

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History 416-05**

**Badger Two Medicine Oral History**

**Interviewee: Dan Smiley**

**Interviewer: David Brooks**

**September 16, 2006**

David Brooks: It's September 16, 2006, and I'm David Brooks, the interviewer for the Badger Two Medicine Oral History Project in Montana. Today I'm talking with Dan Smiley. Dan, could you start out by talking a little bit about your personal history and background, where you grew up, how you were educated, how you made your way to Montana, if you're not from here?

Dan Smiley: I grew up in upstate New York and visited the Badger Two Medicine first in 1957 when I was sixteen years old. My trip at that time was to visit relatives who had homesteaded there, specifically George Jennings, who took out a homestead on what became the Jennings Ranch. I spent three weeks there that summer and enjoyed it very much and it kind of got to me, so I came back every chance I had. Lots of vacations, all through high school and college. Went to Haverford College, graduated with a degree in engineering.

Three days after I graduated, I moved to Montana in 1964, that week after the big June 8<sup>th</sup> flood, which essentially devastated that part of Montana, swept across the reservation, wiped out Birch Dam. Killed 32 people, all drowned in the '64 flood.

I taught school in Heart Butte from '64 through '65 in the grade school there. Did not have a teaching certificate, so the state wouldn't let me teach a second year. I pursued jobs in engineering. In Conrad I was a civil engineer. I spent every minute I could back up in the Badger Two Medicine homestead place. I contracted it by HES-712, which was the Jennings Ranch in 1965. Again, I always had to have real work with salary to make payments and to try to get established in the cattle business. That's how I started.

Brooks: So did you buy it from George Jennings?

Smiley: I bought it from Tex Hughes. George Jennings homesteaded that in about 1916 or '17. I think he actually moved there in 1914 under the Homestead Act. You had to prove up on these homesteads and it took awhile. You had to build some structures and raise a garden and there were certain requirements that had to be met. A survey on the place was done in 1917 and the patent was signed by Woodrow Wilson in 1920. I could get into how he got into the dude business a little later on. But he sold that property to a fellow named Tex Hughes in 1941. Tex owned it as long as he lived. He died in 1964, early in the year. And I bought the property from his estate, so I was the third owner of the property.

Brooks: So before we started here, you reminded me a little of the legal history of the area. I suspect we ought to probably go back to that and get to where the Homestead Act was in place in the area.

Smiley: The Badger Two Medicine was originally part of the declared Blackfeet Reservation. In the late 1880s, the government—and I suspect it's because they thought there was gold in the area—wanted to buy back part of that reservation, the western part of the original reservation that lies on the mountain front. So they negotiated with the tribe to acquire that property back for a million and a half dollars. The agreement with the tribe, which was signed by 357 Native Americans who, if I recall the wording, were considered to be the majority of the male member of the tribe. Of course, women had no right to vote until 1920, so I imagine that the Indian women were also considered to have no legal status. So the government bought that back. The reservation boundary was surveyed in 1895, the boundary as it exists today.

And by early 1900s, particularly after the 1910 fire, people became interested in homesteading there. By that time the Forest Service had been created, which was 1906. And so these homesteads, I believe, were under the authority of the Homestead Act that pertained to National Forest Lands, and they required a special survey, a separate survey, for each homestead because the area had not been surveyed by the General Land Office as part of the rectangular system that

we know in all the western United States. So each of those homesteads has its own special survey, and they're designated HES number so-and-so. Mine was HES-712.

Brooks: Why the 1910 fire? Why did that spur homesteading?

Smiley: Because it wiped everything out. I call it the 1910 fire, but 1910 was a phenomenal fire year in the northwest United States. The fires were... many of them, probably hundreds of them burned across eastern Washington, most of northern Idaho, and most of western Montana. If I recall, people tell me they started in August and they never got any big snows until well into October, so they had about three months of fires. Essentially burned all the timber off the Badger Two Medicine area. There are a few pockets of old growth that survived the fire, most in the north slopes. And even today you can see snags from the 1910 fire. [inaudible] last week and noted that there's still these black snags that are left from 1910. Some of those higher elevation points like Sundance Mountain and the upper Hyde Creek, there was timber, eight inch diameter timber. I think it was probably limber pine. Those snags are still there. They're starting to fall over. Pretty high and dry, cold climate. But those snags are still there and the re-growth is just barely started, even after a hundred years. So it strikes me that when people talk about timbering the Badger Two Medicine and some of that area, they're talking about a rotation that's hundreds of years before it will get to that same size.

Anyhow, after the 1910 fire, what comes in is all kinds of grasses and [inaudible]. This is nature's way of re-vegetating. George Jennings was working for the railroad out of Whitefish and he told me that he—he didn't use the word conscripted, but I suspect that a lot of the Great Northern trains weren't even running through a lot of that time. So the government took all these people wherever they could find able bodies to fight this fire, which I imagine was pretty tough in those days without helicopters and retardant and so forth. George said that he was sent over to the Badger Two Medicine area, along with a guy named Burt Pond, who worked on the railroad and had a homestead right above Dog Gun Lake about the same time George started his. And I suppose several others. They did whatever they could to fight the fire.

He told me it was just a fascinating country to him. He grew up in southern Idaho, loved to hunt and fish. He actually demonstrated for the Remington arms company at one time. He went around to the various fairs showing off his shooting skills. He was a crack shot. And when he saw that Badger Two Medicine, he said I just had to go there. He had married a woman, and I don't know what her maiden name was, from Whitefish and they moved over there to homestead just because he loved to hunt and trap and fish. They squatted on this land that they eventually patented. Started out that way. Said the first thing they built, they threw up a little bit of a log cabin. Didn't have anybody to get lumber in there for a door, so they used an elk skin for a door their first year. No windows. Too cold.

