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The following transcript was provided to Archives and Special Collections by the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society with its associated audio recording.

Oral History Number: 422-128

Interviewees: Queveene "Queenie" Talley and ValGene Clothier

Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon

Date of Interview: May 9, 2006

Project: Upper Swan Valley Oral History Project

Note: Steve Lamar is also present for interview. Not clear who individual with initials GB is.

ValGene Clothier: I got busted up in '67, Haines and Skagway. I got my hip broke.

GB: Well, it's interesting, we had Mom's (ninetieth) birthday up at the community hall, and that hall was built in 1938.

Queveene Talley: Oh, the year we came up.

GB: Yeah, what a coincidence.

VC: That's where old Royden, and Hollopeter family, was one of them that was working on that.

GB: And the CCC camp guys.

QT: I remember that. I remember all the boys they used to haul in the trucks. They'd load up the boys in the back of the truck, you know, and they were nice lookin' boys. Going to the work jobs. We'd see them. From Goat Creek, we were living up here. I was married, but then, gee whiz. The men always wave at the girls, so why can't the women. They were kind of cute. You can look, but don't touch.

VC: Look at where I got my bashfulness (said to Q, his mom).

QT: Yeah that must be. You learned it from your mother.

Suzanne Vernon: Tell me more about your family?

QT: We (Archie Clothier and Queveene) got married in 1933, in Polson, and his dad had a house in Kalispell. We moved there and lived there a couple of months, but we had to pay rent. Things were kind of tough so we moved down to Lakeside. Then we moved to Turtle Lake, Polson.

VC: Well, I was born in '34, up at Kila (Q's folks' place).

QT: Mom took care of me.

SV: So Val, you are the oldest?

VC: Yes.

QT: And then there's Nancy, and she's a Clothier.

SV: I have pictures of you on the old Salmon Prairie bridge, that Dixie let us copy.

QT: Nancy fell through that bridge. Babe and Dorothy Clothier were gone, out to (?) doing the war work at that time, and left us to milk their cows and take care of stuff. We just had the old bridge, made out of lodgepole, and it had started to rot. So you had to be careful. I had the separator going over, and Nancy had a kitten in her arms, and she fell through where a log was out. I dashed back and jumped off the bridge, and hurt my knee, and then waded out. She just...luckily, there was a big rock there that she clung onto. I remember that. I had new shoes on, and I thought oh my God, I don't want to ruin my new shoes. But she was worth it.

That was later in the summer, so it wasn't as high. Those big rocks under there were sticking out. We never did find her kitty. It got swept away. Whether it drowned right there or got swept away and got out later on the bank, I don't know.

SV: So tell me what Salmon Prairie was like when you first got there in '38.

QT: It was kind of wild. We lived in Polson for a while. That was during the dam days, so there was a lot of people there, at that time. Had to build a cabin at Salmon Prairie. Babe made one on his side of the river, across the river, and we stayed there until we got one. We got logs out of that flat there. They were all dry logs. Packed them in and put this one cabin up. Then come Thanksgiving, and we were going out to Kalispell, up to my folks, at Kila, and we started out, and we got up to the Goat Creek Hill, we ran out of gas.

VC: It was farther than Goat Creek, because we had to walk down to Soup Creek.

QT: We figured about five miles that we walked. And we packed Nancy. Part of the time, he was four (to ValGene) so part of the time we had to pack him . . .

VC: Well, I was packing you guys, probably.

GB: By four, I guess.

QT: We heard about that old saying that the Indians used to have. "When you get tired, pick up a rock, and when you put it down you're rested."

SV: Had the Indians quit camping over here by that time?

VG: No, I don't think they were coming over here and camping here when we were here.

QT: But his grandparents homesteaded at Walnut Grove, along the lakeshore, and the Indians used to come back through there a lot. I think that was one of her sayings.

VG: They left Dayton, Wyoming, in 1895, and then they come on in covered wagons, until they homesteaded in the Flathead at Lakeside, right around the turn of the century. It took them a year or two before they got up here.

SV: Why did they come to the Flathead?

VG: I don't know particularly why, but the reason they left Dayton, Wyoming was...my dad's brother, their son, and them, they had two boys the same age, about 12. He ate some wild parsnip, and poisoned him, but it was probably water hemlock. Anyway, he died down in Dayton, Wyoming. So they decided they'd move out of the country and go someplace else.

They used to have a blacksmith shop down there. I know basically, anyplace I go if there's any old history, anything about a town or anything in the old days, I always try to read it. And this one book that I found there showed pictures of the Clothier blacksmith shop, in the days of the tie hack, and the river...Cutting all these railroad ties to expand the railroads.

SV: So what did Archie do for a living?

QT: He had an artificial limb. He got a government pension of thirty dollars a month. So that's what we lived on. Bought this property, Babe's family and us, this half section. When we were in Polson, I think he got a dollar a day setting in LeRoy Peck's radio shop, answering calls, and selling stuff. So we had sixty dollars a month. Then we bought our winter's supply, and we got a car, too, probably. Anyway, we got up here.

Anyway, that Thanksgiving we got down to Lawrence's cabin on Soup Creek, and we had to break in because the house was locked. Vern Lawrence, I'd went to school with him at Kila, so we knew them real well. Of course we didn't have milk for Nancy. Anyway, we stayed overnight and then Vern came up the next day on the mail route, and Archie went up to the road, and begged some gas off of him and then we got on our way.

