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Interviewee: William "Bud" Moore
Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon
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Suzanne Vernon: I have to ask you about your sourdough. . .

Bud Moore: We have ours, dates back to 1885. I had some I had started myself, when I was working back in Washington. I had packed it around from Montana to Utah, to Washington D.C. But on the move, moving back home here, I lost it. It just gave out in transit. So, one day I was working in the regional office down there. Early in the morning a man by the name of Bill Burgess, he showed up there at my house. I was batching there, waiting for my family to move out. He said, 'I heard you lost your sourdough? Here's a starter, to get you going again.' So he gave me that and he gave me a little history. I've got it somewhere here in my files. He had gotten it in Canada. He had gone to a meeting in Canada. Up in Canada, the folks up there, they like to give you a little memento. They'll give you a buddy beaver pin, or whatever. This time, they gave these little sourdough vials. Bill brought it back and started up his own sourdough. History said, 1885, Edmonton, is where it originated. So that's the story of the sourdough. We've kept it alive since then. Of course we've given out starters to quite a few people around. It's sorta like a child. You just take care of it.

SV: How?

BM: We keep our sourdough in a small crock (starter) about a quart, maybe a little bigger, quart and a half crock. Then the way you do that. If you want sourdough hotcakes in the morning. Take the sourdough starter, dump it out into a bowl that you are going to mix in. Then put in whatever flour you think it's going to need. In the case of Janet and I, it's about two cups. That takes care of Janet and I and the birds in the morning. Two cups. Then you let that set overnight, mix that up into a batter, and let it set overnight. Then the first thing you do in the morning, is take out the starter. Put it back in the crock. So the starter never has any eggs or anything like that in it. It's just flour and water all the time. That way your starter is not contaminated and it will last forever. That is, if you don't let it die. You have to use it at least once a week, or it will die on you. It's a bacteria just like yeast. It'll work out if you don't keep feeding it. So you take the starter out before you put in. . . what you got left is for hotcakes. Then put in your sugar, salt, little soda. . . put that in last. . . eggs, or maybe an egg. And that's about it. When you put the soda in, it doubles in size immediately. The sourdough is sour. Acid reaction. The big difference in sourdough compared to baking powder and that sort of thing, is it does all its rising before you put it on the griddle. It just puffs up into a bunch of bubbles. It's that soda interaction. Where the other, the baking powder type, the heat, when it gets hot, it raises. That's the big difference right there in the way they work.

SV: All the old timers who came here in the early 1900s had sourdough.

BM: One of the things that most families, we've given our sourdough to a lot of families in the valley, young families, and they don't. . . they are not stable enough in their lifestyles. . . they are going here and going there, all over the place. Like everybody does nowadays. The sourdough gets misplaced or forgotten or they don't even eat breakfast at home. They'll keep it awhile then it will die on them. Be dead. Just not using it enough.

SV: You have to feed it that flour and water?

BM: Yeah. You can put it in a refrigerator and keep it a long time that way. Keeps it dormant. But as long as you let it set out at room temperature, it's gonna work. But it's tremendous stuff. Good for you, too. Easy to digest. So much for sourdough.

SV: When I called you on the phone, we talked about finding connections. You said that one thing that was lacking was the history of the trappers and the hunting and fishing. I have tried to ask more questions about the trapping. But I'm curious now were there trappers here when you came in the seventies. Was anybody making a living here by trapping then?

BM: Yeah, partly.

SV: Were they using any of the old traplines?

BM: Not much. Some. Let me explain. First let me say, I need to say that the blank in the trapping history is much broader than the Swan Valley. See what happened, the trappers were the pathfinders after Lewis and Clark. They came when Lewis and Clark were coming down the Missouri, they met seven parties coming up, all trappers. They were already starting to come up. The history is well recorded about the attempt to establish trapping in the west. They started first with those outposts. But they didn't work very well. They thought maybe the Indian tribes would bring in furs and things. But they went to that free trapper concept. They'd come up with a big load of supplies. Young men that were willing to tackle this, they'd just dump them off in these mountain valleys somewhere, and go back in a year, "meet you right here again." That's where the free trapper came in. That's all well-recorded up to about 1840, mid-1840s, when they finally caught all the beaver. That was mostly beaver trapping, not entirely, but mostly. That's what they were after. The beaver, when they trapped them down, to the point where the beaver didn't pay to trap anymore. That was pretty much the end of the trapping, as far as that kind of trapping went.

But then, if we were doing that today, those were known as the mountain men. Mountain trappers. If we were doing that today, from our perspective we'd call them valley men. They didn't trap these big mountain ranges very much. Way back in the Bob or the Selway Bitterroots. They were trapping these big valleys. Mostly after beaver. Then they got some other things. They got up in the Flathead, got a few martin and fisher and some things. In the main valley. But these big mountain ranges that were unexplored, they didn't get back in there

hardly at all. Some of their Indian trails probably went through those places. So we would call them really valley men today.

That era of trapping then, after they trapped out the beaver and kinda closed out. . . that's where the major historians stopped talking about trapping. But there's tremendous history of trapping all over the west still going on too, some of it, that went on after that. Some of those trappers did, even after the beaver played out, they did continue to trap. They probed back in, but the big Rendezvous were over with, and all that. So they probed back into the mountains. Some of them when the beaver ran out, they hired on as guides to the military, or that, you know. Jim Bridger, he started a trading post. He saw all the pilgrims coming so he got a trading post set up along the road. That's the way it went.

