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Interviewees: Karen Conley and E. Dale Conley
Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon
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Suzanne Vernon: When I visited with you before, we talked a little bit about the 1950s, but not much. I'd like to go back to your first memories and work forward.

Karen Conley: I was probably about five when I remember Daddy building the kitchen on the house over there.

SV: How small was it?

KC: The house is still over there. It couldn't have been much more than 12 feet wide and 18 feet long, the first cabin. Then he built the kitchen and bedroom on after that. I remember it because I was jumping on the logs that he had laid out. I got chased out of the project. I remember when he put the roof on, he got Dixie and I the cutest little hammers. I still have them. Little bitty handles. At that time they had kind of a tarpaper like stuff with bubbles in it? And then he put roofing over the top of that. We were up there with our hammers and smashing bubbles. We got kicked out of there, too.

SV: You weren't underfoot or anything?

KC: No we weren't. That was Mom's fault. She would always say, "Go out and help your dad." We were always outside.

SV: Refresh my memory. Leita is the oldest, and you are the youngest?

KC: Yes. I was born January 4, 1941. About two years difference between me and Dixie. Her birthday is the twelfth and she'll be 63. And Leita is nine years older than me.

They were in school when dad was doing the kitchen project. I wasn't in school yet. I stayed at home with mom and dad until recess came and then I'd go to the schoolhouse, too. I was over there about as much as I was at home. I walked over there by myself. When I knew recess was on I'd go over there and play with the big kids. Then I'd have to come home when they went to school. I was over there about as much as I was at home.

SV: So that was 1946 or 1947. Do you remember anything about the war?

KC: I remember we were down at my aunt and uncle's in Lakeside and they were all setting around the big radio and they told all us kids to go set down and be quiet, because they had

announced that the war was over. That's about all I remember of that. I would have been in school, then, I suppose.

SV: Did your dad continue to trap around here all through the war.

KC: I just barely remember this. They went to Coeur d'Alene and he worked out there during the war. Leita probably told you that. I can't remember much about being out there. I can remember going down to the lake to the Ferris wheel and sitting on that stupid thing, over that Coeur d'Alene Lake, Dixie and I. But just bits and pieces is all I remember of that.

SV: What are some of the other things you remember before going off to school.

KC: Mostly just following behind Daddy and doing whatever he was doing. Then he bought Dixie and I some pretty little silver milk pails about that big so we could learn to milk the cows! And it worked. We'd go out there every time he went out to milk the cows and finish milking cows in our little buckets.

Daddy didn't have very many of his own (milk cows) but he had my granddad's cows up here and he was probably milking about five head. It took quite awhile in the morning. It was setting out there in the corral on a stool. In the summertime they were never in the stanchion, they were just in the corral. They'd stand there. Daddy had most of them pretty much pets. Apparently it wasn't hard to learn to milk a cow. We must have learned pretty fast, because it wasn't too long after that that we got to milking pretty good ourselves. He went to trapping or working and Dixie and I got stuck milking the cows most of the time. Morning and night, twice a day. And then in the summertime the cows ran wherever they wanted to so you spent all of your time looking from here to where the highway is now or wherever they might be roaming and bring them home at night. They had bells on them. You'd listen for the bells. We had bells on two or three of them and we could find them. Doesn't seem like we took dogs. We must not have been very fast because it seemed like it was always in the dark getting home with them. We were always trudging through the brush in the dark behind cows, which was fun.

SV: Did you ever worry about bears or lions?

KC: No, not then. More worried now. No, they never had any problem with them. Never saw a lion until just about four years ago, before I ever saw a lion in the wild. I used to have cattle on open range and was out there riding horseback all the time and never did see ...saw a bear, but never saw a lion.

SV: When did you start riding horse back to find the cows?

KC: Oh , I suppose we had that old Hobo. That was probably about first grade I suppose. So when we'd ride Hobo, Daddy's old trapping horse. Then he always told us not to trot him. We weren't very big, but we couldn't hear very good, either, because he would always bring home

minus the cows if we got him into a trot, because he'd always come back to the house. They always knew when we got him out of a walk.

SV: Did you know in particular where the cows would go?

KC: Yeah, pretty much, like over here which was Fox's then but is Bannings now, they was over there a lot and over here on the hill behind Kesterson's. A lot of times we'd spend an hour to catch a horse to ride to the schoolhouse to get to the cows. (laughs) Did that quite a few times.

SV: Horses wouldn't come to grain?

KC: Not sometimes. Every once in awhile we'd have one we couldn't catch and of course it was a challenge to make sure we caught them to make sure we could go after the cows.

SV: I can't imagine not having to confine the livestock!

KC: As soon as you got done milking they'd take off. They'd be gone until we'd find them that evening and bring them back home. They'd cross the river over the bridge and they'd spend a lot of time right here where Dale and I live now. This was one of their favorite hangouts. At that time there was a little clearing out there is all. I don't know why they were here so much, laying under the trees. My aunt and uncle lived here then, too. Archie and Queveene. When I was little.

Where Dixie and Neil live, that's where they lived until Archie died, after they lived here.

SV: In the old house down by the river?

KC: Yes. Not too many neighbors then. There was Johnsons down here, and Foxes lived over there where Bannings are now and Fred Kaser. Huletts I guess, over on the highway more. And Kestersons, Buck and Edna. I think that was about it. Livermoores lived over there when I was a little kid, before Fox did.

SV: Fred Kaser didn't have any kids. He was a bachelor.

KC: No kids. That's a picture of him up there when he was in the service and Harry Harmon was taking care of his place. Fred came home from the service.

SV: Did Harry's property join Fred's?

KC: I don't know. He was living way down there where Dee and Vera Morton live now when he died.

SV: So Fred was in World War II? We came across some pictures of Kaser's brandings.

KC: Yeah that was always a highlight of the spring. He didn't have that many cows but he always had a lot of people.

Dale Conley: He told me one time he had a hundred head.

KC: He probably did.

SV: He must have trapped too?

KC: I don't think he ever trapped that I heard of.

SV: He had a lot of beaver water on his homestead.

KC: About all I ever knew him to do was raise his cows and put up hay. Mostly Herefords. We had a few Herefords, too. The milk cows were Herefords, too, two of them.

SV: Did you have any problem with disease?

KC: Not back then. Later, after the war, they made everybody test their herds for Bangs. I remember Daddy doing that, putting tags in their ears and stuff like that. Several years later they got an epidemic of Red Water that killed quite a few cows in the neighborhood. It's in the ground and the water, so we always had to vaccinate for Black Leg and Red Water in later years.

SV: What did you do with the milk?