SV: What did you think when you got here?

QT: We came in September. Nancy had been born in July. She was two months old. I wouldn't have the guts to do it today. How did we take off that far from a doctor or anything. I guess you've got faith. Everything turned out. We were excited about pioneering. It was going to be the cool thing. How old was I? I was 18 when Val was born, and 22 when Nancy was born.

VC: I can remember when we moved up there, why, we camped out for a week or ten days, maybe longer, I don't know. While they were getting (babe's) cabin ready. I was a little kid, but at that time they had the – kangaroo mice – they hop on their hind legs? After that year, we

never seen them again. I don't know whether they disappeared or whether there are any still in the valley. There's lots of them little deer mice.

SV: (to Steve) Yeah, we have a jumping mice, they aren't real common.

VC: That fall, there were just lots of them around there. They just fascinated me. I thought maybe they all died out.

SV: Ed talked about being up on Holland Peak area, and he remembered seeing mice going across that mountain.

VC: I don't remember but he probably did. At that time, basically one of the big job sources was up on the lookout, fire watch, or cutting trails, or packing . . .

QT: But the kids' dad couldn't work or he'd lose his pension, which he did before he died. He did paint the new bridge one time. He was a painter, an artist. Didn't do too much of it, simply because paints cost a lot and he didn't have a market for it in those days. Some of the nephews wondered why he didn't do something with it, but gee, in those days, nobody had any money.

SV: It was just a lot different culture.

QT: It was different. We got our cabin built there and we went out and came back. Our car died on the way home. We were bringing back a couch we bought. Where did we get all our money? We must have been miserly people.

Anyway, our car died. Some of the neighbors come along and they loaded the thing on theirs. Wasn't that Lawrence Smith? We left our car there. That was the last we had a car. Then we had a horse for a means of travel. Things were tough. But I don't know, you never felt sorry for yourself especially. We did have enough to eat. Sometimes we had to kill a deer a little too soon. Val liked to fish in the river. I'd go down and hold onto his shirttail because once you get into that swift current, you're gone. There was a few times I felt like letting him go, but reason prevailed.

When we moved there, how many kids were in school (to Val)?

VC: The first year that I went to school, Leita and I, Tommy and Peach Hulett.

QT: I noticed in Leita's story she never mentioned her cousins at all being in school (her cousins were ValGene and Nancy). There were such few kids that first year, then Dupuis (sp?) came and lived across there on...Fox's place.

VC: I started school, first grade, at Salmon Prairie. They didn't have kindergarten in those days. I walked just a little ways to school, from our cabin to the old schoolhouse. I used to come home

for lunch every day and go back. I'd give my mother some smart remarks and make her made, and I'd zip out the door to the school, and then when I'd get back, she'd forget about it.

This one day, I must have told her a real zinger, because she followed me out the door and picked up a little limb and whack. Got me right behind the ears.

QT: I didn't think you remembered that.

VC: After that I could walk to school and forget all the smart comments.

QT: We used to have dances there, a little social life of some kind, very little. In the spring, us women would get out our rakes and stuff and we'd rake all around and clean up the school yard. We'd have a potluck.

VC: That one year, they had that, it was the Depression era, and they sent a bale of cotton, and mattress ticking.

QT: And we made mattresses.

VC: People got together and made mattresses, cotton mattresses. We had pictures and I think I've still got some. (Queveene later sent us copies) At least one, where they are standing there beating this cotton...

QT: Mrs. Hulett and I, and who else?

SV: So what did you do with the mattresses?

QT: Everybody got one that needed one.

VC: We had feather tick, and of course, some people had hay mattresses.

QT: And some straw ticks.

VC: Some of them was sleeping on boughs that was cut from trees. They'd lay them down with a tarp over them, and then your bed was on top of that. Of course you had to change them boughs every so often, they'd get too dry and start breaking up, and then your bed goes to heck.

SV: Some place else sent you these cotton ticks?

VC: I think it was a government deal, for areas of poor people.

QT: Probably getting cotton from the southern states to help us guys in the north. I don't know what the program was. I had forgotten that. I've gotten rid of so many of my pictures.

VC: You sent that one picture that had a question mark. It was taken over here in front of the cabin. Nancy and I and our dog Worley, and Mom didn't even recognize it.

GB: Those were the days when kids were cute and lovable. That was a cute picture.

VC: Leita and I were there, and are in the picture, that one picture, of the mattress work. We had it all laid on the table of some kind. I got one of the pictures, and if I happen to remember and think about it, I'll send it to George.

SV: Where do you live?

VC: Ashland, Montana. I lived there and worked down there in the 1980s. And then in 1994 or 1995, went to Washington. This friend of mine, they were over there, and her mother passed away, and left her a 5,000-acre ranch, so we decided to go back and live on it. They wanted me to go back, so I went back with them.

QT: Well, we had relatives back there (?).

VC: They came at the same time that Grandpa Clothier and them, but they didn't go that far. They stopped around Alveda and homesteaded. Raised sheep and stuff for years, then got into the dairy business.

SV: So what is your maiden name?