Eventually he became a guide to Louis Hill, son of Jim Hill, of the Great Northern Railroad. I don't know how that connection was made, but he and Louis became fast friends and every time that Louis came out here to hunt or fish or recreate, he'd use George as a guide. I think this association must have started before the Glacier Park was established, which was 1910, when the park was declared, because George took Louis hunting many times in what's now Glacier Park. Glacier Park prohibits hunting. No way around that. In the hotel in East Glacier, I remember George pointing out all the various trophy heads and said, "Oh, I remember when we shot this one up in such-and-such a place." He remembers the big columns, the Douglas fir columns in the Glacier Park hotel in East Glacier. They must be three to four feet in diameter; they're Doug fir. They brought those in on the train from the coast. They didn't log those around here. But he was very fond of Louis Hill and vice versa. Louis Hill had two sons, Louis Jr. and I don't know what the other one's name was. By that time, 1914, Louis said, "George I'm going to send these two boys out there this summer and I want you to make men out of them." So Louis Jr. would have been 14 years old. Again, I don't know the other boy's name.

Brooks: And these are the grandsons of Jim Hill?

Smiley: The grandsons of Jim Hill. George had started to make enough improvement on his homestead by then that he had a place to keep them and he kept them all summer. I guess he must have made men out of them, because Louis Hill, Jr. came back almost every year. He died in 1994, age 94. He'd stop by and visit us and I did some survey for him because he and the Hill

Family Foundation owned property various places all over the state. He'd want to find the corners or the boundaries on some of his properties so he'd send me a note and I'd go find the corners with whatever survey work he wanted. I am a licensed surveyor in the state. And every year we'd get a can of maple syrup from Louis Hill, Jr. for Christmas, right up there until the year he died. He owned, of course, all the property in Minnesota and they had lots of maple trees. Anybody that ever did anything for him, they'd get a can of maple syrup for Christmas. He was a very interesting chap. Still have occasional correspondence with his daughter, Marie Hill Harper, who lives in Canada. Her cousin raises red deer.

At one point after George proved up on the homestead, Louis said—and the railroad had built the hotels and the parkway, this would have been by the '20s—Louis suggested that maybe they needed a good stopping spot for day riders. They had day rides that went out of the hotel in East Glacier. Their homestead is about six miles from town by a very scenic route across the Two Medicine River and up kind of a steep and narrow canyon. So, of course, George being accommodating, he and Emma said, "Yeah we'd be glad to do that," and these day riders started showing up. For dudes it would probably take almost three hours to ride out that far. So they'd ride three hours and stop, and of course George and Emma would fix a fabulous, sit-down, hot meal for them for lunch and they'd ride back.

By about the second year that happened these people would start saying, "George, we'd like to come and stay all summer at this place." So he said, "Oh, yeah, you can do that." And pretty soon he was building cabins for these dudes. And he told me he had as many as 32 people staying there at one time. That's the most he could accommodate. When that happened, why, the help would have to sleep in the hay barn, because they had one small cabin that was three or four, I think it was three little separate rooms for some of the help. They'd actually use their beds for the dudes and the help would have to sleep on the hay.

Brooks: Was it just a pack trail into there at that time?

Smiley: Yep. I don't know when the first road was built. I've got a picture which I can show you that was taken, oh, I don't know when it was taken. But George had an old Chevrolet pickup. I

think it was a 1927, called a Rocky Boy. And his picture's in the middle there and it shows Rocky Boy parked there so by then there was a road. I imagine it's probably pretty close to the existing road.

Brooks: Which is the Heart Butte cutoff?

Smiley: Came off the Heart Butte cutoff road and up past Dog Gun Lake. The topography going straight northwest towards East Glacier, was no way even today they could make one. When the seismographs made them in the 50s their D-8's weren't equipped for some of those rocks. Two Medicine can be a problem. George and Emma had a cable strung across the Two Medicine and a little car that they could pull themselves across the river in high water. Even today you can't cross it with a horse if the water's up, which can happen anytime, but mostly in the spring runoff.

Brooks: I want to go back to when he was first squatting there. I assume he was squatting on the land that became the Jennings Ranch.

Smiley: Right, and that's just a term we use, squatting. They actually had to build some kind of facility.

Brooks: Sure. Do you have any idea, or did he ever talk to you about how many other folks were in the area at the time homesteading, attempting to homestead? And also if before the homesteading started—and you mention the 1910 fires as being fairly significant—before the 1910 fires were there tribal members living there before they signed it over or sold it?

Smiley: I'll talk about the tribal members first. To my knowledge, the tribal members did not live in the Badger Two Medicine. There's rugged country. Archie St. Goddard was born in 1900, lived on Heart Butte cutoff road. His sons and grand—well, most of his direct children are dead now—but his grandsons still ranch there. Archie went to the Carlisle School in Pennsylvania, graduated there in 1918, 1919. Came back to the reservation, was very successful. At one time I think he had 800 cattle and two bands of sheep, which would be 2,000 sheep. He was on the

tribal council many years, was chairman several years. A very respected individual. I had the highest respect anybody could have for him. Just a wonderful neighbor.

Let me tell you a story. After I'd been there a couple of years, he came up one day and said, "You know, you need a good mountain horse if you're going to come up here and run cows. I got one down there at Sapoo's," which was his son. Sapoo's right on the Heart Butte cutoff road. "I think it would be pretty good for you." I said, "Well, okay, yeah, you're right, I need a horse." I went down there and looked at the horse and it was a fine horse, a sorrel.. golden. And we walked up there and he had a whole corral full of horses. He had probably a hundred horses. At one time he canned two semi-loads because he just had too many. He said, "Now this horse has got the same name as all the rest: SOB." I said, "How much do you want for the horse?" "Oh, how about \$75?" I said that would be okay, so I bought the horse. Well the reason he'd got the horse is I'd sold him a bull a year earlier and I didn't have any clue about what the price of the bull should be and I said, "Well, how about \$200?" He didn't say anything. "Is that too much?" "No, that's not too much." The bull was probably worth \$350, so he was getting even. He didn't say anything for a whole year. Getting even with me for giving him a good deal on the bull, he gave me a superb deal on the horse.