That era of trapping, there's lots of trapping going on. Lots of it, since the 1840s, that's only slightly recorded. I've never read any big books or anything on that sort of thing in the West. It's mostly, you pick up some of it in the little local histories. They usually say so-and-so was a trapper. Like Charley Anderson, here. Well, it'll say, Charlie Anderson was a trapper.

SV: People who knew Charley, said there were fur buyers who would come along and buy from him. . .

BM: That's right. That's the way it was when I was very young. We were in the Bitterroot. The fur buyers would come out of Missoula. They made regular trips around. Great stories about those guys. They bought furs from our place. They bought furs from me when I got big enough to trap. I'm sure the same thing was going on here in the Swan Valley. They had those traveling fur buyers. One thing that happened since we came here. When we came here the fur places were very, very low. They'd been low for some time. There were a few people trapping. Butch Harmon, for example. You need to talk to Butch if you haven't already. He was trapping when we come in. He was one of the few trappers probably the only one, that I knew of anyway. With the exception of some young folks, kind of protegés of Butch's. Les Hostetler was kind of learning from Butch.

When we came in, it was pretty low, but it was still enough of a price. Butch was doing pretty well. Before we came they had trapped, him and Howard Kurt (sp?) and then Butch can take you back to Ed Beck, and some of those that trapped and trapped and trapped. One of the things that happened when the homesteaders first came, they were able to scrape out a fair living by growing most of their crops and so on, by putting up hay for their cattle and things like that. But to get cash, it was hard to convert it to cash in a place like this. A lot of the homesteaders, several, not a lot I guess, right in this valley, trapped a lot. They trapped every winter back in the. . . and that was one way to get ready cash. Particularly after World War I. Fur prices were very high. You didn't have to catch very much fur to get shoes for the kids for a family of nine, you know! So you find, here, in the valley, those old traplines. If you know what to look for. I find them everywhere I got practically. I get up in the mountains a little way, I'm always looking.

SV: What do you look for?

BM: You'll see, first off, you'll see where they made their sets. Old cubbies on the ground, for Canadian lynx. It's common to make a kind of a cubby, and put your trap in front and your bait in the back. I'd find one of those here and there, all around. Most of those now are getting pretty obscure because they weren't way up in the high basins. The lynx were a midslope animal all the way from the valley floor here to two-thirds of the way up. So much of that has been logged now. A lot of that is outside the wilderness and quite a lot of that old sign is gone. But then you get up a little higher into the martin habitat. Their chosen habitat is the upper hanging valleys. That doesn't mean that they aren't down here. You'll catch a few of them right down here, too. But up there the country is undisturbed except for natural processes. You can follow those old traplines. There's one in, some of them up in Hemlock country. I've trapped in there. I've documented all of that. At the library. The traplines and the cabins. Wherever I come onto that sort of things I've pretty well tried to document that. Photograph the artifacts. So you'll find that around all over. What that is, that's not the Hudson Bay company, or anything like that. It's the homesteaders that come in here early. They found out it was good fur country and there was ready cash to be made from catching fur. So, and there're number of them you've probably talked to already that either were trappers. I don't know if there's many left that were trappers. . .

SV: The most interesting one I guess was Buster Redd. He never trapped for lynx. He must have been up higher. He couldn't remember who had done the lynx trapping. He didn't make much distinction between bobcat and lynx. That surprised me. . .

BM: A lot of difference in value. A lot of difference. I think, I talked to Buster a couple of times and sketched out his traplines. He seemed like he was primarily after martin. I don't think he even mentioned trapping beaver.

SV: He did at Echo Lake. Permits for beaver. In the 40s.

BM: Back then beaver was pretty well closed all over the state of Montana because they'd been hit so hard. The only time in my young life when I could trap a beaver was when some farmer was being damaged, the land being flooded or something. They'd get a permit. Then my dad trapped beaver quite a bit for that. I never did much on those permits. Dad did most of that while I was growing up. They were tough to work with, those beaver. Work those pelts down there. Tough to flesh them.

The thing that seemed to grab Buster was the marten. Perfect example of the old adage, once you get hooked on these mountains you ain't much good for anything else. You get trapping martin, and that's really something, up there in that high country . . . just you. Nothing up there, everything has migrated down, except the martin and the wolverines and the ermines and the trappers! That's about all there is up there. Pretty harsh country. He just slept out

where he. . . he didn't have much for camps or cabins. He was telling me about his little wicciups (sp?) that he made, just barely to get in.

SV: You said you sketched out his traplines? From Jim Creek north?

BM: Uh-huh. On the Missions side. And he told me once about trapping on the other side, too. He went up and down into Quintonkin, one of those big drainages on the south Fork side. He'd gone up in there and trapped, too. I'd have to get my notes to remember where it was. Sullivan Creek and Quintonkon, I think.

SV: See, he couldn't remember the drainages.

BM: He could tell me the drainages. That was ten years ago.

SV: He gave me the same basic descriptions of how he put he sets in, and going from one set to the next. The daily routine he remembered.

BM: Well, when you get to putting this together, I do have some stuff in my files. If that would help close the gaps. I did talk to Buster on two different occasions. I was all fired up to gather any information I could. Then I went down to his place. He told me in more details. By that time I'd learned enough about where he might have gone to ask him questions. So I do have some information in my files here that might be useful.

SV: No he did tell me a little bit of a story about two or four grizzlies, and shot three, I think. Missions side.

BM: I didn't get that from him. We focused on trapping. And when I left him that day he said, "The next time you come we'll kill some elk." So I didn't get to the grizzlies.

SV: Who were the other trappers here then?

BM: Well, there were several. One of them was, Warner Lundberg's uncle. Can't remember name.

