They were trying to get his papers organized. He was a real tall, rangy guy. I don't how old he must have been by that time. He was all stooped over and walked with a cane. Helen would sit with him for hours, putting his papers together, and they never completed it. I don't know where his papers are today. Then Helen died, and now all of her kids are dead—Mike, Connie, Margaret.

Lois: We talked about Bart Monahan and Ed Rue. What do you know about Frank Clute?

Larry: Not too much. His place was just south of the border. The one who was interesting, I thought, was Paul Abbott, for whom Abbott's Flats is named. He came up here with Matt Brill. They were buddies, and they homesteaded side by side. And they were smart, thinking guys. They staked out 20-acre blocks along the river, so their properties were stair-stepped right along the river. The two homesteads, 320 acres, constituted five miles of river front. They knew what was coming. But Paul then got married. That can be good or bad, depending on where you're at, and I'm not going to comment on anybody here. But the gal he married did not want to be up here. So, he sold his homestead to Matt Brill. Then Matt had 320 acres along the river. And every other homestead, like Rue, who failed, Matt would come in and either try to buy it cheap, or he would take his stone boat and his team, in the fall after the first snow, and go to all the abandoned homesteads and retrieve the glass windows, any lumber that he could get, and even pull the nails out of the walls. That's what he and Mata used to build a new cabin every year. When you walk around down there today, you'll notice that there are no two windows the same size. Interestingly, Matt thought this property was too far from the river, so the properties that he got are all closer to the river than this one.

Lois: How about Charlie Waters?

Larry: Chubb's place, yes.

Lois: All I've heard is that he and his wife did a lot of business during Prohibition. They were right along the road, of course.

Larry: Those stories are all either exaggerated or plain not true. Charlie Waters may have done that, I don't know. But try to find someone who was an actual customer. Madame Queen [Mary Powell] was supposedly running a whorehouse at Mud Lake. Try to find a customer there!

Joyce O'Hara: That house is now owned by Jeff Bridges, the actor.

Jan Caldwell: The director of the movie gave him that cabin, I heard. They hauled it down to his ranch in Livingston.

Joyce: Jeff Bridges added onto it and made it a mansion. He lives in it.

Larry: Is this one that Michael Cimino owned? That they used in the movie "Heaven's Gate"?

Joyce: I don't remember, but John will remember all that.

Lois: There was no whorehouse at Mud Lake. Mary Powell was just living there.

Larry: Mary Powell, allegedly, did sell a lot of illegal booze. And her daughter moved out here with her and had an illegitimate baby. That started the whorehouse story. But who was the papa? And finally they all left. One of Mary Powell's daughters came here once, wanting to see where her mother lived and where the Billy Kruse murder happened. I used to get a Christmas card from her every year. Who knows the truth. We all have secrets, don't we? I don't, but maybe you do.

Joyce: It depends on from whom.

Larry: I really discount most of those stories of whorehouses. There weren't enough people here to support a whorehouse.

Joyce: Maybe Cimino had it built and simulated a whorehouse.

Larry: Cimino did build a whorehouse, but that was up Tepee Lake Road.

Joyce: You're right. This one was up Tepee Lake Road.

Larry: Right. That wasn't a real whorehouse. But I have the finger lamp that the madame used in Cimino's whorehouse.

Joyce: Me and Sweet Rachel [Rachel Sweet] and my daughter Capella were actually in that movie. Remember when they were throwing the dust down at Rachel's property? Which is now owned by the Boyds and the Bensons.

Lois: Actually, Benson sold out to the Boyds and they own the whole place now.

Larry: You have to factor in the road, which was almost impassable. At least half of the homesteaders traveled it by horse and wagon. A 1925 Model T is not something you want to run to Columbia Falls in to buy groceries. Esther Day once told me that when she was 8 years old, she got the best Christmas present she ever got. Guess what it was.

David Silverstein: An orange.

Larry: You're heard the story. It was an orange. It was that rare to have fresh fruit up here. And they spent whatever winters they could in town, if they could find a place where they could stay for free and maybe get paid a little. The men would trap a little, maybe, in the fall and winter. That was about the only cash they ever saw.

Lois: And Bill Adair would buy the pelts from them and then sell them in town when he had a load.

Larry: You had to get out and search for your own. You couldn't afford to go to a whorehouse. It just isn't logical that there would be one up here.

Lois: Speaking of Tepee Lake Road, what do you know about Adelbert Glover and the Glover homestead?