But he told me that the Indians would go up in that area to hunt and particularly in the fall to gather berries, probably the Sarvis berries to make pemmican, and to hunt elk when they were fat. I suspect that by the early 1900s, the elk had been pretty well pushed off the plains by the homesteading. You read Lewis & Clark and there are elk all the way down in the Missouri, well into the Midwest. But when the homesteaders came along, the elk, the only place they had left was the mountains, the front range of them. So Archie said that they would go on hunting trips up there and actually used our hay meadow as a camping spot to set up temporary camps. And they'd flesh out the hides there if they didn't have to pack all the stuff back and actually cure some of them. He found something in the roadway riding into our place at one time. This is a chunk of stone and he brought it down to the house and he said, "I've never seen one of these. I think it's manmade." It looks like a helmet.

Brooks: Right. It looks like a helmet or a small bowler hat or something. One piece of stone.

Smiley: One piece of stone and it's been scratched around. This didn't come out of a crick I don't think. He measured it; it's an inch seven and an eighth. It's like a hat size. And I said, "What do you think it is?" The only thing he could think of is when they were camped up there curing out these elk hides that they used this as a form for a headdress because a headdress has got a skull cap and then you stick all the feathers in it. And so they would stretch the elk hide over this, tie it down, and voila, you have what could be a headdress cap. I showed this to some archaeologists and they hadn't seen something like this.

Brooks: But they agreed that it looked human-worked.

Smiley: Yeah, they said you can't say that it is but can't say that it isn't. But that was Archie's interpretation. Point being that the Indians would go up there and camp and hunt [inaudible]. Another neighbor, Bill Big Springs, who was born in.. he claims he was born in 1916 [inaudible] 1920 and he's always at odds with the tribe over a number of things. But an interesting fellow. He went as a delegate from Montana to the Republican Convention in 1976 in Miami. He was Glacier County Commissioner and had three lawsuits against the tribe and he won all of them. I think he's a full blood. He wrote a letter to the local papers and I failed to save a copy of it. He said the same thing about the Badger Two Medicine, that they didn't really like it that much because it was tough country, hard to get around in. You could haul a [inaudible] around in there. You could get around on horses. They did hunt there but they didn't really occupy it much. Now that's two pieces of hearsay, but I consider them fairly reliable. [inaudible] pretty well. They're not people that exaggerated very much. So that's about Indian occupation. That's all I would be able to contribute on that.

As far as occupation when George got there, he said that.. Of course, being somebody that loved to hunt and fish, he had dogs; they all had dogs. They didn't have horses because horses were expensive and you had to feed them. There was all kinds of game there and after the fire when the grouse comes in, the game just blossoms much as the big game because they have all this forage now. So these people had dogs and he had packs for his dogs. They'd go to town and he had hunting dogs and packs. Said the only problem was that they would invariably run into a

coyote or a bear or something and the dogs would go nuts and take off and he'd spend most of his time retrieving stuff out of these packs that they'd torn off in the brush from their supposed trip to town for supplies.

He said the first thing you got was a cow, a milk cow, because you could make cream, butter, and something to feed the hogs if you happened to have a hog. And he said before he ever got any kind of horses or equipment, he would cut the hay on the hay meadow there on the homestead with a scythe, shock it up by hand, and then pack it on his back into the barn so he'd have hay for his milk cow in the winter. Life was not easy.

He had help in building some of the cabins. This guy named Slim Tobbin(?)—I think his given name was Charles. He lived over on what's now near the highway. Slim was a superb craftsman. He built I know the lodge and the dining room building there. Big stone fireplace are still standing. I think there are about ten or eleven cabins on that place by the time I got there. Two of them had fallen into disrepair over the years. I managed to at least save them to the point that they're usable. When they originally built them, they just laid the bottom log on a couple of flat stones and pretty soon they rotted out. Over many years I used to jack them up and get concrete under them.

Brooks: Where they using logs off the property or from the Badger Two Medicine?

Smiley: Wherever they could find them. Again, the fire took out most of the timber. We can see on the picture that the old growth that survived the fire, there was enough logs to build some cabins. I think that was true throughout most of the Badger Two Medicine. There was a fellow named Glen Smiley that homesteaded. I think, actually, Tobbin bought Smiley's homestead. No relation that I know of. And he would hire crews to go logging in the summer. They would actually leave the homestead and go back up in the Badger Two Medicine to wherever there was some timber. There were patches that did survive the fire. They would drag logs down. There was a fellow—I don't know his name—had a sawmill on the upper Two Medicine, about where it comes out of the steep country going up towards Badger Cabin. Two Medicine makes a big

turn. It's kind of heading northwest and it kind of turns to the northeast—Sawmill Flats. There was a sawmill there. There's no homestead right there.

Brooks: The Badger Cabin you mentioned is a Forest Service cabin?

Smiley: A Forest Service cabin, right. It's over a small divide from upper Two Medicine over into Badger Creek. And I know, I remember up on something called Whisker Ridge, which isn't up too far from that Sawmill Flats, there was an odd looking structure. It was just some logs. It looked like a loading dock, and sure enough, it was where they would drag logs up there and then they could take a peavey or a cant hook and roll them out onto a wagon. And this is the part of the Badger Two Medicine that's fairly flat. It's out towards the highway where actually most of the homesteads were taken. I remember seeing that structure well into the '70s. It's probably rotted away by now. Firewood was a big business, particularly with all those snags from the 1910 fire. I remember in East Glacier, they had to have firewood so the area served as a firewood supply for many of the people who lived in town and certainly for the homesteaders.

Brooks: And would people just go out and get their own or was it homesteaders bringing it into town?

Smiley: Probably both. People in town may not have had to have horses and wagons and all kinds of stuff, so fire was definitely a business. If you had the equipment, why you could get it on your own, kind of like today. Your family goes out and cuts firewood or you can hire somebody to bring it in to you, some sort of a deal.

Brooks: So you mentioned that Archie St. Goddard..How do you pronounce his last name again?

Smiley: Archie's dad was a Ozzie St. Goddard, which is French Canadian. The French pronunciation would be "sank-dore," but it's been kind of bastardized even back in the '50s saying St. Goddard.

Brooks: So he had sheep as well as cattle there. Was he the only one? Were there other working ranches at the time?