SV: I talked to John Hulett. He mentioned things about wolverine and lynx. . . about getting his first lion hounds, and he kept putting the hounds on these track that he thought were lions and they were wolverines. He said there were wolverines everywhere. Do you know anything about that?

BM: Well, not here. I know roughly about the wolverines return. I wasn't here in the thirties. I did start trapping in the twenties. By the mid thirties I was a full time trapper in the Lochsa. There wasn't a wolverine in the Bitterroot country. All my boyhood and I started out very young. By the time. . . the mid-twenties. I was born in 1917. By the mid-twenties I'd have been

8. I was following my dad. He was one of those homestead trappers. Gather furs right out the back door. Just like Elk Creek, or something. He'd go up Mill Creek into the South Fork of Lolo.

But the wolverines were. . . all I knew, were only stories from some of the old timers. Then the fishers were in almost the same boat. In the twenties, they were catching the last of them. They were closed. The state had closed the season on them. But every once in awhile, the underground, you'd hear ole' Frank or somebody got a fisher. They had a black market. They could sell them. They were still able to sell them. But by the time I got into the mountains trapping, which was pretty darn young, I never saw a fisher track or a wolverine track for all the time. In that country. But then there begin to be reports, seems to me in the forties. The wolverines were kind of migrating. They come back on their own. They were never planted or anything that I know of. They begin up around Seeley here, up in this country. Every now and then somebody would get one. That's probably where John was involved there.

The first one that I even saw was I had an assistant ranger named Bob Stiner (sp?) He and his wife Bev are retired and live in Hamilton. He had a home in Missoula. He loved to hunt the Rattlensake. He didn't hunt over with us in the Lochsa. He was up there hunting one day. This creature came loping along. He was setting down, watching. He didn't know what it was and he shot it. It was a wolverine. So he come back to Powell and told me he'd shot a wolverine. I said, Geez. Here I'd been in these mountains all these years and never even seen a track. And this is a greenhorn from New Jersey, goes out and shoots a wolverine! That was just a little harbinger of what was happening. Later on, well, It was in the seventies, I come back from Washington. We went up skiing with the wolf researcher from northern Minnesota and Bob Ream. And Leach was here to give us some advice, and Bob asked if I'd go up with him to Packers Meadow, to ski around. Gosh, we skied into the woods there, I was taking him over to show him an old cabin we'd made. Skied right off of Packers Meadow, and here was the tracks of three wolverines. First I'd ever seen in my life! The place was occupied with wolverines. Well, that and then of course when we come up here we found wolverines to be quite common. And still are. They're not thick or abundant. I don't think they are an animal that gets thick. I've got a number of them here after I came up here. In the Bob I never caught any in the Bob but there were a few of them. I trapped a couple of years over in the little salmon. Trapping marten. I didn't bother with the wolverines.

SV: Did you see fisher?

BM: Oh yeah. I've caught a number of them. Fishers, when we first came, fishers were reintroduced. I think in the forties, along in there somewhere. (See our Wildlife files.) That was a kind . . . the Forest Service and the Fish and Game Department cooperated on that a lot. One of the concerns of the Forest Service was the porcupines were eating up their plantations. The fisher is one of the few, probably the only efficient animal that can kill those porkies. They hunt those porkies. They are able to survive their quills pretty well. So they were helping to put it together. There were several fisher plants up in here and in the Sapphires and in the Bitterroots. So I think fishers are well established now.

But here in the Swan when we first came, they were quite common. Right here in the bottom, on our place, on the ice of the pond. But they thinned them down a lot. Fur prices got high shortly after we came in the 80s. People begin to trap a lot. . . there were long line trappers coming through here. People who weren't residents. A lot of them were trapping coyotes. Of course those coyote sets were deadly for fishers. The traps were bigger. They would break up a fisher pretty bad if he got into a number three or four. They'd just go right into those coyote sets. Quite a lot of them caught here in the 80s. Probably a lot more than we know. Most of them I know about were caught by myself, Butch, Les Hostetler. They turned them into the game department. I never did keep one. I never caught one where it was legal to keep it. So I always turned it in.

SV: When I asked about fisher, homestead families. I just get a blank look.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

BM: Try to go back and find the first trappers is kind of “iffy”. Practically none of them kept journals. They just trapped.

SV: When you were trapping the Missions side, were there certain kinds of habitat where you were more likely to find a wolverine?

BM: Oh yeah. The fishers are more, they are kind of . . . the Candian lynx and fishers have the same favored of habitat. The midslope stuff. Where the snowshoe hares are pretty abundant and so on. They kind of go together. Fishers and lynx are pretty close together. But the wolverines, wolverines and martin, are fairly close. The martin’s favored habitat, oh they have good habitat down into the midslope. But it’s kind of the midslope on up to the timberline. They really like those basins up there. Like Cold Lake basin. Glacier Lake basin. Those are good martin spots. They like that high country. Clear on up to where it gets too thin where there’s no prey. The wolverine, just about the same thing. Give you an example. One of the best places for wolverines right around here is right in there around the forks of Elk Creek. That’s back a ways off the beaten path, but it’s not high in elevation. When I was trapping in there, they’d make a loop. They had a kind of a circle, they cross my trapline every week or so. It looked like they’d circle up into the high country and come down those, one fork and up the other.

SV: So they are regular travelers. . .

BM: They tend to do that. You’ll find where a family of them have a habitat where they seem to be sticking to pretty close. They’ll circle around through that. It’ll be fair-sized. But there’s plenty of food there and they’ll stick to it. Overlapping that you’ll find an old male wolverine that’ll come through about once a month, or maybe come through once and you’ll never see him again. He just comes. . . he’s contouring through the country. I don’t know why. Only the wolverines know for sure. He doesn’t seem to stick so much to an area. I found that to be particularly true in the Bob, in the Little Salmon. The wolverines would come through there, there wasn’t as many of them in there per acre as in the Missions. But they just come through once in a while and never come back.

