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Oral History 416-02

Badger Two Medicine Oral History

Interviewer: David Brooks

Interviewee: Rick Lucke

August 21, 2006

David Brooks: All right it's August 21 and I'm David Brooks. I'm doing an interview for the Badger Two Medicine oral histories. I'm talking with Rick Lucke. Rick I guess if you could start out just by talking a little bit about what the Badger Two Medicine is in terms of land, that would be great.

Rick Lucke: Well up until about the last ten years, this was never called the Badger Two Medicine area. This was basically called the east slopes of the divide. That was always known as the east slopes. Environmentalists or hippies or whatever they were, they started calling it the Badger Two Medicine. It was never known as that before. So that's where the saying came from is when they were going to start developing oil out here.

They had a guy come out here and his name was Mike Bader(?), he was from Missoula. He showed up in an old Nissan car, blowing smoke all over the place and just rattling around. He finally broke down in east Glacier and couldn't make it out of here. It was quite a few years ago. He was the guy that started calling it the Badger Two Medicine area. So that's kind of the history on that.

DB: Why did he decide to name it that instead of just keeping it the east slope?

RL: I don't know. They had a map out and they saw where the drainages of the Two Medicine- this is south fork Two Medicine. Our land actually runs through the south fork of the Two Medicine. We own it on both sides of the river. They saw the map and saw where the headwaters- well the headwaters of the Two Medicine, South Fork Two medicine come in right

close to where the Badger comes down. It kind of divides there. So that's why we started calling it the Badger Two Medicine area. It was just the start there. It was never called that before.

DB: We're on Highway 2 here, what's now called the Badger Two Medicine runs east, how far?

RL: It goes all the way down into the Marias and into the Missouri and drainages into that.

DB: Did you own this place here that's from the highway across the south fork?

RL: Yes this is Summit Creek right here that goes by. Our land goes all the way up over the ridge and across. We own it on both sides of the south fork of the Two Medicine River. It covers the south end of our property.

DB: How long have you been here?

RL: I was born and raised here. The history of the area... basically in 1896, the United States government purchased this land. It runs all the way up to Glacier National Park, from the Blackfeet Tribe from eight and a half dollars. The reason for buying it was for timber, the main thing was for development of mining. Anybody can get a copy of that treaty and read it. That's the start of. It used to be a Blackfeet country. The Blackfeet still have timber rights and stuff like that out here. It runs from the Continental Divide to the reservation line.

That's what they call a ceded strip. In 1910 through 1913, the land that we own now was homesteaded. Basically my family wasn't any part of that. They moved up here, I believe my dad moved up here in about 1939. He came up here with about 80 wild horses, mustangs that he trailed up from Badlands in eastern Montana. At that time he had over 2000 head of horses. He ran the horses and he turned them out, most of them out, he was going to come back and get them later. He came up here with 80 head and they were wild mustangs. It was all you could do to handle them. He started an outfitting business.

He actually worked for a couple of neighbors out here at the Rising Wolf Ranch for over a year and then he worked over here for Joe Halley(?) for a year. They were both dude people, outfitters that took in hunters and fishermen. Then two years later he went back to the Badlands and brought up these horses. We were down here on another homestead about a mile down the creek. That's where I was born and raised. We lived in tent houses. We had a cook shack. We didn't have any electricity or anything until 1955. In 1955, my dad bought this homestead here and it was 160 acres.

DB: What was your dad doing for a living?

RL: He was an outfitter. That's when he started. He ran the business, called it Lucky Ranch. As a family we ran the business until, we hired quite a few people to cook and to pack and to guide, that kind of thing. He had a pretty big operation. He actually got killed on building the Furlong(?) Road over here, just over the hill from Summit. A tree fell on him. He didn't even make Great Falls. He died on the way down there. That's what he did.

DB: What was outfitting at the time? I assume you mean it was hunting outfitting trips.

RL: Yes and then fishing trips. We'd go back in the Bob Marshall and in that area through there.

DB: And you'd just go straight from here?

RL: No actually we were chasing horses down the road here, in those days we had no way of hauling horses. We didn't have the equipment. So everywhere we moved the horses, we moved them by cowboying up and down the road. We'd take them there on the other side of the Summit there about a quarter or a half a mile and we'd go in there on that Furlong trail. There was no roads going in there, just a trail that led back into the wilderness area.

DB: That's where they started building the Furlong Road?

RL: Yes.

DB: And what was this road like at that time?

RL: Actually when I was a little kid I don't think it even went completely- well it kind of went through the mountains, but you couldn't- if you were going to Kalispell, when I was a kid, if you met a truck, you'd have to pull off the road or he'd have to pull off the road. It was that narrow. Traveling through the mountains was a whole day deal. It wasn't like it is now, jump in your car and an hour and a half later you're there.

DB: So all of these out of state plates, people visiting the park from East Glacier entrance wasn't happening then?