Smiley: Sheep were big. Sheep and cattle can compliment each other because they don't eat the same forage. To some extent, you can run them on the same range. Many people on the reservation had sheep. People from the outside brought sheep in for summer grazing. Probably the biggest commercial use of the Badger Two Medicine has been fee grazing by the Forest Service. Dealing directly with the natural resources. No gas and oil, no coal, not enough timber to be commercial. So grazing would have been a significant commercial use.

There's a fellow from Starbuck, Washington. Drew(?) I think was his name. He would bring trainloads of sheep over—trainloads.. .a trainload of sheep—graze them on the reservation and take them into the forest. I think he'd graze them on Archie's property, as well as Archie having his own sheep, and then take them on to the forest. The problem was that the grizzly bears and the coyotes liked sheep.

Even into the '60s, I remember the government had what they called government trappers, people who were hired to control predators. They'd shoot grizzly bears, they'd shoot black bears, they'd shoot coyotes. But mostly they set traps for the coyotes. They had a kind of cyanide gun trap that the coyote would pull some bait and get a shot of cyanide in the face and that would be the end of mister coyote. So probably the predator situation made it pretty tough on sheep. They could find range where there weren't grizzly bears. Grizzly bears and sheep are a conflict. Coyotes and sheep are a conflict. Black bear will go eat one sheep, grizzly bear will walk through a herd and just whack them and kill...Well, one night Archie said he killed forty of his sheep. And it was just one bear, just for sport.

None of those animals are a conflict with cattle. I don't know when the cattle started in the Badger Two Medicine. I know they were there by the 40s, maybe earlier. The Teton Livestock Association, which was an association of four or five permittees, as long as I can remember, and I was a member for many years, has run about 460 pairs up in that area. Used to trail them up

from Choteau, mostly. [inaudible] lived in Choteau. The Peebles brothers, the Stott brothers, the Swansons are in there now. The Swansons came in in the '70s because the Forest Service took away their range someplace else in about 1972 or 3, the last of the sheep were on the Forest and they still had the forage available, so the Swansons became members of the Teton Livestock Association in '73, I think. It might have been '72. So they would trail them up from Choteau, about a hundred miles. I remember helping them trail them up and back. It takes about five days. Cows move about twenty miles a day. Horses probably move twice that, because they're back and forth chasing the cows. And by ten or fifteen years ago, it just became so difficult to cross the reservation that they all truck the cows up here now.

Let's see, in 1966—'65 or '66—the Forest Service established a rest rotation type of grazing, as opposed to just turning everything out all at once. It was a little difficult for the ranchers to swallow at first because they had to come up in the middle of the summer and find these four hundred and something cows and move them all. But pretty soon it became apparent that this was a better deal for the range, so now it's just kind of an accepted practice.

Brooks: So describe the practice before that.

Smiley: On the allotment, which might have been 20,000 acres, because they could go all the way back to Badger Cabin (that's fifteen miles from those homesteads), they'd just turn a whole bunch of cows out and go look for them in the fall. The concept of the rest rotation is that any particular allotment within the total range is used as a different time each year. So when it's used early in the season, next time middle season, and the third year it's used at the end of the season when the grasses has all matured, the seed heads are viable. The cows walk through and they knock the seeds off and trample them in the ground and plant seeds. And then it's rested two years after that. That's kind of the ideal rest rotation system. You get rugged country like the Badger Two Medicine, where the snow drifts just wipe out fences, and it sometimes it isn't quite as pure as it is in the books. But the concept is a good one, and the Association tries to adhere to it.

Brooks: So in switching to the rest rotation, that meant fencing.

Smiley: Yeah.

Brooks: And who was responsible for that, the grazers?

Smiley: The Association, yeah, they have to do that. The Forest Service sometimes provides materials, but when they don't have any money, then the grazers have to do that. The Association built the reservation line fence, which was supposed to be a government property line. The government should have built it, but they didn't have money or the people, so the Association [inaudible] goes all the way from the highway to Palookaville, which is five or six miles. [inaudible] maintains it all.

Brooks: And that's the line between the reservation and the Badger Two Medicine?

Smiley: Right, the property boundary. And if the fence isn't there, then of course the reservation cows will eat off the range on the forest. The Association maintains that, maintains all the division fences, maintains the fence along the highway, they built that all the way from the reservation boundary to, well, it's almost to Summit all along the highway.

Brooks: And are any of the permittees from the reservation?

Smiley: No, not currently.

Brooks: I want to go back to, you know, sort of talking about the Jennings Ranch and the first sort of dude experiences there when George Jennings first started running it as a dude ranch, as an outgrowth of pack trips from Glacier. Talk a little bit about how that expanded and what that led to for the ranch.

Smiley: He was an engaging guy. In today's world, you'd say that he and Ma—I think he called his wife Ma, she never had any kids, but Mrs. Jennings—they were so accommodating and everybody that met them just loved them. So they were the draw. Well, the country's pretty nice

too, of course, but they were just really, really interesting, fun people. So it's not hard for me to see how people would want to come back and hang around. He always had some kind of activity. He could sit in a lodge at night and have little games for the hands, for young people, just keep them fascinated. He'd tell stories. Knew wildlife, knew animals, you know.

One of the things he commented to me.. I was teasing his dog once and he's so gentle, he said, "You know, it's just good that you never should tease animals." And he's right, you know, animals work and respond in a certain way, you don't tease them and give them mixed signals. And I think the most severe form of criticism I ever heard him say of anybody was something like, "I've never seen it done that way before." You got the message, but it was pretty general.

Brooks: So what did he do with dude ranch tourists or visitors, and what was the season like? Were there multiple seasons?

Smiley: Yeah, because it's long winters and you really couldn't get around there, I can't imagine that their season opened up much before June. So they've got June, July, August, and a little bit into September for dude stuff, and that's when families were free, in the summer. Kids would be on vacation. They would have breakfast cook-outs, they'd have supper cook-outs. There's a breakfast nook, a place way down on the crick. Supper Peak, which is a beautiful spot up on the reservation where you could watch the sunsets from. It's such a good viewpoint you could even see the stacks at the Anaconda mill refinery in Great Falls on a clear day. There was always something going on; he always had an activity. They had horse races, they'd do brandings, just always something to keep them busy.

