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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: 422-011a, b
Interviewee: Gyda Newman and Bob Newman
Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon
Date of Interview: February 1, 1999
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Suzanne Vernon: Did anybody in your family ever describe to you what kinds of things your uncle or your dad brought when they first came here.

Gyda Newman: Nope. I just knew what was in the cabin. My uncle was doing surveying, so they lived in a tent, and went all through the valley.

SV: It's too bad we don't have his diary when he was working.

GN: Yeah. He's been dead so long.

SV: He probably took some of that stuff back to Norway with him or turned it over. . .

GN: During World War II he used to set up in the upstairs in this apartment building and take pot shots at the German soldiers down below.

SV: You don't know if they came in with a truck or . . . ?

GN: They must have. Now Mrs. Hartwick wrote a story about my folks. A lot of it is fiction. Like that they skied in from down below Seeley Lake on skis. Well, you wouldn't come skiing up here in the wintertime, that's for sure. I think they must have come in by wagon from Missoula. I know when they took my mother's body out they had a sleigh. They had my mother's body and this man who came to our place from the Gordon Ranch that had died up there. Anyway, they took the two of them out, and my brother and I of course sitting in the sleigh, too.

SV: We had talked about that before. Different subject. When you were eating the willow and the timothy, was that summertime?

GN: Yes.

SV: When you were walking around the valley, it sounds like you guys covered a lot of ground. Did you ever see Indians?

GN: No.

Bob Newman: Well, later years. . .

GN: Yeah, later years, but not early.

SV: Different subject again. Pets. Did you have any pets?

GN: My brother had a dog and I had a cat. Mainly, I don't know what happened to them. Mainly, we always had pet deer. I always put a red ribbon on it but the hunters they still shot them. We had two weasle, instead of house cats for our cabin. Those are the best mousers. They can go anywhere a mouse can get. They really cleaned up on the mice.

SV: Did they get pretty tame?

GN: We'd feed them bacon. They'd sit up like a little. . .

SV: Did you name them?

GN: Just "hey, you". There were so many holes, they probably lived under there and any crack a mouse could get into, they'd come in.

SV: Your deer didn't make it through the hunting season. . .

GN: No. Every year I'd have to have a new deer. Like now I'm feeding some deer. I hope that by summertime they start getting wild again.

SV: Your other deer, what did you feed them?

GN: Mainly moss. Black moss. Then you feed them hotcakes, they like hotcakes. If they get hungry enough they'll eat most anything.

SV: So in the wintertime there were still deer around.

GN: Very few, because they went to the East side because the snow was less. We had quite a few. Every once in a while we'd have fawns because somebody killed the mother. I'd tame them down. Then I'd get mad at the hunters. I still don't like hunting.

SV: So most of the deer, was summer?

GN: Yes.

SV: Do you remember the early forest fires?

GN: In 1929, there was a fire, (started) at Stoner and Lundberg. Then there was one in 1917, but I was too little then.

SV: Did you have anything to do with that fire?

GN: No they always had camps. The one in September of '29, I don't know where they stayed. Maybe at the Ranger Station. I never really paid that much attention.

SV: Did any of them get close to your cabin?

GN: Well, it was a trail crew once. I showed Bob where this trail crew had camped up there along the creek.

BN: Did that fire burn close to where that camp was?

GN: No.

BN: Well, it wasn't too far from there.

GN: They were building trails.

SV: We talked an awful lot about your brother. His name was Jens? Where did he work?

GN: Graduated out of the eighth grade and never went any further. He worked for the Forest Service up here, then on lookout in the Bob Marshall, Jumbo (?) lookout. And then he came to Missoula, while I went to Missoula, and then he started driving a delivery truck around Missoula.

BN: Cater Motor Freight is where he worked.

GN: From there he went to Alaska to work on the Alaska highway. There he got killed up there on the highway.

SV: In an accident on the project.

GN: On the Alaska highway. He was married and his ex-wife is Mabel Stillwell, I guess you'd say his widow. They had two girls. My brother and Mabel. I have a picture somewhere of the Alaskan Highway. It was just a mud hole. My brother wrote and he said he got stuck every day, going along the highway there. It was just a series of bogs. He left in, about May, wasn't it? And he got killed in September of that year. He wasn't up there very long. He said the mosquitoes were as big as airplanes.

SV: Did a lot of guys that age, do you remember them having to leave to find work?

GN: I don't know, Bob? I think most of them hayed for different people. Some of them went and worked for the Forest Service. Some of them worked over in the Bob Marshall. Some of them, used to work up at Holland Lake Lodge, taking care of horses.

BN: There wasn't very much work anywhere around.

SV: Did you ever work for the government here?

GN: No.

SV: That's it for follow-up questions.

GN: Beck's down here, Ed Beck and his father, they used to make whiskey. Ed's brother died from drinking a lot of that whiskey. Earl, I think his name was.

SV: Your parents owned this house (to Bob).

BN: Yeah, my dad was going to retire off the railroad in 1952. He would be old enough, you had to work until 65 then. So Gyda knew these people here that built this place up. We suggested to my folks that when they retired they should look into it. That's what they did. They came up here and bought this place, and they retired here. Then it was about 15 years. My mother, she remarried and then she went back to (?) lived here in the summertime and California in the winter. Until, finally, what we did before the folks died, we made a deal with them. My dad didn't get much pension pay. I had a steady job. So what we did, we made a proposition with them that we buy the place from them on an estate deal. We paid them a sum of money every year. Then after my dad died, and my mother remarried this guy from California. One day she gave me the papers and said I don't want any more money. She just literally gave us the place.