KC: They'd sell the cream. They'd send out five gallons of cream in the mail. About twice a week. We only got mail twice a week, Tuesday and Friday. At that time the mail came over to the schoolhouse over here. They had a great big wooden box out front of the school house and everybody put their mail sacks in. Well, that was a few years later. Before that the mail center was across the highway about a mile up there and they had a little log cabin with a stove in it and people would go up there and wait for the mail which, back then, was delivered a lot of times with team and horses. Bring the mail from Swan Lake.

SV: Did you use cars or the old truck very much?

KC: The old Model A (with the rack on it) right up there was the one I remember the most. But once in awhile Uno Strom would plow the road, then you could use it. Otherwise most of them used the team and sleds. You didn't go very much of anywhere. Maybe go to the school house for a coasting party or over at Hill 27 over by Huletts. We'd always go over to 27 Hill a lot of times and build a bonfire. A bunch of people would get together and go coasting at night.

SV: Did you still sell the cream in the winter time?

KC: Yes. Some of the people who drove the team included Eva Wilhelm, when I was about in sixth grade and Roonie Hultman. He's the one that started the 33 Bar Ranch across from Lynda and Rollie's. He drove. And Bill Wilhelm.

DC: Ernie Lawrence, I think. From Swan Lake.

KC: With the horses, I think. I don't remember them . . . that was probably when they were going to the other school house. (?) The mail just came from Swan Lake to here. This is as far as it went, as far as I know. I think they turned around at the school house and turned back. They must have kept the road open pretty good with their mail. Most of the time it wasn't plowed. It was just the Foxes that had their hay at Fred Kaser's and they'd go up and get their hay all the time. It would have been a darn cold ride. That was the highlight of our day at school. When they'd come by we'd jump on the runners and ride the sleds, whichever way they happened to be going. That was when they had the good old days when the kids could look out the window of the schoolhouse. The windows were low on the whole side of the schoolhouse. The whole side of the schoolhouse on that side was windows, and one window on this side, so you could see them coming from either direction. The teachers were pretty understanding. I don't remember getting punished too much for it.

SV: Who were some of the teachers?

KC: My first grade teacher was Hilda Bosworth, from Swan Lake. Second grade was Jo Zytes (?) who was a girl. She was single. They had three girls and they called them Jo, Ray and Jean. They lived at Goat Creek at that time. And then my 3rd grade teacher was Mrs. Groves. Fourth and fifth was Martha Anderson. She taught at quite a few schools, and the sixth was Golda Zytes (?) Jo's mother. My seventh grade was Mrs. Musselman. My eighth grade teacher was Mrs. Kirkwood.

DC: She was so ornery all the time that they changed teachers, they couldn't keep teachers.

SV: Who were some of the kids in your class.

KC: In my first year, Laura Lee Smith and I were the only two first graders. They lived across the highway up towards, just past Kari Gunderson's place. That's part of Smith's place. They lived here quite awhile. He raised mink for quite a few years and then they moved to Missoula. Laura Lee and I went to school together till probably fourth grade I suppose.

SV: Did you see predators with the mink farm?

KC: Yeah, but that's why he didn't get to raise many more mink. He got in the habit of killing deer to feed his mink and he got turned in, so that kind of ended the mink farm.

SV: I've heard a lot of stories about fur farms.

KC: There used to be an old one down below Dee and Vera's down there. Another old guy had another rat farm or mink farm down there. Might have been a rat farm.

SV: So Laura Lee Smith first grade.

KC: Carsons were in and out all the time. Phyllis Carson was in my grade, and Carl, too. When did Brosten's come in? When I was in third grade? Brosten's were from Swan River where Dale went to school, and I think she was there from third to sixth grade. Must have been some of the Carsons in sixth grade. Seventh grade I probably was by myself. And in the eighth grade was Florence Kirkwood, her mother was teaching and her and I was together. We graduated from the eighth grade but we had to go to Swan Lake to graduate and they had three kids from Swan Lake so they made us go down there to graduate with them.

SV: What year did you graduate from eighth grade?

KC: 1955. I started high school in 1955 when Dixie and I were in Missoula. We had an apartment in Missoula and she was a senior and I was a freshman. We weren't that far apart in years but when she started they jumped the gun and started her when she was five and I was almost seven in first grade. Leita went to Polson for high school. Dixie went to Missoula and graduated from Missoula. I graduated from Bigfork, because I went to work for Dixie's in-laws for board and room down at Ferndale all the time through high school.

SV: You guys prepared yourselves for that?

KC: Most of the time we'd get home most weekends. A lot of weekends we didn't make it home in the wintertime. We caught rides. A lot of times we'd come in with Russell Conklin and his truck. He'd be in to get groceries and we'd catch a ride with him. A lot of times we'd ride the school bus to Seeley and the folks would go up there to pick us up. And the same with Bigfork and I'd catch the high school bus to Swan Lake and the folks would meet me down there.

SV: Did you ever go trapping with your dad?

KC: Just one time, and I didn't go trapping with him; I went to find him. We had a cow having trouble and I had to go find him to get him home and try to save the cow. We were kind of rough veterinarians and we didn't save her. He shot the cow and took the calf. So we got the calf out. But no, I never did go. Daddy didn't really relish anybody going with him on those kind of things. He didn't want you along if he was hunting, and he didn't want you in his way when he was trapping.

SV: Did you help him when he got back?

KC: We never did skin them...I remember sitting there watching him skin them, the muskrat and beaver. He skinned the beaver outside. Just the muskrats in the kitchen. He'd set there and we had the old wooden chairs with the rounds stuck up and he'd put the skinner over that and set there and skin his rats.

SV: Your mom must have been pretty patient about all that.

KC: She must have been. The only thing I remember is that he would bring home grouse all the time. She wouldn't let him clean the grouse because he made too much of a mess. She always cleaned them. But she wouldn't clean his fish. Made him clean his own fish. Dixie and I got good at that, too. Cleaning fish. He was real willing to let us do it, too. He'd bring them home and Dixie and I would beg to clean them. I don't know if we were very smart or not or just out of business. If we caught our fish we had to clean them, too. He didn't clean our fish. We had to learn quick: if we were going fishing, we had to learn to clean them.

SV: Did you fish mostly in the river?

KC: Yeah. He fished in creeks, too, but the river most of the time. Then you could go down here below the old chicken coop and catch about six or seven nice trout in about ten minutes. Eastern brook, rainbow, whatever happened to be in there. He caught the bulls in the late summer when they were running, usually Jim Creek was where he went to get his bull trout. He did that up until he died.

SV: Some places the people wouldn't eat the bull trout.