Hunting trips, of course, were big. In the fall they'd take pack trips. He even took some that went all the way through what's now the Bob Marshall. They'd start out up at East Glacier, and they'd end up in Ovando. And they'd bring the horses back on a train from Ovando. There used to be railroad tracks from Ovando then—not now. They're long gone, ever since I can remember, but you can still see the railroad grade at Ovando. So they'd hunt all the way through the Bob Marshall sometimes. I don't know how in the world they got the meat taken care of. Maybe just

ate it all, I don't know. And I got some stories of some of their big hunts. Some of these guys were writing stories.

He had some pretty well-known people there. Clark Gable used to come and stay there. I've actually got some letters from Gable, one of them saying, "I sure enjoyed that last hunt. I'll be back next year, blah blah blah." The Bernadotte family from Sweden, Countess Bernadotte, came several years. The Swedish royalty, her and her husband, were instrumental in getting Jews out from under the Nazis, I think mostly in Poland. And he mysteriously died at about the beginning of the war. Let's see, the Hill family, of course, they were faithful and came as much as they could. A family named North, and I think they had the patent on the machine that sews the tops of grain bags closed. And they came year after year after year. They actually put up the scholarship in Bozeman in wildlife studies in George's name in the '60s. So people just flocked around because they were interested and like him.

Brooks: It sounds like it was pretty high-end visitors, people who could afford to spend a month, two months.

Smiley: I suppose. Yeah, in fact I got a brochure and I think it said a week cost \$65.

Brooks: That doesn't sound high-end today, now does it?

Smiley: And actually that brochure was from when Tex Hughes owned this, so that would have been as late as in the '40s.

Brooks: So you started out saying that George Jennings began with one milk cow, didn't have horses yet, but now we're to a point where he has enough horses to outfit a maximum of thirty-two people. Was he then growing more feed there? Was he buying it or was the feed grown on the Badger Two Medicine?

Smiley: He had winter grazing. Horses are tough. On the reservation, they rarely feed horses still. And it's good grass. So they had winter grazing. They had a permit from the forest to winter

graze back in Hyde Crick and Mettler Coulee and I suppose into Box Crick. And it's important that the animals have water in the winter. If they just lick snow for water, it's not very good for them. They can get impacted and suffer to the point of not making it. But there were enough riffles that were swift enough that they didn't freeze over in the winter, so it was good winter country for them. They grazed there all winter.

Now the Forest Service took that away when Tex Hughes had it. I remember because then he had to buy hay for his horses. He probably send them down on the reservation and made a deal with Archie to graze his horses. Archie had a hundred horses and I think when I was there in the '50s, Tex only had about eight or ten horses, and Archie was such a nice guy he would have done something for Tex that way. It was a big issue because Tex told me he wrote a letter to Senator Mansfield and a typical congressional response: "Well, we're sorry this happened. I'll look into it," but nothing ever changed.

Brooks: Meaning he had the loss of his grazing rights for his horses.

Smiley: Yeah, his horses. And that's, well, partly true for all of them. Archie told them that there was a fellow named Al Gordon had a homestead over towards the highway. He was in the dude business as well. And he said, Archie's take on it was this, "Ah, the Forest Service made a crook out of Al Gordon," because Al—and this was in summer, because he used to graze his horses and in summer he didn't have enough pasture on his own place. And he'd run his horses out at night and in the daylight he'd bring them back in so they'd never catch him with the horses out there. Made a crook out of Al Gordon. But I suspect that maybe the range was a problem because, particularly in the early part of the growing season, if you have a bunch of horses out there, that's not going to do the range much favor.

Brooks: So did George Jennings run it as a dude ranch up until the point that he sold it to Tex Hughes?

Smiley: Yeah.

Brooks: And then Tex Hughes took it and did he continue with it as a dude ranch?

Smiley: He tried, and he was kind of an engaging character but he wasn't George Jennings. Then the war came along and things just changed.

Brooks: How did the war change things in terms of the dude ranch?

Smiley: Well, nobody went anywhere, and rationing. You couldn't buy sugar, you couldn't buy tires, you couldn't buy all kinds of things during the war. I've even got George's old ration booklet and you were allowed to buy so much of these critical commodities each month and you had these little coupons—they looked like cardboard pennies or something—that would allow you to buy the stuff. I suppose there was some kind of a black market. Nobody had any money, nobody traveled. All the trains were hauling the troops around. It just kind of shut everything down. The whole country went to the war effort.

Of course I was alive but I don't remember any of that. I remember having a victory garden at home. That's what they called them. Everyone was encouraged to have their own garden so you wouldn't put a drain on the transportation and rest of the economy. I learned to hate parsnips because we ate a lot of parsnips. Always hated them out of our victory garden.

Brooks: Was anybody farming at all on the Badger Two Medicine? Was there any irrigation going on?

Smiley: No. Once in a while, somebody would plow up a meadow and try to raise a hay crop, but that was pretty rare. I know on the homestead one place one time, before I got there, Tex had hired somebody to come in. He didn't have a plow himself. The fellow was Ray Lutz(?), another homesteader in that part. He had a tractor. Went and bought a plow and he bought a seven acre to put oats in and that was it and put it back to grass. It's not a place that's suitable for farming and I think anybody that tried it figure it out pretty fast.

Brooks: You mention that you have a photo that leads you to believe that the road, that Heart Butte cutoff road, was in there before '27 because of the photo of the Rocky Boy—is that the truck?—was in there by then. Were there people—and I guess George Jennings as well—that lived in there year round? Was he a year round resident?

Smiley: Yeah. That was their big season if they weren't duding was the trapping.

Brooks: In the winter?