RL: Oh yes. This was a tourist area. For about the same season as it is right now, basically was the same. It was a narrow skinny road. There were a lot of curves in it and it went up over and around through the mountains. They have it a lot straighter now than they did then.

DB: So you said that your dad came here in '39?

RL: I believe it was '39 or '40, right in there somewhere.

DB: Who had homesteaded the place?

RL: I believe her name was Gussie Hat. Just right around the corner here, right up past this garage here, she owned a bar. They called it the Old Rocky Mountain Inn Bar. She divorced her original husband and she was married, when we bought this place, she was married to a Chicago gangster. His name was Leo Hat. She wanted to sell this piece of property. She didn't use it or need it. So my dad bought it for \$2,500 in 1955. That's how we obtained it. Then we built down the creek here about a half mile. My brother owns the place now. This place here, I built myself.

DB: Who else was living in the Badger Two Medicine that you recall?

RL: Basically all there was here was just homesteaders. Up on the hill here, we had a neighbor. His name was Mel Mullin. He was in the first World War. He came back. He was shell-shocked. He lived in an old shack up there with no running water. He got his water up the slew up there until later years that he dug himself a well. He was an original homesteader. I knew him well. He was a pretty nice guy. He went to town once a month to cash his- he walked to town, he would never ride in a car. He'd walk to town and he would cash his check and get his groceries and get drunk for a couple of days and come back out. Then he'd stay in and never go back to town.

DB: Was he working in the homestead land? What did he do in the land there?

RL: He had a big barn. He had a neighbor right next to him there. They must have had some stock at that time because they used horses and put up hay. They put it in that barn. Him and a neighbor, they got in a big fight. She came over. This woman came over and burned his big barn down. So that was the end of that operation.

DB: Who was the neighbor?

RL: I can even remember her name now. I'd have to talk to my brothers and stuff about it. She actually burned up in her house. She had what they called "dropsy" or retained water. She was freezing cold all the time, even in the summer. She got that house so hot and stuff and it burnt down. I can show you the remains of it. There are still stoves and stuff laying there. She died.

DB: Did she have stock up there as well?

RL: Yes that kind of ended all that.

DB: I guess so.

RL: They used to put up all their hay. My dad used to put up the hay with wagons. It was all done by horses. We'd go down through here by Firebrand Meadows and stuff, all down through there. We'd put up loose hay. It was never bailed hay. Then we'd haul it back up here. What he

did was when he'd come up with these 80 head of horses, they were all mustangs. They weren't work horses. He bought some Percherons and some Clydesdales. He mixed these in with these mustangs and got a bigger breed of horses. At that time we had those big work horses and that's what he used to put up hay with.

DB: Is that pretty much what everybody was using?

RL: Yes.

DB: No tractors yet?

RL: No tractors.

DB: When did that come in?

RL: We never did have a tractor. It was all done. We had bobsleds in the winter time. You'd pull it with the horses, get us in and out of here. We had a car, but in those days, cars weren't that good. If you were going down the road and had a flat tire or blow out a tire, you had to change and fix the tire right there. There are a couple of hills between here and East Glacier. You'd have to turn around and back up the hill because our fuel pump wouldn't work. We'd back up, turn around atop the hill, and then take off again. We had an old Dodge pickup but it wouldn't haul a horse. It was all trail horse. We went everywhere.

DB: Tell me a little bit about the hunting and fishing in the area.

RL: It was great in those days. That's why people come out here because there's a big abundance of goats and bears and elk. Mainly they come out to hunt bear, goat, elk. That's the main thing.

DB: What were the seasons like?

RL: Same.

DB: Regulations the same?

RL: Pretty well the same, yes.

DB: So the fall, five six weeks into the fall?

RL: Yes. It would run up until around Thanksgiving time or maybe a little later.

DB: How long did that go on, the outfitting in your family?

RL: We quit in 1967. He got killed in 1963. I went in the army in 1964, got out in 1966. Then I helped them in that fall. They were having so much trouble with the Forest Service, they were saying that our camps and stuff were inside the Bob Marshall. We determined they were always on the outside by 100 yards. So they made us start tearing down part of our camps and their federal regulations and stuff started tightening up at the time. The clients at that time too were starting to go from the working class, was starting to take in the working class, auto-maker workers and stuff. Before that, we were mainly taking in the really rich people. The amount of money we were making and stuff went way down. The bureaucracy of the Forest Service got really bad. So we just quit.

DB: In terms of permitting or...?

RL: Just harassment. Mainly harassment one way or the other started getting tough on you name it. They did it.

DB: Were there Forest Service workers out in the woods?

RL: Oh yes. In those days they had a lot of them in the woods. They did everything by hand out there, building those trails and used hand saws. I remember when my dad bought his first

chainsaw, a big McCullough chainsaw. It was a big saw. Before that, it was all cut by cross cut saws, two man or one man saws. It was pretty late when he first got his first chainsaw.