KC: He smoked them. They are kind of a greasy oily fish. They hardly ever ate them that way, they just smoked them.

DC: He got one that was a big one. He stuck his mouth over the fence post and it was that big around (shows with his hands). That head hung there all summer, I think. Your mom baked that one, I think.

KC: One of them she deep fat fried was pretty good, too.

DC: All that belly fat. And then baked them and got rid of that greasy grease and then they weren't too bad. Otherwise they are awful fishy tasting. I don't think I could eat them smoked, even.

KC: But it must have been fun to catch them, because there seemed to be a lot of pictures of them around.

SV: Brook trout you could eat just fine?

KC: Oh yeah. Most of the time about pan-sized.

SV: What they would call catchables now?

KC: Yeah, they were just good pan-sized. That's still the best fished they ever raised.

DC: We have to give Suzanne a taste of our smoked fish! (salmon)

SV: When did people start fishing for salmon?

DC: We just smoked these up the other day. Smoked a bunch to give away. We've always smoked them ever since I was a little kid, salmon.

SV: But you were raised in Bigfork/Swan River community area?

DC: Yes. They used to run out of Flathead Lake and come right up the river to the dam, out at Bigfork, coming up this side. Of course we just lived across that new bridge they built? Up the bend a half a mile. We lived on the river right there. Still own the property. We just walked right down and maybe would get some old car or something and go down there with gunny sacks and just clean house on the fish and we always had a smokehouse. Bring them home, clean them and smoke them up. And whitefish, too. We used to be able to go down there and my mother and a lot of the women liked to fish there. There was a big deep hole about the size of this house. But it was deep and the whitefish laid in there. A lot of the women, my mother included, would go down there with their little bamboo poles and catch whitefish out of there, too. They used to come up here, the whitefish would. When her and I were going together, up here at Beck's bridge up here and underneath this old bridge it was black with them. But they don't come here anymore.

SV: Why?

DC: I don't know. That was the late 1950s, early 60s. Marian Matthews and Heinie Seaman, and them would come down here and set on Beck's bridge and catch gobs of those whitefish. When we were married, in 1961. They spawn in the fall.

KC: Beck's bridge, and this one. I don't think the water is deep enough under the bridge for them to school up anymore. Pretty shallow. Old bridge. They moved this bridge down a ways from where that one was and it's not near as deep as that one was.

SV: You make good smoked salmon.

DC: It's very simple. Spread the salt and brown sugar over them and let this batch set about 24 hours. Pull them out and rinsed them all off and dried them down and put them in the smoker and smoked them for 10 hours.

SV: You don't brine them?

DC: Actually the brown sugar and salt turns into a solution. We've got this little tub. I can do 42 at a time in this little plastic tub. We lay them in there and after about 8 hours that all turns to a solution, brown sugar and salt. Then I just go in and stir them up and get the top on the bottom and you know stir them up so they all get a good layer of juice. My dad, when we were at home, we just sprinkled salt on them and he had apple boxes and locker paper. And he would put locker paper in there to keep it from running all over and he'd put a layer in of locker paper and a layer of fish and just sprinkle them with salt and that's all they ever did with them. But she started putting brown sugar with them. Made them sweet.

KC: Daddy would always put his in a big crock, stone crock in a brine.

DC: A lot of people do that. Joe Lawrence does that, in a brine of some kind. He might be one that you might be interested in talking to, too.

KC: His mom used to teach at the Wineglass and she taught at Smith Valley, too.

DC: She taught at Bigfork.

KC: She taught at the old school where the ranger station is, Smith Valley (?)

DC: Joyce's mom and dad is Art Anderson's brother's dad . . . her dad and Joyce. Martha is still alive in Bonner, Eileen. Joyce is Joe's wife. She was raised in Missoula, actually.

KC: He lives right past the state house down there at Swan Lake.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

KC: He still hunts lions and traps and stuff. He came up several years ago and interviewed Fred Kaser. And his family are the old timers around Swan Lake that hunted and fished and did all the old stuff. He would be a good one to talk to about history.

I don't remember Leita too much, she was nine years older. But Dixie and I we were always outside, always playing out in the hay mow. All the neighbor kids would land here. Daddy never did get after us. We played in the hay all the time. Fina Johnson wouldn't let us in her hayshed, we'd mess up her hay. But we always played in the hayshed. Made our own games. Dixie and I had an ice house, logs about that high with sawdust for ice that we'd get out in the winter. We'd play out there. We'd just cut 'er in half and one side was my farm and one side was her farm. We had marbles. They were our horses. My grandpa brought us up a quart jar of marbles. You'd a thought he brought us a million dollars, with every size and color of marble. We had mares and colts, and stallions. We had all that. Then we'd take tin cans and batteries, we'd a killed for these little triple A batteries, cuz they'd a been cute calves. We just entertained ourselves with that kind of stuff. It was always farming, because we always had our cows and horses. Still farming today. Never got out of it.

We didn't spend hardly any time in the house, unless it was raining cats and dogs, then we'd come in and play with tinker toys or Lincoln logs or something like that. And we got to churn quite a lot of butter.

DC: Haven't seen any tinker toys around for years for sale. Now Wal-Mart has a tube of things for sale for \$29.95. I don't think our folks paid over two or three dollars for that when we was kids.

KC: Dixie and I got in the habit of building our stuff and then we didn't want to tear it apart, so we would have needed a lot more tinker toys than we had. We'd build wagons and hay slides and stuff like that. Then we wouldn't want to tear them apart. We made all our own toys.

SV: You must have paid close attention working . . . getting the hay in around here was a big deal.

KC: Daddy cut the little field out in front of our place and up where Neil and Dixie lived he'd . . . that's where the horses ran away with me. I was sitting on the teeth of the hay rack and mom was driving and had a kind of a broncy mare, knothead I guess you could call her. Anyway she'd run away at the drop of a hat. Something spooked her and they took off running. Daddy got mom off of there and said to let them go. That's why they ran away. The teeth came down on their rump. That would make most of them run away. The hay rack teeth. And I was sitting there with the teeth when they went over the horses. Darky was Daddy's that was kicking right up, and missing me by that far with every jump. Finally I guess the tongue broke or something

anyhow they dislodged the wagon from them. Daddy said I wasn't about to fall off. It took a pry pole to get me off of there, when they finally got to me.

Then him and Dixie and I were coming out to 33 up here on Bannings. He used to put that up, too. Was coming down that steep hill over there. I don't know what happened that time, but the wagon tipped over. We had a load of hay on there. Daddy said it didn't take too long to find us. He could hear us pretty good. We was raising pretty much Cain under there . . . we were under the hay but we didn't get hurt. July and August, September sometimes.