SV: Lower elevation?

BM: It wouldn’t be lower, but it’s different. Big, straight. . . big canyons that run way on out to the river there. Here in the Missions the streams are down below the hanging valleys. Pretty gentle. They can go through good hunting all the way through. Over there in the Bob side, some of those big drainages, big ridges and bid divides between them. I think the game has to say, well, should we stay here or should we pull out and climb clear over and go into the next one. It’s a special effort to do it. But those darn wolverines will go right up over the top. They’ll go right up over Smith Pass and down the other side. In the winter, just like that. They’re tough little buggers and good travelers. Get up high and look around.

SV: How far south did you go from Elk Creek?

BM: I trapped pretty much from Jim Creek. I never did trap Jim Creek. Butch was trapping over by Piper. We always said, let's between us, we wouldn't trap the Jim Basin. That's kind of big country in there. It's good habitat. But, it was kind of a mutual agreement that we'd leave that alone. Breeding stock. Then I trapped up in Cold Creek. That's as close as I got. Then I went south as far as that country back of Lindbergh Lake. That's about what I trapped. Then I alternated some. For awhile every other winter I'd go in the Bob, and just leave this untouched.

So I trapped the Little Salmon over there, went in over Lion Creek. There's old trappers were in Lion Creek, there's old notch sets up there. There used to be a cabin up there. Uno Strom told me about that cabin. I never could find the ruins. It's probably up where those cedars are. I looked for the old ruins. Uno couldn't give me too much, except it was below the falls, he said. That gets you down into that cedar basin pretty quick. But I went all the way from just below the falls down along the creek and clear down through those cedars and I could never find the ruins. He said it was right along the creek. Right there in those cedars there's a place where there's a lot of activity, been a lot of camps there, but I could never find the cabin ruins. If I had, I would have described it and put it in the pile.

SV: I don't think you're the only one who has gone looking. What motivated at least one of them to go looking was there's a large bear trap that was in or around that cabin, and somebody cached it there. The fellow that cached it there was killed or something. So it's kind of folk lore. One description I heard was maybe it was up in the slide area.

BM: That's possible. Sometimes you look for those cabins where you think is a likely spot and then they aren't there. There's one up here, I think I wrote that one up, too. The Meadow Lake cabin. I'd heard about it, a cabin at Meadow Lake so I looked all around there, around Meadow Lake, where I thought a trapper would make one, where he'd have water, wood. I was about to give up on it and I talked to Bud Wolfe. He said, Oh, it's not even down there. That cabin. . . they had come up in the forties. . . he said we used to go up there to fish. That cabin was up good. There was a fish pole in it. All kinds of stuff. He said, so it's not down at the lake at all. It's up on the ridge. Dry. Absolutely not even close to the lake. So I went and found it first try. Wasn't easy. It was grown up so much I was within 50 feet of that thing. Circled all around it and I knew it was right there somewhere. I knew the general location. Then I found where somebody who built it had cut shakes. So I knew it was right there. I just kept thrashing around until I finally found it.

SV: What did the are look like where they cut shakes?

BM: There was one log, I can't remember what species it was. But I was coming down a game runway. I found a little shake. I could see this old shake. I thought, Gad, that's gotta be close. So then I went back and stirred around and I found the log they'd cut it out of. Then I knew it was

shakes, you know, for a cabin. So then. . . I'd gone clear around it. It was so thick grown up around that cabin, everyplace but in it were small saplings. I found the cabin.

SV: Whose cabin?

BM: Fred Messerer. I think he built it. I'm not sure if he built the one at Beaver Lake or not. I've never been to that, I've only heard about it. Never been up to Beaver Lake. But there is a cabin there. Several people, one was Barney Jette, that in fairly recent times he stayed in it. He went up there and it was still up enough to stay there.

But anyway, Fred Messerer had that cabin, then there's an old cabin on Glacier Sloughs. I don't know if Fred Messerer built it but he certainly used it. Then Kari Gunderson found a cache of traps near that old cabin site several years ago. She brought them over and gave them to me. They got 'FM' stamped all over them. They were Fred Messerer's old traps. They are hanging out there in the fur shed somewhere. But that cabin's all rotted down, but you can find it. I don't think I've ever described that one.

SV: There might be a description of it in the riparian study.

BM: It's right there, near the outlet of the lake. Rotted out. Have to look real close to even see it. Then there was another cabin, looked like a poled in tent, right off the end, not far above the end of Lindbergh Lake. I've always thought that probably was Fred Messerer's, too. Looked like somebody had come up the lake, maybe by boat or something, it's not more than half a mile above the end of the lake, just off the left of the trail. But it was a poled frame that looked more like they'd had a tent set up. I know that's all down now. I was in there with my kids two or three years ago. Come down the trail and it was raining, and I watched for it but never saw it. I did find it once! It's there. Not too far above the upper end of the lake, just barely off the trail, a hundred feet or so.

Then, Warner, when you talk to Warner, he'll tell you about. . . His uncle was Roll. I think it was Fred Roll. You might want to check that out with Warner. He didn't tell you his trapping stories?

SV: He had gone trapping with his dad and he told me those stories. He told me, the most interesting I thought, was Kraft Lake. I wasn't aware there was a cabin there. He said they went there regularly in the winter to trap martin. He said Tom Parker had gone back and found that cabin.