QT: Colby.

SV: Tell me the story about your first name?

QT: Queveene? (laughter) My folks were going to have a new baby, and it was during 1916, when "everything was on the QT" – it was a popular saying – "everything's on the QT" – so Mom thought if I was a boy, they'd give me that initial, but then when it was a girl – thank God – can you imagine a fat little kid running around here and everybody calling her "QT"? So a friend of hers, a Mrs. – can't think right now – made it up from Sueveene – and put the Q on it. And Twila was for my cousin, her name – she took care of Mom – so my middle name is Twila. So I got the "QT". Queveene is the way it is spelled.

My baby picture is here – (George brings it out.) The folks had other kids, and you know when you have your first kids how many pictures you take? Course, after a few, you don't take so many.

I went to school in Kila, one year at Lakeside, and high school at Flathead High.

VC: I went to school in Swan Valley until Dad died (1947) and then we moved to Kalispell. Then I went one year, and Mom married Ed (Beck) and I finished eighth grade at Smith Flats, next to the ranger station.

SV: Okay, help me out on the time line.

QT: Archie died in 1947 . . .

VC: So we came back up here right at the tail end of '48 or at the start of '49.

QT: George was born in 1949 . . .

VC: I don't know, you were kind of prolific . . . (laughter)

GB: You know, we all understand these stories. It's kind of a genetic talent.

QT: We were married on (can't hear) day out in Seattle, that year, 1947. Ed and I.

SV: How did you meet Ed?

QT: When we lived here in the valley.

SV: When did his wife die?

QT: He had never married, when I married him, and he was forty years old.

SV: So he had lived here his whole life from the age of ten.

GB: He was an old Finnish bachelor there for a long time. He was taking care of his mom and dad, and the ranch. No girls up here, I guess.

VC: That was a big deal, whenever a new teacher moved into the valley, why that was the way one of the bachelor's got a wife, was one of the teachers.

Emily: Do you have a story to go with this photo?

QT: We were living at Galen at the time, I didn't stay here too much. And Ed came down and had George baptized and then he took the picture. Him and Nancy.

VC: George was kind of an apple-cheeked kid.

Emily: Wasn't that kind of a long drive for this baptism?

GB: In those days, it would have been a horrendous drive, from here, given the conditions of the road.

VC: A whole day.

SV: Why?

GB: Well, dad, as far as I know, never went to church a day in his whole life. He kind of thought this (living up here) was church. But he had been baptized in Bonner, and my grand-folks – I didn't know them as well as Mom and Val do – and I can't imagine they were very religious, but I suppose they had that tradition...of being sealed into the Lutheran church. So this was real important to them, apparently.

VC: There were no churches up here (Lutheran).

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

VC: (talking about ACM buying homesteaders lands). They basically also guaranteed the homesteaders a job. They wouldn't go out of their way too much, but your dad's dad, when they started up here, why he'd usually come up here and work in the summertime. And work on the place. Then he could go down there to (ACM camps?) where they could work all winter so they could have another grub stake. He did that for a while, three or four years.

Of course, when the boys got old enough (Earl and Ed Beck) why they were trapping. Of course, everybody in this valley trapped at that time.

Everybody had their own area. If you were say, owned the homestead here, which Ed bought this place, but he trapped Condon Creek, and he had an area down so far. Then the Anderson place down there, he didn't dare trap on their property. Beaver and mink, muskrat – whatever there was to catch.

SV: When did the permit systems start on the beaver?

VC: For many years, it was like that. If you had a beaver house on your property, you could catch two beaver out of it.

SV: So did Ed trap on the permit system?

VC: Yes. And then at the old place (now Northwest Connections office), why they had a couple places there they could pretend there was a beaver . . . Up there you know where they had that little dam above the barn. Why, it used to be a beaver house in there. Course, most of these people that had beaver on their property, if they could, they never trapped theirs. They'd go get them on Forest Service or someplace. They saved theirs.

SV: Kind of like savings accounts.

VC: Yeah. My dad (Archie Clothier) trapped Andersons beaver, and that was at the end of the second World War. He caught one beaver that was 80 inches, the way they measured them, width and length. A dollar an inch. We bought a registered Guernsey cow for \$65. So that beaver brought quite a bit more than that registered Gurnsey cow.

And then when Ed and Earl was trapping, I've seen some of their old fur receipts. At that time, that one years, marten (sable) was worth \$70. At that time you were lucky to have a job for thirty dollars a month. So one marten was two and a quarter months' pay. They caught, I think, forty of them.

They had a little cabin – they had one up Jim Creek at the head of Jim Lake, and then they would drop over Tipi Ridge, in Cold Creek – they had another one in probably Cold Creek and probably Elk Creek.

GB: That was my dad and his brother Earl. That must have been in the late 20s.

VC: Yeah, it was in the late 20s. Probably 28 or 29, somewhere in there.

QT: When did your uncle die?

GB: I thought that was in 1934 (Earl Beck – George later in the transcript says his uncle died in 1927). My dad always said that he got ahold of some bad moonshine or something like that, and it poisoned him.

SV: Who built the cabins?