Smiley: In the winter, oh yeah, they had [inaudible]. I want to say something and it's hard to believe. He said that he had three trap lines and he'd visit them twice a week, every third day. Monday he'd go on A, Tuesday B, Wednesday C, and Thursday, Friday, Saturday, he'd take Sunday off. I had it on my mind, he said they were twenty-five miles long and I can't imagine someone going twenty-five miles every day for six days a week. That may be possible, maybe you can walk twenty-five miles if you're in shape. And if he caught something he'd skin it out on the spot, rather than pack the whole body in and skin it later.

He said that there's a reed that grows—it may be the cow parsnip—that's hollow and he would cache those at every creek he came to so he could just stick that thing down into the snow and use like a big straw to suck up water out of the creek, rather than having to dig down and get water and not pack water.

When he'd go hunting, he told me he carried three bullets. He was a good enough shot he's never shoot anything more than three things. He says, "It's just too much extra weight if you're going to carry more bullets than that." So twenty-fives miles seems like an awful lot, but that sticks in my mind and knowing how tough conditions were, maybe they did.

Brooks: What was he trapping?

Smiley: The good one, of course, was mink. Beaver were pretty good, and otter. There's not a lot of them around, but they trapped them when they could. And muskrats, those were not

something that they would spend a lot of time after on a long trap line. Dog Gun Lake, even in the '60s when he was in his 80s, he'd trap muskrats because you could just walk out on the ice. They're only three or four dollars a piece and they're real easy to catch and easy to skin. Mink was the premium one. He wouldn't waste a bullet putting an animal out of its misery. He could press their heart and cut off their circulation. He said he tried that on a muskrat once and the muskrat.. Any trap you have a chain on it so it's secured to something, and he misjudged the distance and the muskrat lunged at his throat and the muskrat stopped just a few inches short of his throat. He said, "I used a bullet on that one." I remember trapping rabbits and things with him and he'd just press their heart till they quit breathing.

Brooks: So when you bought the place from Hughes, was it still a dude ranch, or had that gone under?

Smiley: I doubt he'd had any clients for a couple of years. He was just living there. His wife, Carmella, taught school in Browning, so he'd actually move to Browning in the winter. He had a caretaker staying out there, Jack Baker, Whispering Jack. Anybody that's been around East Glacier for a while knows Whispering Jack. He's one of these fellows that just ended up there and just stayed. So he hired Jack to help him come put up ice one year, because no refrigeration, no power in the early days. And up on the ridge, about a mile plus, a little over a mile from the ranch, there are a couple of lakes. Not very big; probably an acre in size, half acre. They cut ice from those lakes and hauled it down on a sleigh. It's surprising, that country; on top of these ridges, these little pothole lakes. Of course the reason they went up there to cut the ice is the downhill haul on the sleigh. Hired Jack in 1950 to help him cut ice and when I moved there after Tex had died, why, Jack was still there. He went to the home in Browning in about 1980. He was an engaging character, full of stories and BS, and a voice you could hear a mile away. Bill Big Springs told me that's because Jack spent two or three years living in East Glacier in a cabin with a guy named Bill Twist that was mostly deaf and Jack had to yell at him to make him hear. And he never lost the habit of yelling.

Brooks: So wait a minute, there's a guy named Whispering Jack but he yells at everybody?

Smiley: Well, of course, that's how you get the name.

Brooks: Right. So you bought the place, and what were your visions of it or what drew you to buy it, other than having been there as a young man?

Smiley: I'm not quite sure exactly why. I always wanted to...not always... After I came to Montana the first time in the '50s, then I started working on ranches, mostly over in the Bear Paw Mountains on the large ranches over in that country, and just got to love that and thought, well, I really like the Badger Two Medicine area. Probably an attraction to the area was an excuse to be able to do stuff there, hang out there. And bought George's cows. He had eight cows, I think, or seven and a bull, I'm not quite sure. Anyhow, I bought those and started to build up the herd from that. Pretty naïve about a lot of things, but learned and had good neighbors, the St. Goddards and the Big Springs. And that's the way it was: everybody helped everybody. Their cows would wander up there and I'd get them and put them in the corral. No telephone, of course, and get word to them, "Yeah those yearlings you're looking for, I got three of them here." "Oh, okay, I'll be out and get them." It was a good sense of cooperation. Still is, I mean that's how it has to be when you're essentially open range country.

So I had cows, but I was stuck with all these buildings I didn't know what to do with. So at various points, oh, I think for about six or seven years, I leased them out to a couple of guys in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and had an environmental studies camp for high school students there. They ran a program I'd say six or seven years. Another time, I leased out the facilities to a fellow from Browning [inaudible] had an outfitter and guide permit from the Lewis and Clark Forest. Had a special use permit to operate on the Lewis and Clark Forest and an outfitter guide permit from the state of Montana. Had to have both of those things in order to do the outfitting. That didn't last too many years. He was marginally successful at it. We just kind of mutually agreed to sever that relationship. But mostly used it as a place where I could go with the family, raise four boys who all love the place. A lot of friends. I had so many friends stop by that I ended up mostly cooking and taking people on rides and not doing much myself. Beautiful country and once it gets in your blood, it's tough to get out of it. Just spent most of last week helping the Livestock Association round up cows again.

Brooks: So was the, I don't want to say demise of the dude ranch there, it just ceased to be a dude ranch for whatever reasons—the war, Tex Hughes not maintaining it as a dude ranch, the personality of George Jennings obviously not being there. Was that going on all over the Badger Two Medicine with other dude ranches or outfitting, that that was sort of fading away?

Smiley: I think so. I don't think there are any dude ranches in Badger Two Medicine now.

Brooks: But there's still quite a bit of hunting there?

Smiley: Yeah, but it's... There is some outfitting that goes on, but the outfitting has to go on in the Lewis and Clark Forest, because there's just not enough private property. I think I've got the numbers right handy here.

Brooks: So the outfitting is now primarily done by people who are not living in the Badger Two Medicine but are bringing people into the areas that are national forests?