The folks would cut wood for the school over here. Daddy had a buzz saw. He'd plug in a big load of lodgepole, he was clearing the place above the house, too, so he'd skid the lodgepole down there and make a big pile of them. So he'd start up his buzz saw and you knew when you got out of school and heard that, bzzzz bzzz bzzz, that you'd have to go home and stack wood.

At school, they'd take the old Model A and load it up and then we'd take it over there and put it in the wood shed.

Every fall Daddy would take the Model A and we'd go to Kalispell, I suppose, and get groceries for the winter. I don't remember, but Dixie and Leita probably do. When the folks had the store over there at the house. In that little bitty living room. We had a bedroom living room combination, kitchen and they had a store in there too.

SV: For local people?

KC: Just for staples mostly.

SV: Was Conklin here?

DC: I think they came in about '46, that's what somebody said.

KC: Dolores drove the first bus route they ever had at Swan Valley. Lynda and Dixie was the same age. We were all little kids together, Chuck and Linda and Dixie and I. (Linda Papke in Missoula). I don't know where Chuck is.

DC: He was really sick. He might have died. He came up to see Lee Anderson years ago. He had to quit work at a young age. I haven't heard anything about him since they sold the store to Himes.

SV: So your folks' store had to be before 1946.

KC: Yeah. The folks came up here in 1937. I don't remember the store.

SV: Was your dad a pretty good entrepreneur?

KC: Yeah. We never went without anything to eat, which was mostly fish and venison. Grouse.

SV: He put the bull trout in a crock to smoke them?

KC: We didn't have salmon. It was bull trout.

SV: People in this area didn't get salmon except from Swan Lake.

KC: They used to come up here before the dam was in because that's how Salmon Prairie got its name. The Indians would come over Crow Creek and camp over at Bannings in that natural clearing and catch silver salmon. So until they put the dam in they must have come up here all the time.

DC: Why don't they still come up? Swan Lake is full of them. And whitefish? And they catch whitefish in Swan Lake. Not real prominent like the Salmon in the summertime.

SV: Are silver salmon like kokanee?

KC: Yes, a different stage.

DC: Every four years they lose their scales, and get their spawning colors. They go up and spawn and die. And this is what the stage they are in the fourth year. The little silver salmon are really good eating fish and they have pink meat in them at that stage of the game. We fry them around here quite a bit, but I do. Fish and hotcakes? And the fish and game brings up about, well this year they brought up about 13 garbage cans for us to distribute. They've been doing this for several years now. About 3500 fish we had, about that long. So we get on the telephone and start calling people and just try to get rid of them all. We just usually save about 250.

This one time on Lake Mary Ronan, that's where the fish came from. They seine them rather than to let them go spawn on their own. They trap them as they are going up the stream in the early stage. Then they spawn them and get the eggs, take to the hatchery where they hatch them themselves. They end up doing about 95%, whereas if the fish are doing it by themselves, they only get about 30% to 40% is what they hatch out. Every fall they do it. Then they go get them out of Swan Lake. Ashley Lake, several of those lakes. Take their thumb one time and run down the belly and squirt out those eggs in one five gallon can or whatever, and sperm in another one, and there's all the fish. So they put the fish in big cans and they take them to Kalispell, Whitefish and Missoula. They go back in the next week to pick up their tubs, these 30-gallon garbage cans to get some more fish. And people won't take them because they aren't cleaned. They aren't cleaned out. So they dump them in the garbage, after a week. They get their cans and go back. This was irritating them.

This guy I know pretty well through my brother, who worked with his dad at the aluminum plant. So I asked them to bring me a barrel of those. So he did for five or six years. He'd come up here to go hunting. I'd come home from school and there'd be a can of them setting on the porch. So we'd dig in and start cleaning fish. So after awhile they got to fighting about where to take them to. The Indians over there. they get first choice. Out of Lake Mary Ronan. The fish and game out of Helena came up and they had a big meeting and Brian said, I know where we can get rid of these fish. Up in the Swan Valley those people are hungry for those fish and they want them. I know we've got a place up there. I know a guy up there who would probably even distribute these fish out. And he said, they will not be wasted, I'll guarantee you. One fish and game guy said no. But finally they relented. Brian brought three different batches up one year. I think one batch was like 2,500 and one was 3,000 and maybe the next 1,200. We got rid of 5,000 fish that first year and I don't think any of them went to waste.

This year Boyd Kessler got into smoking fish. He took a barrel and a half of them and gave them to people who didn't know about it. And Joe Lawrence, I called him up and he came up and took a bunch to Swan Lake because he could distribute them down to Swan Lake.

SV: How long do they stay good?

DC: They don't have any food in their intestines because they quit eating. They are just swimming. The males are fighting a little bit. Their fins get all wore off. We've gone three days with them easy, let them sit out in the shop where it's cold. And I mean they are cold, your hands freeze trying to clean them. So I think they'd last maybe a week in them cans. There's nothing inside them to rot. Especially where it's cold. Just the little bladder that's all they got in there and the throat area, and the liver. They all have a liver in them. I've been tempted to fry up some of those livers because some of them are pretty good sized livers.

KC: Well, you just tempt yourself all you want.

DC: Liver and onions.

KC: I think they'd be awful fishy.

DC: I've been tempted to fry them up and taste them and try them. I know the dogs will eat them.

SV: I bet you get pretty fast at cleaning fish.

DC: We clean them out in less than 30 seconds.

KC: Like Lynda told us the other day, you and Dad must be trying to go back in time. She wanted to know what you are doing. And I said, well right now we are smoking fish, making wine and jerky. It's probably so hard you can't eat the darn stuff.

(Brings out beef jerky)

DC: We never got any venison this year, never hunted.

KC: We got our elk permits to go down to the Dome (?) Ranch at Gardiner in January, so hopefully we'll get our elk and make a bunch or jerky out of that.

SV: Did your dad ever hunt elk up here?

KC: Not too often. Around the Fourth of July he always went out and got a deer because that was haying meat. He got elk once in awhile. He'd always tell the story years ago he got two elk in fact and took his team of horses to skid them home. They were just up there on 33. An old retired game warden was sitting on his elk. So Daddy just went on and what's his name, asked him what he was doing and Daddy said, oh, I'm just going up here to skid out a log and went on by with his horses. Henry Thol was setting on his elk. Daddy had to go up and get them after Thol had got off of them. Henry Thol the old game warden (ranger).

I often thought, how dumb could anyone be? With all the trees that Daddy had standing here, why would he be up in 33 to skid out a log.

SV: Everybody always called it 33?

KC: Yes, 33 meadow.

DC: This is Section 33 and that's the big meadow that was on the section.