VC: Ed and Earl. But they were just tiny. Just overnight deal, where they could go up there on snowshoes and they'd have a place where they could get in and have a bunk. I suppose they had some kind of little stove in them. I don't remember now. But just overnight cabins. They'd go from one day up to here, and then the next day there and there. Then, they'd cut back down to the home place, and they'd probably stay two or three days. Because on the marten trapline, you really only have to go every ten days. Because you set when it's so cold, that if you catch anything, it automatically froze to death. And the marten don't...they got a pretty good circle that they travel. If you go there every day, why you might go eight days before one even comes by. So you don't want to have to tramp for miles on snowshoes.

SV: They'd circle down to the cabin then?

VC: Yeah.

Lamar: Butch Harmon told me about the one that Ed built up in Jim Lakes area, between number 6 and number 7 (lakes) and he showed me on the map. He said it was about six logs high, and they never finished it but they put a tent on top of it.

VC: That's what they did. Sometimes they'd just find a big granite boulder (we don't have granitic rock here, do we?) and put poles up and make like a lean-to. Whatever was easy. They must have been going to stay in that Jim Creek cabin more than they did in the others, because the others were all lean-tos that they built, in the other basins.

SV: Did they ever talk about what kind of sets they used, peg sets or notch sets?

VC: You'd take and chop into a tree and drive a little pegs in there, and put your trap on it and you'd drive some above it and take cedar boughs or something and make a roof on it. (peg set)

You'd have your bait up there. You'd take a pole and lean it up there to where your trap was at, for the marten to trot up there. Of course, you've got camp robbers, and you've got weasels, and you've got flying squirrels, and all kinds of things that you really didn't want.

QT: He had a nice little habit that I didn't like. He took all the beaver castors out in the room where the separator was, and dried them.

GB: Used them for bait. Dad always used to slip them into somebody's pocket when they...too. It was a joke. And they weren't greasy or anything.

VC: They weren't bad compared to coyotes.

GB: They weren't bad at all. I was just going to tell you, too, my uncle died in 1927. (Earl Beck?) We went to the cemetery.

VC: When they were trapping up there, well they probably started trapping up there right after they got out of school, out of the eighth grade. They were probably 14 years old. But that year that the fur was so high was probably at a later time, I know. What year was that Model A your dad had?

GB: 1927, I think.

VC: But that's where he got the money to buy that brand new, he was telling me, because they made so much money trapping marten that year, that he bought that Model A. They trapped around 40. I don't know exactly, but I seen the old fur lists. And then of course, they'd have a few mink and weasels, coyotes and stuff like that.

SV: Where did you see the old fur lists?

VC: Ed used to have them over at the cabin.

QT: Probably in the old sideboard thing.

GB: Yeah, I've got an old sideboard here, that they kept all their records in. It was kind of the one piece of furniture that was manufactured furniture, made out of pine, tall sideboard, with lots of little doors. There were scraps of wire, there scraps of string. That's where he would have put things.

SV: I'm curious where he sold them.

VC: Well most of them were sold...Maze and Stephen (look at my written notes) and they were out of New York. And he sold some to Taylor Fur Company in St. Louis. Later on he sold to

Pacific Hide and Fur. But in the early days, where everything went out by mail, they'd ship them out. These companies would mail you a price list every fall.

(tape off while everybody watches a real dark-colored coyote cross the meadow, out the window)

GB: There's a pretty big drainage coming down through here. I was talking to a gal down at Lake Inez, and she said they used to come up and stay at the old cabin. She'd come over here and fish. They'd fish at the beaver dam, of course, but she said they got bull trout out of this, too. But I haven't caught any out of here.

SV: Well, let's talk about the fishing...

GB: I should tell you one story I heard just yesterday, talking about how money works here. Harold and Florence Gregg's nephew was here. And he said, or his wife said, that Dad told her that to pay for me, he had to cut down a yellow pine. He paid a yellow pine for me, for the hospitalization, the bill.

QT: We paid cash before we left, I know.

VC: But they did come in, well, right here, there was some nice big yellow pine, right here on this knoll. And then over across on the property across the meadow, they loaded them on a sled, team and sled, and they hauled them down to Vern Anderson's place. It's the next place down the creek here from you. Just above Leita was Vern's. I don't know, that is all kind of divided up now.

QT: Mark (Anderson) was across the road.

VC: Yeah, I guess. But anyway, that's where the sawmill was, because they had lots (of yellowpine). One of the guys up here sawing logs here, he got himself cut really bad, and came over here and bled all over the snow.

GB: Up here?

VC: Yeah.

SV: About what year . . .

VC: Let's see, George was born in 1949. It could have been 1948. He had the cabin built before George was born, because I can remember Mom had some morning sickness for days and days and days. Every time you'd see her she'd be a heaving.

QT: See what you cost me? (to George)

(talking about after World War II)

VC: Well, there was no jobs, really, in this valley, even after the war. You either had a few head of cattle, like the Becks and the Makis, and a few of them, they could survive here. But the rest of them, they had to go to work someplace. Huletts, they managed to tough it out, and a few of the Foxes. About everybody had to move out of the valley.

Emily: Didn't your grandmother make money by sewing clothes for people? (To George)

GB: That was in Bonner. They ran a boarding house there, too. My father's mother, Hilda Beck.

QT: She was so busy pulling stumps and stuff.