Smiley: I don't know who the outfitters are on the national forest now. There's a fellow named Richard Jackson who lived in East Glacier. I think he bought ten acres from Morris St. Goddard on the reservation. Had a very successful outfitting operation. They would leave from Morris's place, which is right by Palookaville, and go up over White Rock Pass into the Badger Cabin area, spend most of the week there, ride out over to the highway, and had people pick them up there. And then some of them wanted experience with trailing horses back around through Box Crick, Hyde Crick, up Mettler Coulee, over to Palookaville. There's probably eight miles you could trail the horses back there. So he'd have a week rotation.

And the Association hired Richard Jackson as kind of a caretaker of the cows. They'd put eighty head back in the Badger Cabin area and for a while they would be bothering Richard's hunting camp, so the Association said, "Well, if we hired Richard to watch the cows back there, he can get his dudes to chase cows, and that's another experience for them and he'd control the cows." He was a great hand. He got killed on a horse, his horse bucked him off in Badger Cabin and he

was a superb horseman. Fifty-five years old, something like that. And it was a safe horse, which I guess there's never a guarantee. Fell on his neck and that was the end of him right there. So he was the last really successful one.

The situation is that in outfitting in a national forest, you think there's a lot of acres, but really the outfitters kind of have to have an exclusive area so one outfitter gets this area, another one gets this area. And I think they only have about two or three outfitters in that whole part of the Lewis and Clark Forest up to Badger Cabin. So it's possible to run a very successful business there, which Richard did. He was good: he was good with the people, he spent the winter making contacts, well-organized, he had good cooks in his camp and good horses. But there's always never a guarantee with the horses.

This information is not entirely current. It was a few years back. There are twenty-five patented homesteads in Badger Two Medicine and they comprise 3227 acres; forty different owners, counting even [inaudible] is one owner. This was in 1988. I just happened to dig those numbers from the county court recorder.

Brooks: What's that from?

Smiley: This is from the county clerk and recorder. I wrote a letter to all the congressional delegations in 1988. I'll give you a copy of this, because it's kind of.. .Because they're considering it for wilderness designation.

Brooks: And I see Senator Melcher's name on that.

Smiley: I sent it to everybody.

Brooks: He was the senator, or one of the senators from Montana at the time, who was working on the Wilderness Bill in the state.

Smiley: I sent it to Bacchus and Representative Pat Williams.

Brooks: So what became of the proposal to make it wilderness at that time?

Smiley: Well the Indians, of course, resisted. I resisted. Just wasn't enough push. I think most of the locals that I have... I wrote up a kind of a summary of what I saw as the situation, sent it to all the congressional delegations, county commissioners, all the other homestead owners that I knew. And there were a couple issues. The rights of the homesteaders is guaranteed by a patent that they've got on the land was an issue, because some of the tribal members, because it was once reservation, feel that they have rights over all this private land, which is not the case. As I pointed out here, the 1895 agreement reserved certain rights to tribal members. The government bought back the land. They got all the rights, with the exception of three things that were reserved to tribal members. Said, "The Indians have and do hereby reserve to themselves the right to go on any portion of the lands hereby conveyed so long as the same shall remain public lands of the United States." Well, when the patents went on the homesteads, they're no longer public lands of the United States. And this is a fact that many of them conveniently forget when they come and cut my fences so they can run their snowmobile across there.

Second right was "the right to remove wooden timber for agency and school purposes and for their personal uses for houses, fences, and all other domestic purposes." So the Indians had a right to come and cut firewood, fence posts, and domestic purposes. Maybe even the right to cut enough lumber to build a house. The courts might go that far. But again, that's on the public lands, not on the homesteads. They provide further that the, said "The Indians hereby reserve and retain the right to hunt upon said lands and to fish in the streams there, so long as the same shall remain public lands of the United States." Again, not on the homesteads. And in accordance with the provisions of the game and fish laws of the state of Montana. So you need to buy a license if you want to hunt there. It's frequently not recognized or conveniently forgotten by certain tribal members, and that's become kind of an issue. It's really unresolved because there's some confusion about what rights any people have, I guess.

Brooks: So how is that tied to the opposition of making it wilderness? Because people still outfit, people still hunt, people still fish, and even harvest some timber from the wilderness, right?

Smiley: Depending on the designation for any [inaudible]. But the restrictions on wilderness would be much more severe than if it's not wilderness. And I think the tribe is against it. Well, I don't know, but I think they feel that their rights, even a very strict interpretation of their rights, would be compromised with wilderness. And I can understand that. I would feel that anything I wanted to do would be compromised if it's wilderness.

Brooks: Well one thing that would certainly be compromised that you just mentioned is running snow mobiles in the wilderness.

Smiley: Well, the tribal plan already that the forest has there can put restrictions on those. That can all happen without it being a wilderness. One of the things that happens when you get a wilderness is now it's been discovered. Look at what happened on the Middle Fork of the Flathead here, when they declared it a wild and scenic. Nobody knew it was there, and it was a great river to go float. Now it's just so popular, you have all these controls on there. There's kind of an anomaly when something gets declared to wilderness—you love it to death.

Brooks: Right. There have been many people that have claimed that about the national parks. The same thing, they get declared a national park because of their "pristine-ness," their "monumentalness." They're loved to death. So who was in favor of wilderness, then, at that time?

Smiley: Wilderness nuts.

Brooks: You mean any groups in particular? Individuals?

Smiley: Oh, all of the above.

Brooks: So the other thing that maybe I'm mis-assuming is that as outfitting trips diminished, people continued to hunt individually as private parties. Did it increase as time went on that hunters from Great Falls or other areas would come and hunt the Badger Two Medicine?

Smiley: Yeah, the hunting pressure has increased. I can't quantify it, but certainly ever since I've been there. Again, the outfitting was, I mean, you had George Jennings and then Tex and Art Trenkle's dad over at the Rising Wolf and some of those other ones that would take outfitting trips, but there was plenty of room for everybody. And the access was not there. They didn't have snow mobiles. They didn't have four-wheelers and motorbikes and so forth. They had a horse or your feet. And so it was a much lower impact.

Brooks: So when did the motorized hunting and recreation start up?