BM: He never told me about that. Here's the way he told me. When he was in his teen years. He went up and trapped with Fred Roll, his uncle. They built the cabin that fall at Hemlock. Hemlock Lake. That's one I did describe. Just before they trapped, the year before, there was a man and his wife trapped. I think they trapped from Stoner Lake? The old buildings right there on Stoner Lake. They had gone up and they had an A-frame built in the basin up above Hemlock

Lake. I've found that and described that, too. Their traps. . . so what Warner said he and Fred Roll would do, they'd go up there to, built this new cabin on the lake, they'd go up there and they'd stay overnight and they'd spur line out . . . they had a spurline that went up past this A-Frame that the folks before them had had. Then they spurlines clear out to where they looked down into Elk Creek. That trapline's all there yet. Those traps are hanging. You can follow that. I took one of them down, brought it down and give it to Warner. And I think Mike Stevenson was up there with me, trying to trace that out one summer. I think he took one. All the rest are still hanging, unless somebody found them and pulled them out of the trees. So then they'd come back to the same camp, and then they went back across and over into Kraft Creek. But he didn't elaborate where. Said they didn't have a cabin where they trapped over there. They had just a camp. They had some deer hides that they rolled up in.

SV: I'll have to ask Tom about that.

BM: But anyway, he said he couldn't remember where it was but there was lots of martin there. So I assume it was in there around, I never heard of Kraft Lake, but there is that little lake down there, it's named. Notlimah. That's the only lake I know of that's in that area. But that's full of little trout, too. Cutthroat trout fishery in there. They aren't very big. But he did say they went from wherever their camp was over there, and they spurlined up the ridge between Glacier Creek and Kraft Creek, that long ridge there. They went clear up to where they could look down. . . they musta been right on the side of Red Butte. Look down, and he said he could remember they could look down at Glacier Lake. And there is an old trapline right up that ridge. I never saw any traps hanging there. But I could see the old sets and signs of the sets.

SV: There's a large Plum Creek clearcut in there now. So that trapline musta been above that.

BM: Well, they have cut a lot since I trapped. See I trapped that Kraft Creek one winter, but I didn't go up that ridge, I went from not far above those switchbacks when you are going around in there. I went right straight up clear to the top of Red Butte. They've cut a lot since then. I went through a clearcut even then for quite a little ways, but then twisted on up. So that's probably pretty well wiped out.

But they did have some. . . but he never mentioned a cabin, nor did he mention Kraft Lake.

SV: But he did have his brother there the day I interviewed him. They were kind of talking back and forth. Sometimes that helps. It sounded like Warner was way younger when he went into that Kraft Lake. Like 8 or 9 years old.

BM: Maybe there was a cabin around that little Notlimah Lake.

SV: A lot of martin up there?

BM: Well there was. Course they cut out the whole basin of Kraft Creek. So that was no good. . . where I trapped I went across that. I never had a set in that clearcut out there. I went up into that, there was quite a patch of old timber still. . . there's still a patch up there above where they've cut. I only run that two or three times. I think I caught a half a dozen, or something like that. There was martin in there. I don't recall that I'd seen any. . . wolverines used to cross. I remember one time when Vicki my daughter trapped with me. She ran that line and a wolverine come into the road. See we were going by snowmobile up to the end of the road. We were trapping Crazy Horse that winter. She went to run the line one day, and this wolverine came into the road back in Kraft Creek somewhere and just followed the snowmobile trail. Depart from it once in awhile and come back on. Then she got clear down in, almost to the end of the snowmobile trail. I had a set under a big spruce there. He got in that. But he pulled the trap apart. I hadn't set it for wolverine. But he got into it. It held him a little while, but not very long! They're hard to hold. If you get a hind foot catch it will hold them in a fairly ordinary trap. But if you get a front foot catch, it's pretty hard to hold them. They don't do like most animals, like a coyote, or a lynx. When they get in a trap they'll jump and try to go. Then they just keep tugging and pulling. But the wolverine, will just make a jump or two and then when he sees he's trapped he starts working on the trap. He'll double up, if it's a front foot catch, he'll double his hind feet up and hook them in the trap and he pulls against himself. You can pull several times your weight that way. We used to have games around the grain, when you were threshing. You get on the grain scales and you just grab the scales and see how many pounds you can pull. You can pull, especially a short blocky guy, he can just make that thing ring. That's the way a wolverine works on a trap. Same way. Something will give, unless it's a powerful trap. It'll either be his toes or his foot, or the jaws will come out of the trap or something. They got it figured out.

SV: When you were going up in the Kraft Creek area, did you see lynx?

BM: Oh yeah. I caught some there. I caught lynx there in that area, and I caught them in Cold Creek. Probably caught more in Cold Creek than anywhere. There's quite a few lynx in Cold Creek. Not a lot. I guess over the years, the last one I caught was over there in Cold Creek. North Fork of Cold. Actually right off the road going up there. That first bridge where you first cross the North Fork of Cold. I had it set down in the Cedars. Below the. . . One of the things that Butch will tell you about when you talk to him. . . There was pretty good lynx population in there from, when he was trapping. When they started logging. What they did, they logged out some big clearcuts in there and left just little stringers of timber, kinda hooking them? Wherever they could find that, that's where Butch and Howard Kirk (sp?) would set. And they, while they were logging, they helped log all that. They sawed up there. . . but they had traps going and coming. Along the roads and things. They caught several lynx in there. When we first came here, the lynx were at a real low ebb. I remember that first winter I trapped up Elk Creek, clear to Elk Lake. It looked like pretty good lynx country to me. I had a few sets. But I saw only one lynx track that winter. Only saw about two snowshoe rabbit tracks. But then they built up after that. Better and better. Then the year Vicki and I trapped, we knew of about four nice lynx families in around, between that Hemlock country and Kraft Creek and Cold Creek. I think we

only caught two or three that winter. We didn't go after them very hard. We just kind of incidental to get into the martin lines. So we got two or three. There was quite a few lynx that winter. Four families at least in that area. Now what Tom and Melanie tell me now is that they've been on those track transects, they find lynx more out toward Marshall Lake and back around Beaver Creek and through there. There's a fair population. But they haven't been able to find hardly any over in this area. That's what they are saying. I haven't been out in the winter now for several years very far so I can't validate that very much.