GB: In Bonner (where the boarding house was), there was real money. In Bonner, there were the mill workers and the dam workers, guys that were earning a wage, that needed stuff mended, that could pay, I suppose. But up here, no. I don't know how anybody up here could pay. They were really poor.

Emily: I thought it was amazing that your dad, Ed, bought this Victrola that's in the back corner, for his mother. It must have been a time when he had the trapping money.

GB: That's a 1928 or a 1927, so it might be that same marten harvest.

VC: It could have been. This one I remember in particular, because marten was so high. But other years, they were fairly high, but not like that.

Emily: What were the Victrola's worth?

GB: I think about eighty bucks or so.

QT: That was a lot of money in those days.

Emily: We restored it, so we could play a song or two for you. We have one or two records that did not get broken up in storage that Ed had.

GB: Yeah, we are lucky to have anything that survived.

VC: We used to go around in some of the old homestead cabins and stuff that were out there and you'd find those old cylinders, you know, for the phonograph? That's what they had before they had the (records).

GB: From what I understand, there were a lot of homesteaders here, and a lot of them sold out and disappeared. You went around to some of them?

VC: Oh yeah, there were quite a few of them, years ago. Where the timber is grown up, I couldn't find them now. Well, there used to be the old Condon Ranger Station, and a road that went up past that quite a ways. There was a school up there. I remember going up through there, and looking in there, and there was parts of old desks and packrats had a big pile in one corner.

Lamar: The packrat nests are still there but the old desks were not there. And the roof's starting to go on it.

GB: Well, that would have been the one that my dad went to. He had to cross the river on a log.

SV: Why did they put it up there?

VC: No particular reason, other than the fact that there was a community and they got together and built a school. The Salmon Prairie school land probably belonged to Andersons, Carl. (Check Brist transcript.)

Pretty much, years ago, somebody would donate a piece of land for a school, and all the neighbors would get together and have a log-raising bee.

SV: How late did Ed trap?

GB: He was trapping even after I was gone to Alaska. He and Agnes would go along trapping. I used to go with him, and lug in the big beaver, and we'd skin them on the floor in the house there, nail them down. He had boards that we put them on, then we'd pick them up and stack them and dry them. Sometimes they were up in the attic and sometimes they were just in the back bedroom. Mink and not much muskrat. But mostly mink and beaver. Lots of beaver pelts. Even when he married Agnes, he'd go along. She kind of took to the valley, and she kind of kicked the dust off, whatever her past had been, and became this. She was right there with him, doing the trapping. He was doing that clear into the 1980s.

VC: He trapped here, and then he trapped up behind the old Condon Ranger Station, over toward Mary Harris' and on the river.

Lamar: I think I found one of his traps a year ago. I left it where it set.

VC: But he had...at the time I was young and up here, he had these sets already made. Like he had, rocks, for beaver, you got to have weight. I know in a lot of places, I know particularly up along the creek here, there wasn't rocks handy. So he packed them in, and he'd have them

wired up. Then of course, he'd spring his trap (can't hear) but the rock and everything was ready when he was ready to set things up. It saved a lot of walking.

Lamar: This trap is rusty, but it also has lichens and stuff growing on it. It's been there awhile. It's in an area where there's a whole bunch of beaver cuttings, next to a pothole.

GB: He used to have little copper tags for the traps, but that came later.

VC: We didn't put the tags all on. A lot of times where you had to trap someplace where you didn't want somebody to know that you set it there, so you didn't put the tag on it.

SV: Fur thefts were fairly common in this area.

VC: The trappers, a lot of times, they might be trapping on somebody's property that maybe they wasn't necessarily supposed to be trapping on. So they didn't want to leave their name and address there. If a guy found their trap, why, that's tough. But of course, that was the idea of tagging your traps, so the game wardens or anybody could come by, if they happened to see it, and tell if you were using illegal bait or this and that.

I trapped up until I got busted up in the woods. Why I trapped some after that. The year before I got hurt, in 1959, why I bought a brand new 1960 four wheel drive Dodge pickup, off of beaver I caught. I got seventy-two beaver 72 and I got \$50 apiece for them. I was down the Bitterroot and up the Deer Lodge Valley trapping. You had more area that way. This valley had been kind of controlled for years. Like the Huletts, they had an area they trapped, Ed had an area he trapped. And some of the Hollopeters they did some trapping, and Babe Clothier – he never did too much trapping, he'd catch coyotes and stuff like that. You know, anything you could do to make a dollar.

When I got up to Ed's there, when Mom married Ed, that first winter I caught a hundred weasels. And that was just going from the house and walk around the school bus, where Beckville used to be. And then on the weekends, why of course I had traps all around this and around Maki's on the river, there, for weasel. I got a dollar apiece of them. It was pretty good money for them. Then probably in 1948 or 1949, they took that 1080 poison and scattered it up and down the valley. They killed damn near everything.

GB: It was terrible.

VC: After that, there was no weasels. You'd see a track very occasionally.

GB: The 1080 was for the coyotes?

VC: They put it out for the coyotes, but it would kill everything. That 1080, like an animal would eat one carcass, so it kills it. Then another something else will eat on it, like the ravens and the magpies, and it about got them wiped out.

GB: It's not DDT, it was some poison.