DB: Were there other outfitters?

RL: There were quite a few actually. There was a Rising Wolf Ranch here. There was Joe Halley. Down over by Dog Gun Lake, there was another outfitter there, Tex Hughes. He owned that place, which is now, you know that guy that you interviewed before from Whitefish, the veterinarian?

DB: Yes.

RL: Doug Hammill(?), that's his place there that he has now. Tex Hughes owned that. Then on down the road here was, one down there at Bear Creek Ranch. There was an operation there.

DB: Was that primarily how people were making a living here at that time?

RL: No. It was a very few. Most of them, kind of basically how it is right now in east Glacier. They were taking the big lodge and all that. They'd get their money from the tourists that way. There was only five or six outfitters in the whole area here that took in dudes.

DB: Did all the outfitters suffer from federal regulations?

RL: Definitely. It just changed the whole ballgame of outfit.

DB: In the time that you were outfitting, as well as since then, have you seen a change in the land in other ways, wildlife?

RL: Wildlife has probably declined. I'd say the biggest reason for that is there's a lot more hunters, hundreds and hundreds more hunters now than there were when I was growing up. When I was a kid growing up and going out here and hunting with my dad and stuff, there were

very few hunters that ever hunted in this area. It would be really something if you'd run into one or two different guys out in that country or ever seen anybody out there. I think that was probably a big deal of why there was more game than there is today. Now they run all over the country with everything and basically that's changed.

DB: What do you mean by that? They run all over the country.

RL: Well they go in four wheelers, stuff like that. When I was growing up as a kid, the only way you could get out there is walk or ride a horse. That's all changed.

DB: Just because there were no trails?

RL: Oh there was always trails.

DB: But just no four wheelers?

RL: Right. I believe it was about 1952, they seismographed this area through here. My dad got on. He ran a CAT. In those days, you did anything to feed your family and whatever. He ran this old CAT, which is a new CAT, but a cabled type dozer. They put in these seismograph trails that run all through this area. Those are the trails that people use today. They were made for seismograph. They would go mostly east and west, but a lot of them go north and south too.

DB: Who put those in? The Forest Service?

RL: It was oil exploration companies. They started doing that in 1952.

DB: We started out, and you mentioned that this area was primarily bought from the tribe for mining timber. How much of that ever went on?

RL: Just some logging. They never did find any minerals. At the time when they bought it, they thought that- they had mines up by Many Glacier, Cut Bank Creek, that area, that they would get

some minerals out of. This area out in here was virtually no minerals at all. There was some logging. When the railroad and stuff came through here, they had a saw mill just up the creek from our land here. They called it Sawmill Flat. They had a saw mill in there and the river dammed up. They'd cut the timber and the timber would come down the river.

DB: Are you talking about the south fork?

RL: South Fork up here. There are still probably some remnants of that left up here. There are some old cabins that are still there. Some old boards still sticking out of the river. When I was a kid, you could see where they blocked up the river pretty good and they had a mill there. They cut ties and timber and stuff for the railroad. That's what it was built for.

DB: Who was doing that?

RL: Privately. Then they had moonshiners that lived up in there too that made whiskey and they'd cart it down off the hill here and they'd sell whiskey to the Blackfeet.

DB: Just individual homesteaders or families log as well or cut timber for their own uses?

RL: Yes. They also made whiskey.

DB: When was that happening?

RL: When I was a kid and maybe before that. The Blackfeet never had any bars or- Indians weren't allowed to drink or whatever. They'd have to come off the reservation and come up here. In 1955 they opened up the reservation for alcohol. Part of that, there was no alcohol on the reservation other than the Glacier Park Lodge. The Glacier Park Lodge had a congressional deal, taking the lodge off the boundaries of the reservation so that they could sell liquor to their guests- just at the hotel, which was owned by the Great Northern Railway. So that was the only place. They wouldn't sell it to Indians. It would have to be a white person or something. Indians weren't allowed to do that.

DB: Earlier you mentioned the woman who owned the bar right down here that was off the reservation, so that wasn't a problem.

RL: Yes. Well there was this tavern here, Dusty's Tavern just right down the road here, which was right off the reservation line. It was two bars. They were pretty active bars. A lot of people got killed between here and east Glacier. They'd come up here and get drunk and head back to the reservation, driving. The road was a lot curvier than it was now. A lot of big curves going through there and people would run off the road and get killed. A lot of people got killed.

DB: So was this sawmill up here that you mentioned the only one operating in the area at the time?

RL: No actually they had another mill up here that they called Rising Wolf, which doesn't exist anymore. It was a turn on the rail that went back around. The railroad now goes straight down here, but it went back and it curved around. They called it Rising Wolf. They had a mill there and they actually logged a lot of this park area up here, which wasn't park at the time. They skidded all these logs down. They had a mill there too. You go down through here, you'll see the sign that says "Bison" now, but as you make that curve, it was Rising Wolf.