SV: There have been some changes, but it's not just been all recently. Sounds like there was this fluctuating thing since the 1800s.

BM: Oh yeah. They go up and down more with the hares. But I don't think our lynx here are quite as dependent as they are further north. I know further north where they have a bigger lynx population it really fluctuates up in Canada. Here, though, the lynx are heavily dependent on the hares but they don't limit themselves to the hares, that's for darn sure. They catch grouse and squirrels and anything they can grab. They are pretty good hunters.

About the old trappers. Now you probably have identified most of them in the valley.

SV: I was trying to go from south to north. Fred Messerer. Charley Anderson. . .

BM: Anderson and Vandewalka trapped together. They are the ones that bought those big, super grizzly traps, you know . . .

SV: Well, I got some of it from John Hulett. Buster didn't know either one of those guys . . . that he could talk about them. It was evidently one of those big grizzly traps that was left up Lion Creek. Buried up there, or cached.

BM: You heard the story of Charlie Goff finding one. There was one found in more recent times. Charlie was cruising Barber Creek. South Fork of Barber? Him and someone else. Charlie told me he was finishing his strip. They were giving a ten percent cruise across there. They each took a strip ten chains apart. His partner had finished and he was up on the ridge, hollering to Charlie to get up there. It was time to go home. Charlie had two more plots. He got his last plot, and then he started off and he tripped over something under a tree. He saw this, looked like a car spring. He grabbed this thing and hauled out this huge trap. It was under a tree there, just a spring sticking out. So he packed it out. They didn't pack it out that night, but he went back and got it. He had it on display up there at the Montana Double Diamond Guest Ranch for a long time when they had the bar there. He took it over to the trapper Rendezvous. It was a huge thing. Generally the Newhouse traps that they made the biggest was a number 6. There was a number four and a half, a number five, and six. Those were the standard Newhouse bear traps. The four and a half were a little small. I got one of them hanging on the wall over there. But the six, fives and six, would hold grizzly. But somehow, Vanderwalker and Anderson they was after a big one. They hated these grizzlies cuz they was always tearing up their cabins. So Charlie

(Goff) had one up there. So he got ill, he got cancer, and when he was about to out. He died of cancer, then he took that trap over and contributed it to the history museum in Helena. I haven't seen it over there. That's where Charlie took it. What I'm repeating here is what Charlie told me. I don't know where he got his information. He ferreted it out, and found he said that Vanderwalker and Anderson had bought six of these big traps. They were special made. I never saw them that big before. I've seen lots of bear traps. It used to be when I was young there in the Bitterroot, practically every homestead family had a bear trap. But it was usually a number 5, number 5 almost always. Hardly ever a number six. But these were bigger than a number 6. So that was Charlie's (Goff) story. He found it right up there in the head of Barber Creek.

SV: Well, Charlie Anderson was maybe an earlier trapper than Fred Messerer. The only stories I've heard about Charlie were to do with bear trapping. I don't know how much bear hides were worth, or if he just . . .

BM: I think he trapped other things. That's the way, what little I've heard about him. Him and Vandewalka were trappers, essentially going after whatever fur they could get. And the bears were giving them trouble with their cabins.

SV: I wonder if Vanderwalka was older than Charlie?

BM: I don't know. Van Peak was named after him.

SV: John Hulett told me that Van was an old man in the thirties. Van may have been about the first resident in that Goat Creek to Swan Lake area.

BM: Charlie Anderson was lost in the Missions.

SV: We did get that story on tape. Bob Martin at Swan Lake relayed the true story, I think. That's part of that folk lore. . .

BM: That's the way a lot of history ends up. The way I had to deal with that, I would just write it like I heard it. But not for sure. There may be several versions. That's the way you have to put it. And very seldom can you really clear that up.

SV: I could never figure out exactly where Charlie trapped. That's kind of lost. . .

BM: The one thing that does suggest, that big trap, if the legend is true. . . that Anderson and Vandewalka together bought these six and one of them is way up in the head of Barber Creek. . . (tape off: they must have been trapping in the Barber Creek drainage.)

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

BM: What you find out is you might have to go back several times with loaded questions. That's what I found out in the Lochsa Story. I'd go back to some earlier interviewee. I'd learn something from one interview, that I'd build questions around for the next interview.

SV: Some people have a real keen sense of wildlife and what's around them. Others don't. Some of the people who were here early don't remember grizzlies at all. If you want to find grizzlies, you had to go hunt for them. . . And you went in the South Fork. They don't talk about grizzlies in this area. Maybe there's a connection. Maybe these two bear trappers trapped a lot of them. Maybe they ran off a lot of grizzlies.

BM: I think so. They were fairly common in the valley at one time. Did you ever read that book (by Erwin and Peggy Bauer. Story of Two Toes.) I had heard something about it when I first came. Butch or somebody mentioned it. The pastor up here, Jim Moore, called me one time and asked me if I'd read it. It was in the Swan Valley real early. (We have the book.) There's this story of Two Toes which is a bad bear. And it mentions people who settled in the Swan Valley that I've never even heard of. So I don't know what kind of research this guy had done.