KC: Every fall at the MEA convention, no matter what anybody was doing, they always went over to Daddy's sister's at Big Bend country for chink (pheasant) hunting. Take off real early in the morning in the old Model-A pickup and probably get over there in time for supper if we didn't have too many flat tires. If you had a flat tire you'd jack up the pickup and took the tire off and patched it. It was between Hot Springs and Ronan, the Big Bend country they called it. Every year.

SV: Did you use a dog?

KC: A little terrier, called him Snooks, about like our dog, a black and white one. Best chink dog in the country. Everybody would have their big pointers over there and fancy dogs. Snooks would go down through the thickets and flush them out and Daddy would have his chinks in nothing flat.

SV: Then what would he do with them?

KC: He'd take them to his sister's and she'd cook us up a big old plate full of chink.

SV: Were there very many grouse around here?

KC: Quite a few grouse. Always had chickens and pigs. He always had several pigs. In fact, that one year when we used to have to come down to the river with a wagon to get water, that one time that old sow got out. I was a little kid and she seemed bigger than a saddle horse. She was between us and the river, between the house and the river out there wandering around and we just knew that she was going to eat us alive. So we left our water and went up without it. Had to come back and get it after Daddy got the pig in.

We always had to bring our wagon down here to the river before they got water in the house. I can remember him digging the well. I can remember him doing that. Remember his head and shoulders sticking out of the hole. Out in front of the kitchen, but before that we always had to come to the river to get our drinking water. Then we had a spring right above the house there where mom put her cream and butter and in the summertime a watermelon, if we had one, to keep it cold. Daddy had it boxed in with a lid on it.

SV: What did you call it?

KC: Just a spring. Daddy also had his meat box on the north side of the house was a screened in box where he'd hand his deer in there. That was the coolest part of the house, the shadiest place. No trouble with bears, not when we were kids. Then they had a root cellar dug in below the house towards the barn.

SV: Did you have a garden too?

KC: Mom always had a small garden, or tried to. It didn't always work out. Roy Fox, she cooked for the hayers all the time. Three old bachelors that always...Roy would buy the groceries...he always bought case pop. Dixie and I always had to split a bottle, we couldn't each have a bottle. Go down to the hayshed and get us a canary grass stem and we had a straw and everything. We was up town!

SV: What kind of pop?

KC: All different kinds of pop. Then we'd take them up to Strom's and turn them in for a nickel a piece. For the bottles.

Chickens were usually Rhode Island Reds, sometimes Barred Rocks. Daddy had this lovely rooster he got from John Hulett. I don't know yet why he went over and got that stupid rooster. It was a game cock. It wasn't even a rooster, it was a game cock. Every time you'd go out the door he'd either have Dixie and I both bawling or we'd be up on the hay chute or up a tree or something. We hardly ever made it to the barn. Then my aunt and uncle, my daddy's sister,

they brought us up the most beautiful big white rooster, unbeknownst to us it wasn't a rooster, it was a Capon (?), but we thought it was a rooster. Great, nice, big, gentle critter. We wanted Daddy to kill that stupid game cock and let us have that white one. But instead he killed the white one and we had to eat him.

SV: Ah, life in the Swan....

KC: One time we had baby chicks hatched out. Daddy cut the leg off of him anyhow, with his mowing machine, and we were calling him Pete, Peg Leg Pete, and we made a pet out of him. One day he was missing. We couldn't find Pete anywhere. Mom was cleaning chickens and we found out that she cleaned Pete. So we bawled and we bawled and we wouldn't eat, wouldn't have no dinner. So Daddy forbid us to make a pet out of any more chickens. Still remember that old Pete. He grewed up to be big enough to butcher with one leg, walked around.

He didn't want us to make a pet out of his chickens and listen to us bawl.

SV: Did you have other pets, pigs?

KC: No, we were scared of that old sow.

SV: Did the pigs bring in the bears?

KC: I think back then the bears were not used to people at all. They were pretty leary of being around humans, not like they are now. Every year Daddy would get a bear because Mom would render the lard out and that is what we used for cooking all the time was bear lard. He never did bring the meat home. I think all he did was skin it and take the lard. I don't remember ever having any bear hides around.

SV: What about huckleberries?

KC: We used to go up to Jim Lookout and pick huckleberries, the old lookout. It was up on stilts, but not quite as high as the one they put up after that, but it was about the same thing. It was beside it. Every summer we'd always have to ride up to the lookout.

DC: Somebody should have some pictures of those lookouts. Tuffy Anderson hauled stuff to the new one on horseback when her and I was going together so that was in the later 1950s. 1957 or 1958 when he was working for the FS and hauled timbers up there on mules.

KC: Him and Dick Peltier.

DC: And the old one was still up there and they sold it to somebody for a buck.

KC: Butch Harmon bought it for a dollar, oh, that's the new one.

DC: He didn't tear it down, he sold it to somebody and they got the material.

KC: They just burnt the old one.

SV: When you went up there in the summer who was working up there?

KC: Usually some young single guy. Another reason why we had to go to the lookout.

DC: I never was to either one of them.

KC: In fact one real nice guy up there, he always packed his water from the spring up above the lookout a little ways. He took one of our horses and got his water. The spring would have been up the trail to the northwest from the lookout there was another trail that went that way. There was a good spring up there and that's where they always got their water. I'm sure the spring is still there if you can even find where the lookout was now.

DC: Why didn't they keep it? There's one up on Goat Creek still. I don't know why they took that one down.

SV: Were the huckleberries thick?

KC: Yeah, just to the left of where the lookout was. The trail went that way and we always go up there and huckleberry. Mom made jam and jelly, and probably syrup. I know her and I, Mom and I and Dixie and Etta Fox was the last time I remember Mom going.

SV: I wish I'd known Etta Fox.

KC: She was a good old lady. I don't think you can ride a horse up there anymore unless you know how to get there because the bridges are all gone, the corduroy. That's part of the reason they tore the lookout down they didn't want to build the bridges back up. It would have been more sensible to build the bridges back up and keep the lookout. Also they couldn't find anybody who wanted to be up there all summer. They were pretty much up there all summer. They take supplies up to them with a mule. They pretty much stayed up there all summer.

SV: Forest fires?

KC: I don't remember any. The one upriver was before my time. We never had any fires around here.

DC: Most of them were before World War II. Everybody was out of work. Most of them were manmade except for a few lightning strikes. At that time, back in the late forties and before, a

lot of people were going out here and striking matches and taking little fuel cans and starting fires to get them a job. There wasn't much for jobs. Late thirties and forties.

SV: There used to be a road that continued from this main Salmon Prairie. Was that the lookout road?