DB: That's not the tribal bison that you're talking about is it?

RL: No.

DB: Before that?

RL: Yes. Before you get to Firebrand there.

DB: Right. So who owned the mining rights? Who was coming in and putting in the seismograph roads in?

RL: It was exploration for oil. They actually did some drilling for seismographing and right down the creek here, they drilled a hole and oil came out of that hole for years. They hand dug a well over here near back by the old ranger station and it burnt for about 18 years on natural gas. There is oil and gas in this area. Oil ran out of this one up here for years. I remember seeing it. It just seeped up out of that hole.

DB: Nobody tapped it? They just drilled the hole and let it...

RL: Yes it was only about a 50 foot hole. What they call surface oil. It just poured out of there for years, a long time.

DB: Why was it never developed?

RL: I have no idea. My dad, he would take in a lot of geologists through this area, especially back in and around Badger cabin area. We had set up camps. He'd have seven to ten geologists at a time. They would spend eight to ten days trip per group. It worked that area, Goat Mountain and Badger and all that back there.

DB: They were out to hunt?

RL: Geology.

DB: So they were hunting minerals.

RL: That's what they were doing.

DB: That's interesting. So how has it changed things to have roads improved, four-wheelers on the land? You mentioned that there's less game.

RL: Yes.

DB: Other changes?

RL: Not really. I would say probably as far as hunting and stuff goes, that four-wheeler thing is great for the hunters and whatever, but it's not really that great for the country. Now they've got it down to where they have to stay on certain roads or trails, whatever. If they get off they could be fined for it. That happened just this last year. That might make an improvement. There's probably quite a few more people that fish this river.

When I was a kid we were virtually about the only family around here that ever wet a fly and would go around through here. It was pretty rare to have anybody come through here to fish. I don't know why, but there just never was. Now there's a lot of people now that come over here from the west side, especially bringing their horses and fancy rigs, go up and down through here and fish it, stuff like that. There's people like who bought that Rising Wolf Ranch over here. They're from out of state. They bring in people that fish this a lot. When I was a kid, it never was that way. That's changed. Just a lot more people.

DB: Are there more people living here now than there used to be?

RL: Probably. Most of these homesteaders that homesteaded were basically single or had a wife or whatever, but very few of them had kids for some reason. I don't know why. A lot of these homesteads out through here were never- you'd have to stay on them I believe a year or two to prove up on it. If you couldn't make it, then they went back to the Forest Service. There was quite a few homesteads out across the Two Medicine here that never were proved up on and lost back to the federal government, the Forest Service.

DB: So now they're just part of the Lewis and Clark national forest?

RL: Yes. But you can get the old maps. You can see where they were. You can get them out of the courthouse in Cut Bank. They have their listings and what they are. Like this is Homestead 707 that we're on right now. This piece here and our other land is in a different homestead up

here that we own. So they're all listed. They have maps of them. You can get them out of the courthouse.

DB: Was there much a sense of community between people?

RL: Not really. No. What we'd do, like when I was a kid, probably the only entertainment we really had is every Saturday night, they'd have a square dance in East Glacier at the community hall. They'd have box socials and things like that, live dancing, you know, it was all live music. They didn't have records and stuff playing..live callers. Everybody would get together and bring in their lunches. They'd auction them off. Whoever bought it, then the guy would go sit with the girl and eat the lunch and square dance all night, until probably midnight.

DB: That sounds all right.

RL: Yes. It was an alcohol-free thing.

DB: Who was it that came here to homestead? Was it Montanans? Was it people from out of state?

RL: Probably a good variety of people from everywhere I suppose. To my knowledge, there wasn't any Blackfeet that did it. I think they were all white people from who knows where. It was Joe Halley, he came from Germany. There at that Steiner place, his name I believe was Joe Eidum(?). Where he's from I have no idea. Most of them were just men that would get the right to homestead and they would either marry after they had been at it for a while or whatever. I don't think many of them had wives to tell you the truth. Like Mallop(?) here, he never had a wife. I don't think they came here- they weren't local people because if they would have been, it would have been Blackfeet or whatever. Possibly at the time, maybe the Blackfeet didn't have the rights to do it. I just don't know. There wasn't any, I can tell you that.

DB: Were there Blackfoot folks that ever came down to use the land for anything?

RL: I tell you what, not really. In those days, it was pretty rare to see anybody out in this country at all. They'd come up and drink in the bar and have a good time. They always had a piano player, maybe a band going on around here. This whole area over here across from the Rocky Mountain Inn would be full of people. So I think at that time, the Blackfeet were more attracted to the whiskey and the beer than anything. My dad hired a lot of Blackfeet guys to work his business as packers and guides and stuff like that. Real good help.

DB: Was that pretty common?