Larry: Of all the homesteaders on the North Fork, I think the Glover homestead is the only one still in the original homestead family. There may be others, but that one I'm sure of. [Peter Moore and Ruth Tacheny would be another.] The original homestead house is there. It's kind of a rare thing, because it's pretty small, but it's two story. All of the family carved their names on the walls of the front porch. It's neat to see. You can kind of see the history, because Felicia Glover signed it, then she became Felicia somebody else, and then another name. She had at least two husbands, and she signed it three times. That family was pretty prolific. I think the last time I checked, there were about a dozen direct relatives, and they share ownership in it.

Joyce: That's cool they've held onto it.

Larry: We patrol it.

Lisa Gallagher: How old is it, I wonder?

Larry: 1914, I think. But I've met multiple Glovers in there at different times. There's one group of young guys who come from Washington State to snowmobile in the winter. And there's a lady Glover who comes from the Flathead Valley in the summer to clean up the mess that the Glovers

from Washington make. Her story is that they can't cook anything without grease, so she has to scrub the ceilings and the walls and everything.

Lois: How about Earl Ryan?

Larry: Earl Ryan was the postman up here for years and years. His original homestead was what is now owned by Paul Marotz. Later he moved down and lived behind where Jon and Pat Elliott [John and Pat Cole probably] live. But he was gone by the time I got here.

Lois: The question is, why did all these homesteaders settle up here? You had settlement down in Polebridge and around that area, and then all the settlers up here. The answer is: before it became the Park, the Inside Road came all the way up to Kintla Lake. They'd come all the way north and then cross the river. They settled all the way out Trail Creek.

Larry: It actually went further north than that, all the way to the border. The answer is simple. The biggest thing you need in any homestead is what? Potable water. And Trail Creek provided that access. And Whale Creek to a lesser degree, but for some reason that first steep bank stopped them. So, they stayed on level ground up Trail Creek.

Lois: Dick Woodmansee was clear out there at the end of Trail Creek Road. There were quite a few homesteads.

Larry: It was kind of funny, because Ed Peterson shot and killed Billy Kruse up here in 1932, in a fight over a woman. Billy Kruse had advertised for her and got her out of a Heart and Hands magazine. She came, and they spent the winter together at what is now Dick Leigh's property. In the spring, Billy had a job as a sheep herder on the East Side, so he asked his good friend, Ed Peterson, to look out for Mary [Powell]. And he did. He had just finished building a second-generation homestead house on Mud Lake. It's a nice two-story log house. He moved out of it and gave it and five acres to Mary [actually, he sold it to her a little later]. Billy came back in the fall, and he was known on the North Fork as (a) a drunk and (b) a man with a very bad temper. She had received a letter from him that he was coming back, so she got out of there. That's one thing I know about Charlie Waters. That's where she went, to stay with Charlie and his wife and was gone from the house.

Here came Billy, and the cabin was cold. What was he to do? He was to go see his good buddy Ed Peterson, who had promised to watch out for Mary, to see what had happened.

Lois: I don't think there was anything between Ed and Mary. He was just being a good neighbor.

Larry: Who knows. There's many ways to be a good neighbor. So, Billy went up there. He accosted Ed Peterson, who was staying in his original homestead house on the lake. Mary's house was cold, of course, because she'd gone to Charlie's. But Ed also had a young fellow there who was helping him trap. He was related to somebody else up here. I don't remember who. Billy said, "I'm gonna go get my gun. I'll take care of her, then I'll come and take care of you." Off he went to get his gun. He came back with his .22 rifle. He went over to Ed and said, "I'm going to take care of her, then I'll come and we'll have a little talk." Ed and the kid thought, "Geez, he's liable to hurt her." So, Ed loaded up his .30-06 and followed Billy over to the other cabin. Billy was drunk, or so they claimed. As he approached the cabin, Billy came out onto the porch facing the lake, at the top of the steps, and raised his rifle like he was going to shoot at Ed. Remember, in the end it was only Ed's story. Ed said he swung his rifle around and pulled the trigger. He hit Billy and shot off his left bicep. Billy then yelled and screamed and ran into the

house. Ed fired one more shot through the window, and hit a frying pan hanging on the wall. Ed looked and realized that Mary wasn't there. So, he went home.

The next day was mail day. All the neighbors were gathered, wondering what happened to whom. Matt Brill took his team and went to Mary's cabin. Bill was still alive, but not conscious and didn't say anything. Then he died. They called the Sheriff. The Sheriff and the coroner came up here, which shows how things have changed. The day after he was shot, he was proclaimed dead by self-defense. That was the end of it. In fact, if you look inside my cabin I have Billy Kruse's record player, one of the old cylinder-type players. It was given to Matt Brill for bringing the body down. Matt Brill left it at Kintla Ranch when he sold it to my dad, and when my dad sold the ranch we kept it. I still have it and about 80 records. They're kind of neat. Some of them are not very politically correct, because there's a lot of black face stuff, which you can't play over the public air anymore.