Smiley: The first snow mobiles I saw were 1965. That's about when they started to become popular. That certainly changed the winter because suddenly you get way back in there and bother the elk, poach them. There wasn't a lot of that went on to start with. But boy, now, well, let's see... Saturday, Labor Day weekend, the boys and I took a couple of horses and went over to the other side of Summit to the loading dock there, rode two plus miles down to Sawmill Flats, then rode the horses up the Two Medicine River about five miles, just for a day trip. There were twenty-three four wheelers and three motorbikes in just the three or four hours we were in there we passed different [inaudible]. And that's just a lot of impact compared to somebody... And it was a beautiful Labor Day weekend day, so you could see why everybody was out. Almost too warm; eighty degrees and sun and not too much wind, which is an unusual combination for that country, no wind. But it's just a tremendous impact.

Brooks: Talk about the impact. You mean roads, some wildlife, weeds?

Smiley: Yeah, exactly. It was probably not until—oh pick a year—1990 that the four wheelers really got to be popular, maybe a little earlier. But before that those horse trails, cow trails, and elk trails had been there for a long time, never changed much. Now the four wheeler, instead of one track that is defined but doesn't really wash out very much, now there's two tracks,

particularly on the hills where they spin them a little bit. Suddenly you've got a lot more erosion. Knapweed is a big one we notice. In the last twenty years it's just mushroomed back there. Now that may be for other reasons, but I don't think horses carry too much knapweed seed. Those axles on the undercarriage of a four wheeler, I think that carries it pretty well. So that's certainly an impact. People impact.

I remember sitting at the head of Hyde Crick one day, which is an hour or two ride from the ranch somewhere up there, and suddenly we hear four wheelers coming. We knew the people, stopped and talked, and they live over on one of the other homesteads. They're caretaking on the homesteads. And they said, "Oh, we just thought we'd make the loop before supper." So in an hour they can go and cover twelve miles there. That's just an awful lot of country that's impacted by human beings, compared to somebody on foot or on horse.

It's accumulated, I mean it's gradual. It's not all of a sudden you notice this. But it is gradual. Definitely an impact. Forest Service I think is trying to control it. You can take any side of the tribal plan issues and it is difficult because the Forest Service, they don't have enough people to patrol that. That's a big district. Not very many acres, but gosh it goes from Glacier Park down practically to Great Falls, a hundred and some miles. I don't know how many law enforcement officers they have but it isn't very many, it isn't enough.

Brooks: So you sold the property in...

Smiley: It was probably about '98, something like that.

Brooks: And you sold it to Doug Hammil(?).

Smiley: Yeah.

Brooks: Okay. You still obviously go ride there, you seem fairly well in touch. What do you think looms for Badger Two Medicine. It seems like there's a new hope—well, I don't know

about new—but a set of issues there again: possible wilderness, possible gas and oil exploration, certainly multiple use is an issue. Where's it headed?

Smiley: I would guess that oil and gas, unless it's a national emergency to the point where they're just going to go drill anywhere, I would guess that that issue will probably wane. I think just recently I read that some of those companies that had leases there sold them to one of the environmental groups or terminated them or something. Geologically, it has potential for oil and gas, but it's tough country to drill in. I mean, those guys have got Cats, they can put a well in anywhere they want, but underground I think it's so fractured that I know in one well they drilled they just gave up because they couldn't maintain the pressure [inaudible] Caverns under there and they just keep losing their drilling [inaudible]. So it's very speculative and very expensive to drill there. Now that they can handle these off-shore places pretty easily and they get good deals from the government on the leases from those, there's other places they can get oil. So I would guess that that's going to be less of an issue, at least for a while, than maybe it was perceived to be in the past.

I think with the claims that the tribe—and I don't want to put words in anybody's mouth—but I have a sense that out there there's an interest of individual members and maybe the tribe as a whole has in that area, that it really creates a cloud on the title—who has the authority to do what? For instance, something like the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, AIRFA. They can wave their hands at the mountains and say this is a spiritual experience for us. Well, it's a spiritual experience for me. And this Bill Big Springs letter, the one I mentioned he wrote to all the papers around here, said that it never was historically of spiritual importance to the tribe. Unless one can find specific evidence of an important spiritual happening, like some petroglyphs or something, whatever anyone might find, there really is no basis for that. But that's not how the courts are going to interpret things.

We have not treated the Native Americans well, historically. They were always a problem, and we set up these reservations, which was probably a mistake, but they're there and we have to deal with them. So I think that's really going to make management difficult. For instance, now they're managing the bison range in their contract. Here you read that it's something that would

be successful, maybe not. I could foresee maybe something like that in the Badger Two Medicine. Probably more is maybe a guilt trip by the government, you know, we haven't treated them well, we better do something. I don't think that's the right answer, but it may be that eventually it's going to happen.

It would be more impacted with fishing and hunting, and just access, with people being in there. In the '60s or '70s, I'd get on a horse or just hike down to the Two Medicine and go fly fishing for hours just to lose myself. You know, catch a few nice big trout and a bunch of small ones and the last time I went over there it was about a couple of years ago and fished pretty hard and got one middle-sized one and there's lots of tracks up and down the pieces of river where you can see tracks. So there's just more impact. It's the mobility of people. Somebody in Great Falls can get in his big four wheel drive pickup with a trailer and bring a bunch of snow mobiles up there and in three hours you can get a whole lot of people out there. That's the significant change, I think.

Brooks: And so you think a lot of the increased use is from non-residents?

Smiley: Oh yeah.

Brooks: So it's a recreational ground for people from outside the area.

Smiley: Sure. It's a nice place. And of course some of the homesteaders now are [inaudible] is an opportunity for them to use the land and now homesteaders are seeing it more as a pristine area that ought to be preserved and protected. I imagine you'll interview some that are pretty upset—maybe you already have—pretty upset with the cows on their property because they don't understand open range law and they need to build a fence to keep the cows out. So that's another conflict that's certainly extant. Love it to death.

Brooks: Great, well, I appreciate your time and your memories. If you have anything else you'd like to add, please do. I certainly have enjoyed it.

Smiley: Well, I'm glad somebody's taking all this down, so that's good too.

Brooks: Alright.