VC: 1080. It was a chemical poison. It's deadly. It's outlawed now.

GB: I remember that. The fellow who was the hunter, the government trapper, he used to come up at Dad's. He'd go set these things out. I guess it was like in a shotgun shell or something?

VC: Cyanide was in the shotgun shells. They'd pop off in their mouth, but that only kills one animal at a time. With that 1080, they'd come up with...they'd buy chunks of horses and they'd doctor them, and then they'd just fly over and drop them off wherever they hadn't hit, you know.

GB: I didn't know they did that, at all.

SV: I didn't know they did that up here. I knew about eastern Montana.

VC: They did it here. A few years ago, I suppose it is to a certain extent now, but there used to be big deer yards along the foothills over there, on that range (where?) where the deer would winter. Of course that's where all the coyotes hung out, too. There used to be big deer trails every place. Then they had – when Tuff and Leita was down there, in the 1950s – why they left the season open until after Christmas. You could have... probably from the Missoula County line down, you could have walked on the gut piles without getting off, all the way to Swan Lake. Just killed the deer by the thousands, from the highway, the hunters killed them. Probably 1955 or 1956. You'd have to check the records. They had put the new highway in at that time, just after that.

Down at Cilly Creek and down in there, they used to have the big deer yards down in on the river. For a couple of years, after that, they damn near killed all the deer. They need to have a fairly good population to keep the trails open and breaking trails around where they can get forage. They killed too many of them out, and the rest of them starved to death.

GB: I remember the snow being incredibly deep, and it stayed deep.

VC: That one winter that your granddad died, I stayed and took care of the cattle and stuff for Ed, because he was out in Missoula, and his mother was out there, too. That was the year that the coldest and the most snow. They was dropping hay in the Dakotas and in Eastern Montana. We had that fence over there and you couldn't see a sign of the fence. The snow was so deep you couldn't see a sign of it. I got pictures of it, where I was catching muskrats – I had them out

on a muskrat house – and that was the fifth of May and there was still four feet of packed snow in the meadow below the barn.

It must have been 1948 and 1949.

GB: I was just a year old when he died. (Who?) He went to the hospital . . .

VC: He went in first, he went to Missoula, and to do his fall shopping. He liked to go in once a year for clothes, and pick up a couple, three bottles of booze for his little eye opener in the morning.

QT: He didn't get drunk.

VC: He had prostate problems. They had to catheterize him. He got back on his feet and come back in the valley and it hit him again. That time, he didn't come back. He probably had prostate cancer, I suppose.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

QT: I used to open a box of raisins or something from the bottom. Put it all back on the shelf. They'd take it down and wouldn't see where I'd opened it from the top, so they didn't dare get into it! With the dried fruit and stuff like that.

Emily: I thought it would be interesting, too, to talk about the history of Shacktown, too. You know a lot more about it than we do.

VC: Well, that's started . . .

GB: You were here in the valley when they moved those in?

VC: That was the year that Anna May and I got married, in 1954. We'd moved up. Earl Slack, he was a logger from out around Columbia Falls. He had moved those little shacks in there to use for crews to stay in. Beckville, right at the corner there, at Cold Creek Road.

But at that time, there were quite a bunch of them. Ten or twelve.

QT: How come your Dad did that?

GB: It was a get rich quick scheme, I guess. (laughter)

QT: Gonna get those all rented?

GB: Yes. These were things from the Hungry Horse Dam, little worker cabins that he bought and moved down there.

VC: He used them, and once the logging was done, apparently he didn't want to move them again. He just let them sit.

SV: That was part of Ed's too?

GB: Yes, down on the corner there. This place just goes all the way down there. Pat Patalong lived there until he wasn't able to handle it any more. Thank God he has his daughter to find him a better place. Then we had it cleared up, because it was kind of a mess.

SV: Tell me more about the Condon cabin on this place.

GB: Jim Condon, that's what Dad always said. It's got trees growing up through it, now, maybe 70 or 80 years old, I suppose, maybe more. I took pictures years back. It was kind of a three sided thing, built into the bank, a three sided log affair. Logs going up maybe five or six feet

high. I've never seen a roof on it, to see what that was. But now a big tree is coming up right in the middle of the place. It's probably about as big as this little dining area here.

SV: Did you ever hear any stories about who Condon was?

GB: Just a trapper. I heard he was from the Bitterroot, and just came up here. The other thing is this must have been just the perfect place. He's got good southern exposure. Of course, I don't know what it was like when he built it, but the big fire kind of went through and this must have been new growth about that time. The natural resources in the area, it was pretty marshy and pretty wet – wetlands. What was it, in 19?? When Disney was here?

VC: I think you were born. I'd come up to help Ed hay. That was...nope, that was the year before you was born. We had such a hell of a hay crop. We filled that shed as much as we could. Then we had another deal, stack, there because we didn't have room for it.

GB: So that was 1947. Walt Disney, a film crew came up, and filmed Beaver Valley, a little short movie thing.

Emily: We saw it in Anchorage.

QT: You did? Did you recognize it?

Emily: The school district owned that video.

GB: How long were they here?

VC: Most of the summer. Probably six weeks or two months. They had their camp set up right here in the timber, on this side, where the timber starts turning into meadow. They had cameras set with wires so if the beaver would trip them, it would start taking pictures of them. Of course, when it shows the film, all the beaver scenes are from here. Looking at the mountains, I think they are from Jackson Hole, or some such place.