[Note: See the National Register nomination for the Billy Kruse Cabin for the most accurate rendition of this story.]

It's hard to imagine how little most of these homesteaders knew about anything. They mostly came from the East. They didn't know how to trap. They didn't know how to farm. They were lucky if they knew how to chop down a tree with an axe. They didn't know anything about saws. One of the best stories about Matt Brill is that he and Paul Abbott went together and bought a seeder, a mechanical thing you could pull behind a horse to seed the ground. Of course, it came in pieces and they put it together, and they had one piece left over. That's kind of bad, you know. So, they walked up to Dick Woodmansee's, three miles plus up Trail Creek Road, which wasn't much of a road then. Woodmansee asked to see the piece, but they said they left it at home. "We need you to come down and show us where it goes." He said, "I'm busy. I have things to do myself." They said, "Well, we'd sure appreciate it if you would come down." So, he did come down, and he said, "That's the wrench!" But he got even with them. He stayed for five days and at their food.

Lois: You're probably the only person up here who knew Frank and Ella Wurtz, and Harry and Lena Holcomb, and some of the other early homesteaders. We see their pictures, but we know very little about them.

Larry: Yes, I was really lucky. My dad bought Kintla Ranch when I was 10. It's funny—in my mind, I'm just the same now as I was then. Except then I could run from here to the river and not think about it. They were part of the second wave of homesteaders. The second wave of homesteaders had it a little easier than the first wave. Columbia Falls was bigger. There were more jobs available in the Park and in the Forest Service. And there were more people who would hire you. Matt and Mata Brill were famous cooks. They could make a feast practically out of garden dirt. They were famous on the North Fork, and they worked in the Park. Usually, they would try to get a job in the same place. He would be a bartender, and she would be the cook. But they helped each other.

Her stories about their wedding night were just fascinating to me as a kid. They loaded up in a wagon and came up the inside road from Belton. When they got to Starvation Creek, it was raining and dark. So, they slept under the wagon that night, their second night on the road getting there from Belton, and they didn't get to the ranch until the next day. But they then built one new cabin every year, with the aim of having a guest ranch, which they did. They developed it into quite a business. By the time my dad bought it in 1947 their customers were all 20-year customers. They'd been coming for years. "This is my cabin." "This is my week." They all had

their own weeks and their own cabin and they came every year. They were some pretty interesting people.

Jim Rittenburg: Did they start the ranch after they bought the property from Paul Abbott?

Larry: Yes, it was after they bought from Abbott. That was then when Matt got married, because his buddy Abbott pulled out and he needed help again. Mata was a go-getter. They really worked to make that place go. You'll see when we go down there, there's the root cellar, a cabin on top of the root cellar, and beside that was a big tower that had a 700-gallon water tank in it. At its height, Kintla Ranch had 14 guest cabins [maybe 16?]. Five of them were housekeeping cabins where people would come and do their own cooking. They were down along the river. The ones up by the lodge ate in the lodge with the cook. When we operated Kintla Ranch we had one wrangler, two high school girls who made beds and waited table, a single cook, and sometimes a cook's helper. My mother mostly ran it, because my dad was the game warden then and was only there occasionally. He usually timed his vacation to come when hunting season was on. We had a concession to hunt in British Columbia, so our hunting camp was up there.

By today's prices, Matt sold awfully cheap. But by 1947 prices, he was able to buy a house in Kalispell and later one in Hot Springs, and he lived quite comfortably until he died. Mata died first, and then he went back to where he went to high school and found his old high school girlfriend, married her, and brought her out. He had a good retirement and a good life. But it's hard to imagine the kind of work they had to do. When we go down there, take a good look at it. The lodge was down on one level, then there's about a 25-foot bank and the cabins were on top of that bank. He had a road at both ends. One of them is gone now, but on the other end you can see where he has rock walls like Richard Tuerck just built at Red Meadow Creek. They are still intact, how many years later? From 1930 until now, almost 100 years. It makes me feel better about my house in Columbia Falls, which was built in 1906.

Jim: What did they do with the ranch in the winter?

Larry: Matt and Mata lived here and stayed year-round. There was no Landowners Association back then. The Holcombs and the Brills were the social center of the North Fork—more Brills than Holcombs, because Matt and Mata had the big lodge with a big living room. That's where the dances were held. Holcombs were more the card playing groups. They could set up four or five card tables in their living room. Of course, Harry became famous for shooting a bear in his living room. None of these guys had money. They didn't target shoot, for example. You didn't buy ammunition until you were out. A bear broke into Harry's house. His bedroom was off one side, and the staircase to the upstairs was in the living room. On the first landing was the gun cabinet. That's where his rifle was. The bear got in and was in the kitchen, with a big wide door into the living room. Harry snuck in his underwear to the gun cabinet and ran back to the bedroom so he could shoot the bear before it could get at Lena. No ammo. He had to go back to the gun cabinet. He had one bullet. But it was big enough, and he shot the bear in the living room. Mel Ruder wrote big articles about him shooting at a bear in his living room, with his wife Lena sitting in the other room. She made coffee after he shot it, because she insisted he haul the body outside that night, right now.