SV: There's lots of stories out there. People will bring magazines and books out of their closets, most that we've never seen before. Lots of people passed through here and wrote about this area. Publications went everywhere but here! There's stuff out there that needs to be researched.

BM: Gotta get the recordings done before the old guys all pass on.

SV: I had a question about a white bear. Jerry Parker worked for the railroad locating the Elk Creek road during the 1950s, early 60s. He saw that bear, and once he started asking people about it, he heard lots and lots of stories.

BM: (Bud has a picture of a white bear that Tom Parker took.) You can see from looking at that that there could be a white bear, maybe more than one. I talked to Jonkel about it. He said, I'm not surprised. You'll find here and there in grizzly populations a white bear.

SV: I think Jerry was treed by this sow and cubs. And now I'm trying to think, if it was the sow of the older cub that was white.

So then we had Messerer, and Herrick. The people who knew Herrick, he was done trapping by the thirties. An old man by that time. And hadn't been doing any trapping. He cooked for some of the outfits. He trapped early, apparently not too far from Lindbergh. Maybe before Fred Messerer. Both Freds spent a lot of time with Cap Laird when that Lodge was built. (See Sharon MacQuarrie interview.) There was a Fred Herrick at Coeur d' Alene that Cap Laird talked about.

BM: That's one that I haven't connected with is Fred Herrick. Herrick Run is about all I know. For some reason that was named after him. I just don't know. One of the things I feel a little inadequate about is in the Swan, see I was so focused on that Lochsa, ever since I've been here, I've only reached out, when I find something historical I try to capture it. That's about as far as I've been able to go.

There's another one that's recorded down here, county commissioner's wife. Audra Browman. She gave us all that stuff that she had done.

SV: There were trappers, all these bachelors around that were also homesteaders. Maurice Thomason.

BM: Yeah, he was over on this side somewhere (Swan Range). What I've heard about him came mostly from (Tex Baker. Tex used to buy furs up here. Tex is a newcomer in many way. But he bought them from Thomason. That's my only connection from Thomason.). . . but anyway, Maurice Thomason trapped Barber. He went over into the Bob some, over the top and down on the other side. I think it was Maurice that went up Barber Creek, there was a crossing up Barber Creek, one of the few places you could get up there and over. Avalanche Pass? You can see it from out here, just a strip of timber. And then on the other side it's pretty good, once you get up there. So, I'll think of who told me that.

SV: Ole Semling? Oscar Southern?

BM: No, I haven't struck those two.

SV: The two at Stoner Lake, Evelyn Jette told us their names. Then we get to Wirkkala, and Laine. Ed Beck. Vandewalka. He thought he was on a homestead, but it ended up being NP land, and he had to buy it from the railroad.

What about bears? Do you think there were very many grizzlies when you came in?

BM: They were more common. They were easily as common as they are now, maybe even a little more so. We killed one right here. We didn't do it, a young fella named Freidman Man. Ever hear that story? I think the bear that was killed here, his habitat was pretty much Hemlock Mountain. The reason I say that is there was a big one, the first elk I killed up there, no the second one, Janet's nephew and I went up to hunt one day, and we killed two bulls. Right on the side of Hemlock. Gee there was a huge bear there, big old track, going up and down that ridge. He was so big, he was heavy. There wasn't any snow, he would press right down in the needles, kinda like a horse's foot. Big bear. So that. . . we had some trouble with him up there. He ate one quarter of our elk before we could get it out of there. But we never tangled with him. Didn't want to. But then that fall, there was quite a lot of problems here. Bears were breaking in around Salmon Prairie and up at Shoup's. First time I ever met Mel Shoup, I went up there one day and he was sitting in his truck. Alta May said he's out there guarding our apples.

He had a warehouse and a big bear had been breaking in. He was out there sitting with a rifle watching for him.

So we had quite a splash of grizzlies around here. This grizzly here was one of those that was pretty, broke into cabins around. Got habituated quite a bit. As I understand they caught him down here at Salmon Prairie and took him over on the South Fork somewhere and turned him loose, but he come right back. The next spring he was right here. I had to trap that winter up in the Missions. Along about the first of February and closed out the traplines. Snowshoed out. We didn't keep the road open those days. I drug all the stuff out except the dry stuff. We just had a tent here, pole frame. Later on, I got a call from the Newmans. They said that a big bear was over here and had broken into the tent. So I told them well I'm coming up in about a week. Don't worry about it, there's nothing he can hurt. But in the meantime, Freeman Man came over. He was a young man who had come from the East and we befriended him. Kinda his God-parents, you know. He was a back-to-the-earth type. Spent that winter in a bus over around Ovando. Rigged up this bus so he could live in it. He come over here, thought I'd be here, but it was all snowed in yet. I wasn't here, along late March, early April. So the Newman's told him, look Bud is coming up in a few days. Why don't you go over here and guard this tent. So he brought his rifle and come in. He cleaned out the tent and went to bed that night. In the middle of the night this griz come back. The way that griz worked, he wouldn't wreck the place like a black bear does. He'd broken the door down, and then he'd go in a get something. Flour, and sugar in big canisters. Like those big five-gallon plastic buckets. So mice couldn't get at it. He'd pack one of those out and go away with it, out a ways, and then he'd open it up right there. That's the way he worked. But he come in when Freeman was in there, and Freeman . . . when he started to bust the door down. The only thing that held it was this little knob. So Freeman saw this door about to bust down so he fired through the door. He hit the bear, mortally. The bear went out and down. He died. The next day, Freeman tracked him down. That was a big griz. It was just kinda symbolic of what was going on. Every once in awhile those grizzlies get hungry along in the fall and come down in pretty good sized numbers.