KC: To go to the lookout you'd go through 33 and up behind there. Just go across the meadow to 33 and the trail took off from there.

SV: Do you remember if the Piper Crow trail came out ...

KC: It came out right there on Bannings. The packers would always come by in the fall. They'd come over Crow Creek and come past the folks headed for the Holland Lake, usually about four different packers would come over.

SV: Was there a bridge or did they ford the creek?

KC: They just forded the creek.

SV: We were trying to figure out what the old maps symbols meant.

KC: They built a bridge across Jim Creek years later, but I think they came by Carson's old place and forded the creek there. Further upstream past Bannings and out there in the boonies. They only had 17 kids, him and her.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

Note: Discussion about making jerky.

SV: So you soak it in brine?

KC: We use High Country (seasoning).

SV: When did you get electricity?

KC: 1957. We just got it in and we got a big wind storm and nobody had any power for a month. It blew the roof off of Russell Fox's barn.

SV: Your mom told me one time she saved your gas washing machine because she didn't trust the electric...she wasn't going to mess with losing power again.

KC: Well, it was off more than it was on, back then.

SV: What was the biggest excitement over having electricity?

KC: Having lights on our Christmas tree! (laughs) Never had that before. Kitchen lights were exciting, too. And we got a hot water tank so we didn't have to heat water to do dishes. When they finally got the sink and stuff in. Mom's cupboards were so low over there. When Daddy built the cupboards she done her dishes in pans on top of it. Then they put the sink in so it's really low now.

And telephones, the only telephone I can remember growing up was Etta and Russell had one on their porch and the old Swan Lake store had one.

DC: The old ringer style. But they had them up on the lookouts, because there used to be number nine wires running up all the way up the mountain up there.

KC: Well they must have had one at old Condon, because I remember a story years ago. They said that Mrs. Wolff called Mrs. Fox at Lion Creek. So there must have been a few phones around.

SV: I wonder if they weren't Forest Service phones?

KC: I think so. They put one at Russell's down there kind of as a stopping off spot or something. He packed a little bit for the Forest Service.

SV: Where did you say the Number Nine wire was?

DC: We run into a bunch of it when we were doing something up on the hill several years ago, but somebody rolled a bunch of it up and brought it out of there. To Jim Lookout, Mission Mountains. They had those old type phones. They are about \$275 bucks in a secondhand store. I just saw one the other day. I wanted to buy it so bad. I just didn't feel it would warrant that. I'm sure they all work yet. They had batteries in them. Coils, and then batteries on them. Hooked up to telephone batteries, they were like that (shows with his hand) about that tall. A square battery.

KC: They used to have those glass insulators but you can't find those anymore.

DC: I've got a bunch of those out here. White and brown ceramic insulators.

SV: What about parties and dances?

KC: We used to have them over here at the school house, a lot of times. Ole' Lawrence Smith and Uno Strom was the music. We all learned to dance to "You Are My Sunshine" because that was about all that Uno knew to play. Then every Christmas they'd have the regular Christmas programs and in the fall of the year they'd have the ladies' club bazaar, Salmon Prairie Ladies Club. They would have all of their handiwork that they'd work all year on and then they'd have an auction sale and sell it over here at the school house.

SV: Your mom was a part of that?

KC: Yes. She usually done a lot of needlework. Pillowslips and stuff like that. In the evenings. We didn't have TV. She'd set there by the hour and embroidery.

DC: Gas lanterns and eat popcorn.

SV: Did you eat a lot of popcorn?

KC: Yeah, on the old cook stove with the wire corn popper. With real cow's butter on it. We didn't like that butter real good because Dixie and I would get in a fight and Mom would set each of us in a corner and hand us the churn. We'd have to take turns churning. We were slow learners because seemed like we churned quite a bit. We had lots of funny books back then. Roy Rogers and Tom Mix. Mostly traded them back and forth with Florence Strom. I don't know where any of us got them, actually. We must have got some when we were in the store. We always seemed to have plenty of funny books.

DC: They cost a nickel apiece.

KC: I don't know if Grandma and Grandpa got them...you know, they had the store over there at Polson. They may have kept them and brought them up to us. Maybe that's where we got ours. Then Wise's, they were here part of the time, too. We'd have taffy pulls and skating and

coasting parties for the young people. Reuben Kauffman's younger brother, Joe, started a youth group and they had a lot of parties going around to different houses. Played games. Summertime we'd play outside. Hide and go seek and stuff like that.

SV: Where did he live?

KC: Joe Kauffman. He must have been living with him (Reuben).

DC: There was a Joe Miller, too, married to a Kauffman, Mabel.

KC: Joe might have been living with them, too. They were always at the same parties. Gene and (?) were the same age.

SV: Do you remember Mary Harris? What was she like?

KC: She was just a little bit of a woman. She probably wasn't much over four eleven. Real frail and thin looking. Always wore her hair pulled back in a bun. It wasn't white, it was dark gray. She wasn't really a white-haired lady. She'd walk from up there where she lived clear up to Jim Lookout and pick her huckleberries. It took most of the day. Usually all by herself. Clara Hollopeter sometimes went with her, too. We used to go to club at her house, when I was a little kid. Women's club. We tagged along. Unless we were in school. In the summertime we always got to go to club because they always had it on Tuesday. The best part of probably eating and playing with the rest of the kids.

SV: Favorite foods?

KC: Chicken and noodles. He doesn't like it, but my mom always used to – it was made with venison – it was just boiled venison, spuds and onions. She cooked that a lot for hayers.

DC: I don't like boiled meat.

KC: And then chicken. We had a lot of fried chicken. Pork. No bacon, mostly side pork. Grouse. I used to like grouse when I was a kid.

SV: Sweets?

KC: Yeah, mom and daddy would have people come over, people come to the folks to play cards a lot. Have a card game or something. Archie and Queveene was always over there in the evenings to play cards and she's make gingerbread and whipped cream a lot. Cream puffs. Because she always had eggs. Pies. Because I remember she was great on making lemon meringue pie. I don't know if it was cheap to make or what, but we had a lot of that. She always made mincemeat pies, too. Seems like I liked it. We always made our own. Raisins and apples and that kind of stuff in it.

Daddy made a lot of homebrew. Seemed like he always had a crock of homebrew going.

SV: Wine?

KC: Not when I was a kid. But when they lived over there around Polson he made quite a lot of wine and champagne and stuff in WPA days. They could raise all the fruit that they could possibly have over there. That's what used to upset Mom pretty bad, when he moved her up here and they couldn't raise nothing. They had all kinds of fruit right at their fingertips over there.

SV: No apple trees here?