GB: I think all the cameos may be from here. But the mountains are quite different. So they kind of... like the *River Runs Through It*, they used stuff from here and there. I didn't know that until . . .

Emily: We did tape it.

GB: I videod the movie, but it's terrible quality. It's an old sixteen millimeter film. Many teachers had taped it and patched it. The other thing is, I was talking to Bill Gregg, he has some old things, like Maki's skis and things like that. My granddad made a bunch of those, too, but they are all gone. A lot of this stuff...is gone. We were talking about having a place for these things.

(Misc. discussion about museum possibilities)

VC: Did you ever hear that story about old Shorty? That lived down the river. He was an old moonshiner. He'd apparently go along for a long time and didn't drink. But then once he'd go on a drunk, why he'd get his little gallon, or two gallon, moonshine jug, set it next to the bed until he passed out, then when he'd wake up he'd drink till he passed out again. Eventually, somebody would go down and find him, and he'd be about half dead, or something. They'd get him sobered up again. They had a place they called Shorty's Hole and Shorty's Knob, down there, where apparently he drove his team down in there and drowned in it, coming back from Swan Lake drunk one time.

GB: I heard about that. That's the dip in the road?

VC: It would fill up with water in the spring of the year, or in the fall, too, if it rained. Why then you had to go around. Ol' Shorty. I don't know if anybody even knew his last name. People would drift through this country. Years ago, a lot of people didn't want to give you their name. Who knows, they might have been a draft dodger or deserter from the First World War.

SV: I have a hard time picturing a hole with enough water in it to drown a team.

VC: In the spring of the year, there was probably twenty feet of water in it. A lot of water in there. It looked just like these potholes you see around here, with dead trees sticking out in them, except it would dry up totally in the summertime. You could go right down one side and up the other with your wagon. Spring or fall of the year it had a lot of rain. It was between Salmon Prairie going toward Foxes on that old road

QT: That road. Coming up that road, and you'd see the dust. That was the only way you would know somebody was coming, the dust up there and just one track.

SV: Steve, do you have any place name questions?

Lamar: Have you heard of Moore Meadows?

VC: The Moore Meadows I know is over in the South Fork. Where Russ and Etta Fox and them had one of their main base camps. You'd hear them talking about Moore Meadows. They'd go up through Holland Lake, and then they'd drop off. I never went with them.

VC: Everybody had something named after him. Like old Vandewarka (sp?) He was supposedly the first Forest Service guy in here. He lived across the river from where Workman had the place up there, across the river, he had a cabin over there. It was all just about gone when I was here. He come up in the valley, on the north side of the Swan River, you could drive a team and buggy anyplace. No road or anything. You could go out through the timber anyplace in the

valley. On the south side, you could still ride a saddle horse through there. By the time we were up, why the windfalls and the forest fires and stuff, it would have took you forever to get up the west side or the south side I guess of the valley.

SV: Van Lookout named for him?

VC: Yeah.

(misc discussion about Jim Condon being prospector, possibly.)

VC: They never found much mineral up in this country.

(Misc discussion about how Squeezer Creek might have gotten its name, and that there used to be a few buildings there. Also joking about the name Soup Creek.

Discussion about Al and Vic Wise just celebrating ninety-sixth and ninety-seventh birthdays, and Queveene just celebrated her ninetieth.)

VC: And I know some people can't hardly believe that anybody could live to be ninety.

(laughter)

SV: If you came in 1938, that was shortly after Fred Kaser disappeared.

VC: They were talking about that, but that was before we came. They were secret. They didn't have one building that didn't have a padlock on it and was locked, and that included their outdoor toilet. Every building they had had locks, and was locked. Of course, there had been a lot of talk. Apparently the old man Kaser was a mean, miserable SOB. There was a lot of talk that maybe his life and Fritz had helped him stepped him in one of them bog holes out in the meadow. But whether this is true or not. But Fritz' story, the last he seen of him, he was down at the barn peeking around the corner of the barn.

(Tape off, then on)

VC: Then Grandma Dear that we called her, one of her earliest memories that she can remember, they lived in Missouri at that time, during the Civil War. She can remember that a Confederate soldier was wounded. Her mother hid him in the cellar until he got healed up. She said the only reason that she did, because they were Union, was because he was only 14 years old and scared to death. And of course, if they'd a got caught, they would have been hung for doing it.

On my Grandpa Clothier's side, his wife was a Garret. And Pat Garret was one of her uncles that killed Billy the Kid.

We've got the Clothier family tree, it goes back to (?) from England in 1627 that they actually have records of.

(Misc discussion of Colby family in Kalispell, meeting at the reunion)

QT: I wrote my life story. (I asked for copies.)

GB: I can make you a copy.

(Misc. discussion)

VC: Did you hear about old Ma Strom's husband, and him dying? Uno's mother's husband. I guess he was a terrible person. They poisoned him with strychnine. Ed was the one who was telling me all about this. They loaded him on a sled and hauled him up to Seeley Lake, to take him on into Missoula. Uno and his sister, and mother, were all driving the sled and everything, singing jingle bells . . . (laughter) But supposedly what happened, what she said, anyway, he'd been trapping coyotes and stuff, and he'd used strychnine. Supposedly he had strychnine setting on the table and he had sugar setting on the table. He mistakenly put strychnine in his coffee.