RL: Absolutely. It was really good help. They knew the country good. One guy he had hired and worked for him for years, his name was Joe (?). He was from Little Badger. He was a great guy until you'd give him a drink. Then he'd take off and come out of the mountains and he'd be drunk. He'd stay drunk. It didn't work. My dad never did ever fire him. He'd wait a week or so and come back in, pick him up, bring him back in the mountains. He'd be a good hand. These dudes always bought a lot of beer and whiskey with them. White men could handle the booze and Indians couldn't at that time at all.

DB: Recount some of your stories for me about yourself growing up here.

RL: Well, I went to town maybe once or twice a summer. We spent our time- we had so many horses and so little time that we spent most of our time herding our horses on somebody else's land or out here in the Forest Service or whatever. So day after day, we'd spend four, five, six hours a day herding these horses, eating grass off our land and then we'd bring them back on our property for the night. We'd continue again until they went back in the mountains. Then they would eat the grass from back in that country. They never packed hay in those days. It was hobble the horses or had bells on them or whatever, tied them up at night.

DB: Did you have to have grazing permits then?

RL: No.

DB: Just went out and did it?

RL: Yes. That was kind of my- I broke horses for my dad. I started breaking horses when I was like seven years old. I started going in the mountains when I was five. I spent all my younger years in the mountains and breaking horses. He was a pretty good horse shoe-er. He had a forge and all that. He taught me how to do all that. He had kids to work. He didn't have kids for laying around and not doing anything. From daylight to dark, we worked. That's why people in those days had big families because they needed the help.

DB: So you haven't mentioned winter around here yet.

RL: Well I tell you what, winters were always tough. Years ago we had bad winters. Normally we would move out of here in the winter time, at the end of hunting season, move into East Glacier, spend the winters in East Glacier. When I was in the first or second grade, we moved down to Cut Bank and when we lived east of Cut Bank on a farm out there for free. We had natural gas piped into that house and it never cost us a penny. So we virtually lived there for almost nothing. First or second grade I went to Cut Bank, hated it down there. I wanted to be back in the mountains. So after that, we never did go back. I spent my whole lifetime out here other than being in the army in Germany for a couple of years.

DB: So did you go to school here in East Glacier?

RL: Yes and Browning both, yes.

DB: Did anybody stay out here during the winter?

RL: Yes and there was a lot of winters that we did too. In the early years, all we had was what they call a cook shack. It's a place to cook and there were a couple of couches in there. We didn't have running water. We didn't have indoor plumbing. We didn't have any of that kind of stuff. We didn't have electricity. Just lanterns and that kind of thing. We lived in tent houses and we couldn't survive very well in a tent house through the wintertime. So later on when my dad

bought this property, we built some more houses down here and then he moved the big house out from East Glacier. Then we virtually stayed here year round.

DB: So nowadays when people think about winter in Montana, they're looking to come up here or come somewhere and ski or snowmobile. What was it like growing up?

RL: My mom and step-dad actually bought the first snowmobile in this country that I know of. It was an old Arctic Cat, a brand new one, but it had 80 horsepower. It had a steel track. They used it. They virtually bought it for trapping. My step-dad was an excellent trapper. That's how he kind of made his money in the winter time. Before that, we used to pack the (?) backs and the hides and stuff like that.

We'd go back in this country and trap beaver and lynx, wolverine, stuff like that. We did it all in snowshoes. They bought this snowmobile. Of course when you went up a little bit of a hill you'd have to get off and push it to make it because it only had a small motor in it. Gave a little more access to the country and being able to haul out more pelts and stuff like that.

DB: Tell me about trapping lynx, wolverines, and beaver. I hunt, but I've certainly never trapped.

RL: Oh really. In those days there were a lot of trappers because the pelts were worth a lot of money. These rich people back east and throughout the whole world, actually, liked the pelts and stuff for fur coats and that kind of thing. So the market was really high on all that mink and all that stuff, you know, especially mink coats and all these different beaver furs and all that kind of stuff. So it was good money in trapping, which isn't today. The beaver market and all that, the fur market's not worth anything. That's why you see all these creeks dammed up any more. Virtually they aren't worth nothing.

DB: So the animals are here?

RL: Yes.

DB: Lynx and wolverines?

RL: Yes. We trapped a lot of mink and muskrat, mostly beaver. We had a lot of sets for- we trapped a lot of wolverine, a lot of lynx. We got quite a few mountain lions, stuff like that.

DB: What's a day of trapping like?

RL: Hard. Virtually hard. You take off early in the morning and sometimes you wouldn't come back for one or two days. You'd have a trap line and you did it all with snowshoes. We'd go all the way in to the Badger cabin and in that area and work our way back, which is about 16 miles from here. So it's a pretty good tug up through here through that Two Medicine area.

DB: Do you bait? I don't even know how trapping works.