Harry and Lena were great friends with the Blocks, Walter and Ethel. Old Man Block was a retired fireman from Milwaukee, and he had purchased the former Price homestead, right across Trail Creek. They became very close friends. The Blocks had two grown sons who came with them, Clyde "Bud" and Dan. They started a mink ranch. The famous ones, really, were Harry and Gerane Block, Dan's wife, who had long, dark red hair to her waist. In one photo she and Harry

are standing next to each other, each of them having shot a black bear. But the boys had the mink ranch. My dad was the game warden at the time, and he arrested them because they were shooting moose to feed the mink. The mistake was that they labeled the jars. All of the jars of canned meat in the root cellar were labeled "Moose Meat." So, all my dad had to do was confiscate one jar. They tested it and found that it was moose meat, so they were in violation and that was the end of the mink farm.

Terry: I know there are different stories about the mink farm. I got to know Bud Block real well. He said, "We could kill a moose without a permit." And they did can it, for their own consumption. But he didn't feed it to the mink, because mink will eat meat that's two weeks old, and they didn't need to preserve it for the mink. They could feed the mink rotten meat all day long. He said, "We eliminated all the ground squirrels." Yes, they did get fined, and they paid the fine.

Larry: That makes sense, really. Yes, they didn't even argue it. Actually, the Blocks and my folks were close. Gerane just died six months ago or so. Dan left here and became a professor at Dillon.

Terry: That's right.

Larry: The one I really miss is Bud. And he married Zelma. That mink farm used to sit right where the roads into Kinsolvings and Luddens are, on that flat. They pumped water from the creek. In those days, you didn't have to have a permit to drink out of the creek, or to pump water out of the creek. You could just do it.

Lisa Gallagher: You have to have a permit today?

Larry: You bet. To pump water to irrigate, for a garden or a field or something. You can't build a bridge across a creek either. But we have a guy on Trail Creek—we call him Rambo. Hardly anybody ever sees him, but he has a super-duper cement bridge across Trail Creek. We discovered it during the Wedge Canyon Fire. And he has all the permits he needs for it. It's all completely legal. He lives in Bigfork. We saw the road down there and knew there was a new summer person there, but when the Wedge Canyon fire came, his mother or some relation called the Sheriff's Office worried about him because of the fire. So, Lynn and I went up there. We walked down that road and came to a small camper trailer. It had a shotgun leaning against the front door. Lynn checked it, and it was loaded. He said, "I'm not sure I want to walk away leaving this behind," so he took it. We walked on down the road and there was this really neat bridge. He and I walked out to the middle of the bridge, and Lynn yelled, trying to see if anybody was around, and nobody answered. So, we came back home. About ten minutes later, here came Rambo with one of the neighbors from up there. He said, "Somebody stole my shotgun. Did you know about that?" I said, "Yeah, go talk to Lynn and you'll get it back probably." Luckily, Lynn is big.

Joyce: What's Rambo's name?

Terry Atha: Doug Rigler.

Larry: Nice guy, really. I've met him several times since then doing different things.

Terry: I know his son Jesse real well.

Larry: He minds his own business. I caught him cutting firewood on Forest Service land one time, with a tractor, which was technically not okay. But I said, "No, it looks like to me you're

cleaning it up, so get it out of here." I'm not real good about wood permits. If somebody wants to cut some fire wood, let them.

Joyce: We'll all remember that one. "Larry said we could."

Larry: No, I didn't say you could. I said I would not stop you. That's different.

Terry: I'm not saying that I do.

Larry: Me either. I only cut it if it's available.

Lisa: I was going to get a permit to cut some wood on state land near us, and the guy said, "We don't give permits over there, but if it's just a couple of trees we don't care." As long as you're not logging.

Larry: The one that always kind of irritates me is Wurtz Hill. There's a lot of dead fir in there from the fire. You can't cut it there, because it's too close to the Wild and Scenic River corridor. But the Forest Service goes in there every fall and cuts wood for Wurtz Cabin. If they can do it, why can't I? It seems to me it should be equal.

Lorna Rittenburg: I would agree with you there.

Jackie Graham: But then you're taking it away from them, and they'll have to go farther.

Larry: There's so much of it, half of it is going to rot before it's taken out and used for fire wood.

So, do you want to go down and look at Kintla Ranch, at the successful homestead?

Everyone: Yes. [Departure to Kintla Ranch]