QT: No, they didn't do it. He done it himself.

VC: No I heard it the other way. And there was another guy, up towards Lindbergh Lake, and he got shot. What I got a kick out of was the guy was hiding in the bushes down there in the willows in front of his cabin. Shoots him when he come out to take a leak off his porch. And claims self-defense. Probably figured he was trying to drown him, or something.

QT: Val, you quit now. (laughter)

VC: Years ago, even when I was up in Alaska, if somebody deserved to killed, why, if he got killed, why, they pretty much turned them loose.

GB: Justice was pretty far away.

SV: These are important stories, but people won't talk about them. Warner wouldn't talk about his dad dying.

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

VC: He had quite a little herd of cattle. But he'd shoot them all the time with a shotgun (talking about Fred Kaser?), because he wanted them wild so nobody was going to rustle them. They was wild all right. When he wanted to butcher one, they had to shoot it with an ought-six (30.06).

QT: He was odd.

GB: The story I heard was that he just disappeared and the thought was maybe he fell into a fen or a sinkhole or something.

VC: There was quite a few of them, clear up Kaser Creek and on up past Rudy Kaser's place up there. You could take a slender lodgepole, I've done it several times, oh maybe 18 or 20 feet long, and just stick it down that hole and it would never touch bottom.

Either Fritz stuffed him in there, or he fell in by himself. Everybody would like to think the latter.

QT: Nothing like embellishing the story. I don't know about you.

VC: All the old timers up here, they had a lot of time to think about stuff like that.

GB: I didn't get a lot of these other stories, and that's too bad. As a young person you just aren't there to listen. Had other things on my mind, I guess. Too bad. I wish I'd a gotten a better . . .

Emily: We might have historic photos, too. The album is in Anchorage.

[Break in audio]

VC: And you know that, well, that little sweat lodge that was there, the sauna, it's 10 x 10 inside that sauna. And that grizzly, tacked up on the wall, all the way around. We measured the skull, and it was a 32nd of an inch and quarter of an inch in width of being as big as the World Record that Teddy Roosevelt killed over on the Missouri Breaks.

That grizzly, it was just tough. We didn't eat it. You couldn't put your thumb in it. Anyway, they had sold the hide to Buscher (fur buyer). They supposedly had it mounted over at Butte, the Pacific Hide and Fur office there.

GB: That would have been a big bear.

VC: It was nice. It would have been a trophy in Alaska. Anytime you get a 10 foot bear, that's a trophy in Alaska.

GB: Why was the bear shot?

VC: Well, we had a horse die, old Bella (?) and we skidded her back up on the ridge. And I wanted to get a bear. So I kept watching, and in the spring when the snow went off, well most of the snow was gone, bare ground pretty much, but there would be a little patch of snow, anyway, I'd see where they [unintelligible] and eaten on it. So I went up there, and of course here comes a bear down the hill. So I shot it. I shot twice and then I was out of shells. I went back, so Ed he come back with me so I didn't get myself killed. With two dogs. That bear, took Ed and I, both of us, to roll that bear over. It was a s big as a good sized pony, a small horse. Ed was a big man, at that time, and I was about 14, but it took two of us to roll it over. I wasn't like a little black bear. But it had part of one foot was gone, where it had been caught in a bear trap years ago, and tore its foot loose out of a trap.

I went to Miles City the other day, with a friend of mine, hauling up a bunch of carpenter stuff, and we stopped there at the Pacific Hide and Fur – so I asked him if he knew Ted Buscher – and he said, well, that's my granddad.

SV: So Ted Buscher bought furs here for Pacific Hide and Fur?

VC: Oh yeah, and Jerry - - what was his last name. He was the one that normally bought, when Ted was busy. Jerry would come up and buy furs.

GB: He was a big guy. Boy that place was amazing, all those hides, the smell in there. Stacks and stacks of hides. All kinds of hides. Taken up here.

SV: Would you mind if I called you sometime?

VC: I don't have a phone. (he gives a phone number of a friend if we need to get a hold of him)

GB: talking about Victrola. And ----- on the bedpost overnight.

(Music. Playing old records.)

VC: And when old man Beck died, of course Ed had to pay for the funeral and whatnot. Anyway, he'd never been let, or allowed, to go into his folks' bedroom. But when they died, he went in there, and under the bed, why they had a little trunk there just plumb full of cream checks. And then they had a gunny sack there, that had a lot of silver dollars in it. But they had cream checks that went back into the early 1920s. They'd never been cashed. Missoula Creamery. Ed took them down there, and they cashed them. But they told Ed that from then on, they wouldn't

cash any that were more than a year old. Them cream checks were mostly just for a few dollars. A lot of them for a dollar. A big one would have been seven dollars.

GB: You know, and how I remember going up in the barn and looking with my dad . . . but he quit doing that.

(misc discussion about milking cows, and had Hereford blood in the milk cows)

VC: I was milking a lot at the time. All of them cows would give less than ten gallons of milk.

(more discussion about Mormon church)

[End of Interview]