RL: Just depending on what you're trapping. Like if you're trapping lynx, you put a rabbit up in it. You build yourself a little pull house. One little opening in there and you have slots in between these poles so they can see that rabbit in there. As they try to get in there to get this rabbit, they step in the trap and you catch them. You've got to keep it completely sterile so man's scent- you don't spit or nothing around there. You boil your traps to keep the scent off and you use rubber gloves to keep the man's scent away. You hang that rabbit in there, hang it down where they can see through there. They try to climb through the hole and they step in the trap and you caught them. So that's how you'd do that.

DB: How about beaver?

RL: Beaver is two different sets on them. You can either set it down on the dam itself and use a scent bait. You put the scent bait on the trap and it brings the beaver into it. Or you can set a conibear trap, and you set that by setting- it's a square trap. You set it in the runways and you put poles and sticks in around it so when they're going through their runways, they'll swim right into that conibear- it's a square trap and it immediately kills them. So that's how you trap them.

Then like with muskrat, you take their house apart and they have a little hole that goes down into the lake. You take the top off and you put the trap in there, you don't bait it. Then you put the top back on. The muskrat comes back into his house and he steps in the trap and you've caught him. Muskrats never were worth that much. If you could get a couple of bucks worth of muskrat, two or three dollars, you'd catch maybe 50 of them in a couple of days, you could make some pretty good money. Beaver was always probably worth the most.

DB: What was beaver worth?

RL: You could get 20 or 25 dollars, a good super pelt. So it was worth quite a bit in those days.

DB: You mentioned trapping wolverines. How do you go about that?

RL: The same way as you would trap a lynx. The same set, yes. They're inquisitive just like a lynx is. They're real inquisitive. We trapped a lot more lynx than we ever trapped wolverine. You can't leave a wolverine in a trap very long. He'll either chew his leg off or they completely- I mean they're pretty vicious. They come out of the badger family. They're pretty vicious. So they'll tear up an area and tear down your whole trap set and chew and bite on trees. They'll actually- if you leave them in there for very long, they'll dismember their leg or something and get away.

DB: You've seen that happen?

RL: No but I've heard of it. Actually back in the mountains I've had them follow me at different times. There's a lot of stories on wolverines. They're pretty mean. They'll even put a run on a grizzly bear if they're on a kill first or something like that. They'll follow you just being inquisitive. They'll attack you if you try to get them cornered or something like that. They're pretty vicious. They're not an animal like a grizzly bear that'll stalk you. They mostly just follow you, see what you're doing, you know.

DB: So you also mentioned trapping mountain lions. I've heard people running them, hunting them with...

RL: No not really trapping them. My dad, he was a government trapper and stuff before he came up here. He'd use hounds and dogs. He had greyhounds. He had staghounds, stuff like that. He'd use dogs for the mountain lion.

DB: What was the government having him trap?

RL: Before he came up here, he was a government trapper down in the Glasgow area, down there. He had greyhounds and staghounds and airedales. He would take these rigs out and he'd see different animals like coyotes and stuff like that. He'd put the dogs on them. The staghounds and airedales would do the killing. The greyhounds would just run and knock them down. The other dogs would do the kill.

DB: Do you have bear stories from around here?

RL: Oh I have hundreds of them. I wouldn't know where to start.

DB: Give me one or two good bear stories.

RL: There were probably a lot more, hundred times more grizzly bears in this country today than there was then because years ago until probably up until the Sixties or even maybe later than that, they were always legal to hunt. They were kind of a lot different then. At the time, they were more scared of humans than they are today. It would be impossible to have one come down through this area. If you did he would be through here in a minute. Now they'll come down and they'll break into your house and all that kind of stuff.

They're not afraid any more the way they used to be. With the hunting season and stuff like that, they could kill as many bears as they wanted to. There was a lot of grizzly bears in those days too. Probably three or four more times today. The difference is the bears were not as aggressive

in those days. You'd meet them on the trail and stuff like that. Somebody's horse or whatever would break its leg or fall over a bank and stuff like that. You could actually even ride right by them and they would be more tendency to stay on what they were doing rather than bother people. I virtually never known of any Indian around here who's ever killed a grizzly bear.

I've known a lot of white tourists who show up and hike around this area. It started in about the Sixties. They started mauling people. In the Sixties, of course, there were no more hunting of grizzly bears. They closed the dumps for grizzlies around the park. They used to be able to get in the dumps and eat. They cut them off, quit doing that. So when more people got to walk in the park, and probably carrying food and that kind of thing. Since then, there's been a lot of maulings and a lot of people killed. That one guy up around Many Glacier, (grizzlies) killed him and even ate his shoes. They're a lot different than they were then.

DB: You know another animal that sort of is a poster animal around here and in the park are wolves, especially in the last couple of decades.