Tom, now, they have with their track transects, they can positively identify twelve to seventeen different grizzlies. From the upper end here, down to Goat Creek. That's the area they work. Some years when they go through it they'll get twelve. Some years seventeen.

SV: Warner Lundberg has described to us seeing a sow with four cubs. But now he hasn't seen her for a couple of years. People who have those big open meadows. . .

BM: Yeah, they can look out and see them. When we see them, they are at a pretty close distance.

SV: What about moose? I cannot get anybody to talk about moose.

BM: Moose, we've had kind of an interesting variety of moose. When we first came here we rarely saw a moose down here. We had, almost every year, a couple come through here. Late

spring, early summer. But they'd never stay. One year we just saw the tracks. One year we had one come right by the window and down through. Smelled out all the place. They'd just come and go, by the time summer got here we'd never see them. When I was trapping, though, I learned that the moose generally are again, they are that mid-slope thing. Where all the brush is. Lots of feed up there. That's where they'd winter, too. The moose does real well in deep snow. They'll wallow around in the snow where most of the animals just can't do it. They got those big splayed out feet. So that's where they were wintering. Nothing was wintering down in here for a long time. But then about the time they logged Elk Point and all that pretty heavily, all at once we had moose down here in the winter. They started to winter in the river bottoms here. Then we had . . . they summered here. We had moose. Evidently a family, or a herd, or whatever they did down here. They are pretty isolated animals. We had four, five, that stayed here all summer. We'd see them in the ponds, every other day. Likes of that. Right up. . . one big bull, one little bull. A couple of cows. Occasional calf, that we would see here, occasionally. But that big winter three years ago? That heavy snow buried everything in the bottom here. It wasn't so much the depth, it was the way it fell. It fell and then it rained on it, then it iced over. All the alders and everything went down. You could go down in this bottom and it looked like a park in the winter. You could snowshoe right out over the top of it. The moose couldn't get at the winter feed. So they pulled out of here that winter and where they went, I don't know. Tom thinks that they went over across on the elk and deer winter range. He'd seen quite a few moose over there that he'd never seen before over there, when he was prowling around over on that side. Whatever happened, they never came back in numbers like that. But they did, now it's kinda back like it was before. You get a little shot of them early in the summer, then that's all we see. So that's about the moose story. I'm familiar with where the Newman's snowmobiled and whatnot. I used to run into them in the dark toward the trailhead. Up in there that was always good moose country. I think it still is. And now we shoot one. . . up to three. Every once in awhile one gets bumped off.

SV: I'm hearing the same kind of stories from people who live up Beaver Creek.

BM: We might have lost a few moose in that winter. But I never heard of anybody finding a carcass. If we didn't lose them, they made a big shift. Where they stay and where they winter.

SV: I think it's interesting that I don't get any stories about moose.

BM: Too bad you can't talk to Vandewalka. He'd know, wouldn't he?

SV: Goats? I've asked people specifically, but I don't get many goat stories.

BM: Those goats stay up high. Winter up there. Where the wind blows the snow off the vegetation. Some of those little rocky ridges? There's one right in the head of the Little Salmon that's just packed with goat dung. It's partly sheltered. It's higher on both sides, but it's a little center ridge. I camped right in there. That's just goat dung in there everywhere. It's all eaten down, all that shrubbery that's up there. Mountain heather and stuff like that. Eaten right down

to the rocks. That's where they go. . . they go up, they don't go down to winter. So the homesteader wouldn't see them. Nobody sees them down here. But surely those folks who did travel, into the Bob or hunted up high.

SV: There was one interesting story about Red Butte, in the spring. Goats up there, come out on the snow.

BM: There's a few goats in there. I saw goats in there when I trapped Crazy Horse. The back side of Red Butte. They winter there. There's some steep bluffs in there. Not so much windblown, as it is steep country and the snow slides off. Another place where they winter some is in Elk Creek, up above the forks. The South Fork of Elk Creek. Big canyon in there. One winter I trapped up in there. I never did see them but I could see their trails where they crossed the avalanche trails. I say they go up and not down. That's most common thing. But sometimes they'll come off, in the Bitterroots for example. I've got one upstairs. I hunted way up high for that bugger. But, I found his track and he went down to where there was some terrific steep bluffs that broke off into the canyon. He went from the high country down to winter. After I got down in there and saw where he was. I could see all kinds of signs of goats wintering. So sometimes where there is a precipitous piece of country down lower, that's cliffy enough that the snow doesn't hang on it. They'll winter down lower. Not real low.

SV: What other things should I be asking these old timers?

BM: The cabin locations. That sort of sets the path for where they went. It might disclose the identity of some cabin that somebody knows. The other one would be the griz. Did you run into any grizzly bears? Do you know of any killed? Where? When? That's a kind of a critical thing. Trapline locations. One thing that might be worth asking about, too. The outfitting business. This is something that goes way back. Kind of a different mode. That's something I tend to overlook a little bit. In modern times it's everywhere. Rivers are full of them. Everywhere you go somebody is making money off the natural situation. But way back then, as I understand outfitting, it pretty much started with ranchers in the West. Some of them made it, and some of them didn't. They begin to find out that these people would come and work on the ranch just to experience the west. People with deep pockets were willing to pay. That went from that to what we know today as outfitters. From homesteaders to ranchers.

[End of Interview]