KC: Mom's got a crab apple tree, ever since I was a little kid. And strawberries, and raspberries and stuff like that. No plums, no cherries, nothing like that. They tried it, they planted all that stuff. But back then, too, there wasn't...like now, there are bees all over the place. There weren't that many bees. There wasn't that much for them to eat up here. Nobody had alfalfa or clover. Maybe wild clover, and that would be about it for bees.

SV: Did anybody plant alfalfa in this area?

DC: Dad had that field up there, and we cleared about half of it, and planted it. But it freezes out. It don't last. Maybe, it'll last pretty good for two or three years then it starts freezing out. I think when we started doing Bill Goodman's over there we were getting a little bit of alfalfa yet but within two or three years of when we took it over it had all froze out. It just dies out for some reason, whether it was too rocky or it won't hold the moisture for it, I don't know.

SV: Did the elk ever come in on the alfalfa?

DC: Elk come in all the time, even last year and the year before last. We put about \$450 worth of fertilizer on about 30 acres over there. Got up about that high (shows with hands) and we had 50 head of elk in there every day and night eating. We took the pickup finally, her and I and run those elk, tried to run those down the other end, get them off of our fertilized hay. But they'd come in at night and they ate more hay...If we hadn't had those elk in eating the hay we'd have had twice as much hay off that field. Because we got it on just the right time, and it rained on it, snowed on it actually, a real wet snow, and it took a couple days for that to melt and it just seeped in slow. Man it worked slick. Now last year we done the same thing, and we didn't get near the crop of hay that we should have got in comparison to the year's before.

SV: Do you remember the elk coming on the meadows in the winter?

KC: Not when I was a kid, too much. Mostly whitetail, black tail, mostly deer. There was elk but not like they are now.

SV: A few things have changed in that way.

DC: Elk are originally a prairie animal... something happened over there and ran them up all into the mountains and finally they just started migrating and in the 1950s they started coming into here. My dad and brothers working up at Cold Creek when they first started logging up there in the early 1950s...of course it snowed then. We'd get eight or ten feet of snow up there. They were trying to log in all of that snow and the elk came down so they'd see quite a few elk in that time that hadn't migrated in. I don't know when they started opening hunting season on them up there.

KC: Bobby said when he was a kid they never had elk in here, Leita's husband. He said there wasn't no such thing as an elk in Swan Valley back then.

SV: I guess there was a time period when elk weren't here... did you guys ever go in the South Fork?

KC: Nope, we never did, until a few years ago. We always had horses but we never went in the South Fork. Daddy always had a team and two or three saddle horses around. We always went in the hills. Daddy took Dixie and I and our cousin Nancy up to Piper Lake and Cedar Lake once. Bobby was with us. Went fishing and camped up there for a few days.

SV: That's a pretty close ride from here.

DC: I've never been there, either.

KC: Roy Fox, he was an old bachelor that lived over there by Huletts, he gave Francis Kesterson a colt. Then the next year, they would always take their horses over there to Arlee or somewhere for winter pasture, and somebody unbeknownst to everybody left a stud loose over there. When they brought their horses home that year there was 13 baby colts running around over here. So Roy came over and asked the folks, and gave me a colt, and told me I'd have to raise it on a bottle because he needed the mother in the hills. So they gave me Copper. I raised him on the bottle and Mom bought one of the other ones for Dixie, Cricket. Raised him on the bottle and got him broke and that's when they first started having OMoksees. Well they first got the arena built. The first OMoksee was on the other side of the highway over there, just open, there was no fences around it or nothing. Then they built the arena and they started OMokseeing. Did that for several years.

I was in eighth grade the first time I ever rode in it. Well, this is a different arena now from that time. They had the drill team in '54 and '55. We had 16 or 18 riders in it. We had blue jeans and white shirts with our emblem on it. I still got my emblem on it, with a Swan on it, the blue mountains and the Swans. Blue neckscarves. Pretty fancy drill team. We just performed here. We was too poor. Everybody said, Take that out. Take it to the fair. Get out of the valley with it.

Shoot we was riding up to the arena ten miles up and ten miles back. Nobody could afford to...most of us rode. A few of them had a stock truck and they'd haul a few head but the rest of us rode.

SV: More questions about people? Did you know Vandewaukka?

KC: No.

SV: Henry Thol?

KC: He'd stop at the folks', but he was a good friend of Fred Kaser's. He was at Fred's quite a bit of the time. Fred worked for the Forest Service.

DC: Before the war. He was 44 years old when they drafted him? He was born in 1903 and they drafted him in 1942. What would that be? Thirty something.

KC: I can remember Harry Harmon. He rode, well it was Fred's team, Mike and Bird, and they had a big old wagon and little red and white dog that came out with him all the time. He'd go out and get the mail, that must have been when they was going clear over there to get the mail, because he'd usually get the folks mail and stop by and leave the mail when he got back.

SV: I'm curious to find out more about Henry Thol.

DC: Haasch's, Lucille Wilhelm, or Evelyn Jette might be able to help.

SV: What about the names of the creeks around here? Jim Creek?

KC: It had to do with the ranger that I understood, Jim Condon. That's where the Condon came in. That's what I always heard was that Jim Creek was named after Jim Condon. And Condon Creek.

SV: And then Piper Creek was a surveyor, I guess. What about Cedar Creek?

DC: There used to be a bunch of Cedar going on the way up. This bottom over here used to be full of cedar.

KC: And this creek here that comes down through Bannings, called Kaser Creek, is actually a branch of Tipi Creek. It breaks off up there and part of it comes this way and the other part of it goes down towards Beck's Bridge and hits the river.

SV: Tipi Creek is something to do with an Indian camp up further. Do you remember the names of any of the outfitters who came over in the fall?

KC: Herb Tulke was one of them. (?) That was Bob Tulke, his son. I can't think of the others. Cheff came that way at times. There was a Bell, too, Junior Bell used to come over. No Indians that I ever did know about. I sure can't think of that other packer's name. He's a well known packer, too. He looked like an Indian, too, he was dark.

SV: There's an article in Bugle magazine . . .

DC: Not to change the subject but you said Indians. You know Loretta Underwood started a book about the Swan Valley.

SV: We had some information about businesses and farming on that other tape, but what has been the best part of living here and what has been the worst part?

KC: I can't think of any worst part. The best part was just being able to live kind of free and easy. There wasn't a lot of stuff to tie you down. You pretty much did what ever you wanted to do.

DC: That was before we were married.

KC: I suppose what was probably the worst part was if you had to get out for any reason it was such a long trip and not very dependable vehicles. If you were sick or something it was a little iffy to go out. It was mostly just home remedies.