RL: Believe it or not, there's always been wolves here. I remember that ever since I was a little kid, they had a white wolf out here. It was a big male. Never really were packs of wolves. There were single wolves in this country and always have been. This particular white wolf would always hang in around our horses. I don't think he ever bothered our horses, he probably ate their crap or whatever. He was pretty inquisitive. At one time I saw him. He was in his sixties. He would come up on the ridge right here and looked at me. He was a beautiful white wolf. I've seen wolves in this country my whole life. There's a lot more now. Like this spring up here that was seven wolves right here.

DB: So we've been talking about all this wildlife. It's funny when you talk about animals, you don't talk specifically about wolf or grizzly bear. Earlier we were talking about timbering. Timber seems to be just timber. What specifically were people cutting out of here?

RL: Mainly people would come up here to cut any more are Blackfeet that cut teepee poles or (?) poles. That's about it.

DB: So no more commercial?

RL: There hasn't been a commercial cut up here in quite a while.

DB: So how about fires since you've grown up here? We've had this huge fire up in Red Eagle this summer. Has fire been through here?

RL: Believe it or not, this whole country in here burnt in 1910. That fire started in Kellogg, Idaho and worked its way all the way through this area. Of course, when fires burn, they don't burn everything. The fire came through here and burned all the way to Heart Butte. The winter snows put it out at Heart Butte. The next big fire was in 1932. It started in West Glacier from a little saw mill over there and burned its way through the mountains. It actually went out in Heart Butte in the late fall of 1932.

I remember seeing pictures and stuff like that. It was a lot different country. These trees and creek and stuff like that weren't here. When I was growing up, it was all burnt dead timber. Not all of it, but the old growth timber and the biggest share of it burned off.

DB: So a lot of this timber is fairly new?

RL: Yes since 1932.

DB: And aspens have come in?

RL: Yes covered the country, especially out this way. All this up here on top that we used to own, still own up here in this whole area was nothing but grassy ridges and dead timber, standing timber. Now it's quake and aspen and willow. What we do a lot of times is, I have a machinery CAT. We'd go up there and clear out an area and clear out the quake and aspen and put grass seed back in and get more grass growing.

DB: What's the value of the grass growing for you in there?

RL: For our livestock. We run cattle and horses.

DB: Now when you grew up in an outfitting family, now you own a construction business. What sort of construction is going around here?

RL: Well it's not booming to tell you the truth. We stay fairly busy, me and my son. He lives over next door over there. Me and him have been in this since he was 12 years old. I worked heavy highway construction ever since I got out of the army. I worked on Libby Dam. I worked on straightening out and working for Morris Knudsen here for the Great Northern Railway. We took the tunnels out and opening them up, straightening out the track and all those lines. You know it would go down through here. It used to be a lot of curves and cross sections that the railroad went that they straightened out and took the tunnels out. Worked virtually all over. In the early sixties I started my own business. We've been at it for over 30 years I guess, in that range.

DB: Are you doing construction mostly in the Badger Two Medicine area?

RL: Oh no, we work everywhere. We do most of our work around here, but we sometimes go over to Kalispell and we do a lot of work in Glacier, Pondera, Toole county stuff like that. We move around.

DB: What's the work for the construction like here in the Badger Two Medicine. Is it residential, commercial, roads?

RL: Very little as far as, if you're talking about- what we do is, like the East Glacier area, maybe we do septic systems and stuff like that for different places, neighbors at Bear Creek. We did a big sewer system for them a year ago. We do a lot of sewer systems down in Essex area and development for people moving in there and stuff like that. That's kind of what our work is.

DB: Something I meant to ask you earlier is, when did electricity come in here?

RL: About 1955 I believe. We didn't have electricity before that.

DB: Are you still in wells?

RL: Yes.

DB: Pretty much everybody?

RL: Yes.

DB: And septic?

RL: Yes. When I was a kid growing up we just got our water out of the creek with buckets.

DB: Drink it straight out of the creek?

RL: Oh yes. Still can.

DB: So how about now, Badger Two Medicine. When I hear about the area here, it's usually in the context of more possible exploration of natural gas. You mentioned ATV, snowmobile use.

RL: I don't know. I don't think that the minerals thing makes sense lately here, especially when Conrad Burns put this deal trying to get it off limits. I believe Gloria Flowers or whatever her name was, she was probably the biggest one that was against any drilling and stuff out here. There's really one hell of a massive reserve of oil and gas in this area.

DB: Okay so we were talking about- there was quite a bit of natural gas here with the potential of that being tapped. How do people feel about that these days?

RL: Actually I'm for it. I think that- I would just assume to see alternative energy come through and stuff like that. At this point in time, until it happens, I think the United States government has got to tap and develop its own resources regardless of if it's here, in Missoula, Montana or east slopes of Alaska rather than relying on the Arabs. I'd like to see an alternative energy myself, bio-fuel, stuff like that. We're not in the works yet. Natural gas, at any point we get a big share of our natural gas comes out of Canada, developed right across the Canadian line there is a big field. The same fields actually run down here we're purchasing our gas from Canada and could be using our own resources rather than buying from the Canadians and taking care of our own economy. So that's the way I see it.

DB: Are a lot of the people that live here in support of it?

RL: Probably 50-50 margin on it, you know. The Blackfeet tribe would be if they got any money off of it. If the tribe owned the minerals out here, you would have seen drilling going on here years ago. They've drilled a lot of areas on the reservation. If the Blackfeet had the mineral rights, which the government bought in 1896, they really don't have any rights on the minerals. At this point, they're against it because if they're not going to get anything off it, they don't want it. If they would be getting the mineral rights and stuff, you'd see a rig sitting out here quarter mile apart. That's kind of the story on that.

DB: How do you think that would affect one of the things that's been traditionally a source of income around here, which is tourism? Your outfitting that you grew up with, I assume, mostly tourist based. Almost everything coming in and out of East Glacier here is tourism.

RL: It wouldn't affect it a bit. It would probably make it better for the economy. The economy in East Glacier is a three month economy. If you got an oil field or a good logging deal set up- we just don't have the timber out here. The timber is pretty well burnt. If you had a steady economy of oil field workers, it would actually be probably better for the area than this three month surge of tourism. The biggest share of business in East Glacier closes up and they head somewhere else. The town itself is a dead town. If you had a steady economy around here, then there would

be more people in the force of keeping their businesses open and that kind of thing. It would be a lot better for the town. It would be a lot better for the whole area.

DB: So on the almost exact opposite end of that, you mentioned Conrad Burns trying to close this down to development. There are plenty of other people too that would like to see the Badger Two Medicine go to wilderness and connect them with Bob Marshall and Scapegoat and basically make it wilderness or national park all the way through. How would that affect things?

RL: I think it would be the worst thing in the world. If you sit right here and you look out my window, right across the railroad tracks there's Glacier National Park. That whole area is untouchable. You can't virtually go in there and cut down a tree. You can't do anything. All you can do is maybe ride a horse through there or walk or whatever. It's untouchable land. That's it. The Bob Marshall wilderness area it's cut off. It's non-usable anymore. You can't log it. You can't do anything with it. You can walk through it, ride through it on horseback.

Then they came through and they made the Great Bear wilderness. That took out a big area. So all we have left is this little strip of land right here that they call a multi-use area. It was set up for timber and logging and it was set up for minerals and it was set up for that type of thing. That's all we have left is this one little piece of land to fight over. All the rest of it has been taken away. Years ago when we'd have people come in here, very few of them we'd take out here hunting. It was back in the Bob Marshall and through that other area. My dad took them in there to fish the lakes back in that country. Excellent fishing and that type of thing. This is all we have left here that they can run cattle on and they can go out and still cut some timber and virtually what's left underground is massive amounts of oil and gas.

It's untapped resources for probably the American people. I'd like to see it stay that way. I don't think it's going to. I would fight it tooth and nail to take and put it in wilderness because we don't have any land other than this left that's not sewed up. The reservation isn't sewed up. It's pretty well open and I like it that way. That's my feeling on it.

DB: So you said you would fight it and that you suspect that's what it's going to come to?

RL: I would say that's probably the trend, yes. There's going to be a lot of people fighting with it. It would be a lot of sportsmen that don't want it shut off one way or the other, snowmobilers. This is a big area for people going through here in the winter time snowmobiling. There are certain areas you can't snowmobile in. It's an elk area. They snowmobile up and down the south fork of the Two Medicine and into the Badger, up over Indian Pass and come back around. Come out Furlong(?) Road. It's a hell of a nice loop.

Snowmobilers don't hurt anything. Absolutely really rare to ever see a car on the trail or anything. They leave tracks in the snow. They don't hurt anything. I'd probably like to see the four-wheeler situation changed. There's hundreds of people that enjoy that and who am I to say that when I go hunting and I ride horses? Who am I to say that they're not allowed to go back into the forest with a four-wheeler? I think as long as they can stay on the roads and probably not run around at 100 miles per hour, probably wouldn't bother me a bit. Tear up the whole country out there with four-wheelers, I don't like it. That's my feeling on that.

DB: So I guess I'd like you to finish just by telling me some of your recollections or fond memories of this land and of growing up here.

RL: Myself, I've pretty well been around the world. I was stationed in Germany and Europe for a couple of years. Massive populations all over the world wherever you'd go. You come up here, very few people living in this area. Very few people ever track it. It's probably the most beautiful place of anywhere in the world. It's been a real nice way to spend my life here. I virtually have been here all my life. I love it. Go out my back door, right down my creek here, less than 100 feet away and go catch a fish. It's been a good life.

DB: Great well Mr. Lucke thanks for your time and your stories.

RL: You're welcome.