SV: Were you ever really sick?

KC: I wasn't but Dixie had scarlet fever. We about lost her. I didn't even get the mumps. I got the measles. Telephone made some difference. Tom and Sherry Hulett were the first ones in Salmon Prairie to get a telephone.

DC: We were the second. That was in 1964 after we got the bus route. Huletts had theirs in before that.

KC: I don't know who they could call. Nobody else much had a phone!

DC: They had them on up in the Condon area, in the stores and other people on that end up there. We just didn't have them on this end until we got the bus route and they ordered me to get it and I ordered the school board to pay for it and they didn't pay for it but I got the phone anyhow.

KC: No we were never deprived of anything that we could think of. We were always . . .

DC: Money.

KC: Didn't have to worry about money when I was a kid, anyway. Every fall Mom would take probably her haying wages and some trapping wages or something and always ordered us new snowsuits and boots and mittens because we were outside all the time. She made sure we always had good warm clothes. She made all of our clothes though up until probably fourth grade or fifth grade when Daddy got us each a pair of jeans. Big mistake. Never got us out of them.

SV: Did you have to wear dresses up until then?

KC: yeah we wore dresses and long stockings and mom made a lot of slacks with bibs on them and stuff like that. Never owned a pair of shorts. We always wore our shoes in the summer time. They might have to have a piece of cardboard in them to keep a hole from poking through. A lot of them would go barefoot but Mom wouldn't allow that, to crawl into bed with dirty feet. So we weren't allowed to go barefoot. Of course where we played most of the time it wouldn't be a good deal anyway because we played down in the barn yard.

SV: What nationality was your mom?

KC: Mostly English. Dad was French and English.

SV: You said you had a Christmas tree for Christmas. What did you do for Christmas decorations?

KC: We always had bulbs and tinsel and rope and

DC: Popcorn. We kept colored paper and put them together to make a chain to go around the tree.

KC: I remember Stroms, they were always considered kind of ritzy compared to the rest of us. He had a generator and so they had lights on their Christmas tree.

SV: So you got to go see it?

KC: Oh yeah, we were down there more than we were here. That was our second home, pretty near. They lived, past, where you come down Alder Creek Hill and go straight up...actually about three quarters of a mile. From Frye's place you look straight down the hill to Strom's. Uno. And they had one daughter, Florence, who is Dixie's age.

SV: Did you exchange gifts at Christmas?

KC: Yes. One year they got us each a fish pole and that was a pretty good deal. One year they gave us each a doll. One had brown eyes and one had blue eyes so we didn't kill each other over it. Our sled was probably the next best thing we got.

SV: Did you ever ski?

KC: Daddy made us a pair of skis when we was little. He made us a tobaggon, too. One of the best things to slide on was a deer hide or cardboard. Then in the spring of the year we'd all have to get ourselves over there and clean up our deer hair and our cardboard off the hill. That was always us kids' job. The deer hide go good. Get the hair going the right way and hang on.

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

KC: Well, whoever had the last dinner somebody would say well, I'll have it next time. When Leita and Bobby got married in November and I think it was in March she said she'd have the dinner. She got up and it was cold and raining and everything. So she didn't figure that anyone was going to come. She was standing around there in her pajamas and leisurely doing nothing. And Bobby looked out and Russell, Etta, and John and Marian was coming in the back way, they'd waded through that swamp. So she had to quick like get dressed and get ready to get dinner. Daddy had the team and sled and had gone around this way with everybody. Had to forge the creek because the creek was running high. They all made it. Leita was living up at Dixie and Neil's.

SV: What's the biggest changes now?

KC: Highway, electricity and people. People aren't neighborly like they used to be. They are busy doing their own things. Living a much faster life. They just don't get together. Used to have card parties. Anything just for company. They don't do anything like that anymore. Probably TV is the biggest change. Everybody sets glued to that. And electricity.

DC: Since I've been here, that highway. They paved it in 1959. We started going together in 1957. They had electricity when I came up here so that's no big change to me. Basically the amount and influx of people in the valley and in Salmon Prairie, too. There was six families in here at one time and now there's about 18 homes.

SV: Do you think the same changes affect this neighborhood?

KC: The only thing that is keeping it still intact is the school. They still have the Christmas program.

SV: So there are still a few families with kids.

KC: A few. It's getting fewer every year. Nine or ten there now.

DC: New little school teacher, first year out of college. I wonder how she's going to do.

KC: Retired people. Don't have to make a living here.

DC: There are numerous people belongs to that, the ecosystem up here. And I know maybe ten people on the list. I've never heard the names of fifty percent of those people, and the other ones because Ronnie and Rollie mention them.

SV: Do you think in Salmon Prairie, in the 1950s, was it mostly people interested in small farms?

DC: Kestersons had ten or twelve head, and Fred Kaser had some up there, you (Clothier) had some, and Huletts. Bob Fox had a few. Now, Dixie and Karen are the only ones who have cows.

SV: How are the meadows used now?

DC: We cut part of 33 up here. They took all the leases. We had about 65 head of cows, in 1989, and we sold out. We kept one old milk cow for the kids, and I think we ended up with three or four cows. We'd turn our lease back from the Forest Service. Then she built back up to about 15 head and tried to get the lease back. Well, we don't have pasture enough or hay enough to run anymore and still have five or six head of horses on the place, too. But Lynette she likes her cows, so she has a cow and heifer coming on over here and a calf and you got a milk cow.

KC: I don't milk her she's 25 years old! Still got her though.

DC: Just hay and pasture. We didn't seed. Mostly canary grass in these meadows. But now see that they haven't been taken care of and hayed in so many years they are all turning to what we call rip guy, just an old meadow grass that the cattle don't like to eat it and the horses don't like to eat it. And probably if that's all they had to eat they'd starve to death. Even canary grass it takes about twice as much canary grass to feed a cow or a horse through the winter and keep them in good shape as it does timothy or clover or higher kind of grass. Because it's long and stalky, and there's big holes in that stalk and there's not enough nutrition in the leaf itself. It takes a lot of leaves to fill a cow up.

SV: What do people use the meadows for?

DC: Nothing. Just wildlife, I guess.

KC: A few of them got horses around here.

DC: She's got five or six head. Pam...has six or eight head.

(misc discussion about neighbors they don't know riding their horses on Salmon Prairie road)

SV: In the 1950s and 1960s, there were more things going on in the community, do you feel that disconnect now?

DC: Not as strong organizations now as they were back then. Not as strong Saddle Club now as they were back then.

KC: We used to put on plays at different times. And that other outfit upriver they've kind of taken over, putting on plays at the Hungry Bear.

[End of Interview]