SV: I was thinking they were here about the time you guys got married.

BN: No. They didn't come on the scene until 52. We got married in '39.

SV: Do you remember the first time you came up the Swan?

BN: I tell you, I came up the Swan when I was, just a punky, little kid, about four years old. My folks, they liked to go fishing. We'd go out and we'd stay in a tent. We came up here and we camped right across the road there. Where that little cabin is? There was no cabin there then. Just a little flat spot. We camped there. I think that was possibly five or six years old. I didn't know anybody. Gyda said she saw some little punky kids running around.

GN: They were dudes to us. We'd just ignore them.

BN: We camped there. That was my first encounter with this country. Then after I got out of high school I had a Model T Ford. An old clunker that I got for about fifteen dollars. A couple of my pals down there we came up in this country in that old Ford to go hunting. That was about in 1935 I'd say. We hunted deer. We didn't get any deer, I guess we weren't very good hunters. We didn't care whether we did or not, just an excursion. We were over on the Kraft Creek Road and one of these young guys that I was with, with me, Brunson, his grandmother, was the

GN: Grandmother and Grandfather were Rolls, over at the Roll Place there.

BN: His grandmother, but she had remarried. Man wasn't his grandfather. So anyway we had experiences there. In fact his grandfather he was working out on the road. His grandmother was there and she was glad to see her grandson. . .

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

BN: On the Kraft Creek Road there was an old cabin right there. We stayed in there, three or four days, hunting.

GN: Just before you get to the Elk Point Road. It was on the left hand side of the road.

BN: Then the next time I was through this country was when the CCC's had a camp at Goat Creek. One of my buddies there in Missoula was working for the CCC's. My brother and I we were out on this particular night down there in Missoula, Saturday night. Zach said I gotta be back to Goat Creek by Monday morning. It was Saturday night. We said, don't worry, we'll take you home. We had a Model A truck of my folks'. Good thing we had knobby tires on it. We got into Kalispell, we went up around Polson, into Kalispell. We didn't know where the Swan was. Never been beyond this area. So anyway, we went to the Forest Service, they told us the road was closed, and it was impassable. It was in the early summer, spring of the year. The road was impassable. Well, that was like throwing a flag in a bull's face, because when we walked out of there. I looked at my brother, and said what do you think? He said, what do you think? I said, Hell, we can get through there. It isn't impassable. The guy is just trying to discourage us. He was pretty well right. It was a tough road. But we got through all right. We left Jack at Goat Creek camp and went on to Missoula.

SV: When you came up the first time, do you remember the road. . . ?

BN: The only thing I remember is it was a dirt road.

GN: Real dusty.

BN: It was a dirt road right up until the early fifties.

SV: Was it better around Seeley. . . ?

BN: Well, Seeley Lake was a little more populated than I'd say. . . their road was possibly a little better.

SV: When you were out of high school did you guys stop at the Summit Springs? Did people stop there at all?

BN: I don't even remember the place.

SV: Do you Gyda?

GN: No. You know what, there used to be a house up above the springs and an outdoor toilet there. A lot of that (?) went down to the spring. . . .

(discussion)

SV: I don't know the history of it. How about when you came through Frye Meadow. Was that open? Do you remember that being open?

GN: Yeah. There was a house there.

BN: What did they call that at that time? Daisy Farm.

GN: No, that was Rovero's. Daisy Farm was down below.

SV: Do you remember in those early days ever seeing deer, or bear or elk in the meadows?

BN: Yeah. Well, down lower in Placid Lake country. I killed a bear down there one time. Thought I had to be a big he-man. Came up there to go bear hunting. Went bear hunting with an old timer there from, our cabin. He and I spent some time out there we were supposed to be bear hunting. We were just hiking and seeing the country. But on the way home that night, I was up here about a week, I guess. A bear run across the road, came in the headlights, I had an old Ford car, with a rumble seat in it. This bear run, at Salmon Lake, he run across the road in front of me and down over the bank. So I thought well, I was hunting bear. I had been hunting bear. So I decided, I had my rifle in the back end quite a way there. I dug my rifle out and he'd gone over the bank. So I had to sneak down there. I shot him through the nose. Went right through the top of his nose, came out through his jaw. Didn't realize that. It wasn't a killing shot. He was, went down toward the water, it was brushy down there. Here I was, all by myself. The bear was wounded. Heard a car coming. That was, oh, ten o'clock at night. A car would come along once a week, in the night time. So I got out on the road there and waited. The guy that had come along was a native up here. Fred Herrick. He was a good old gun smith. I knew who he was but he didn't know me, I don't think. Anyway, I told him the situation. I said well, I kind of figured you come down there with me and hold a flashlight or whatever. He tried to talk me out of it. It could be a grizzly bear. Well, I said, I don't think so. I'm going to go back there. But anyway, we could hear that bear down there. I could hear him breathing. I knew he was wounded but I didn't realize what kind of a wound. So, he said, nah, he didn't want to go down there. Well, I said, you stick around and tell 'em what happened in case he gits me! So I went down in there and I was sneaking around and crawling around down there and this bear reared up and he wasn't over, couldn't have been over six feet tall. I can remember seeing them white teeth, you know. I couldn't hold the flashlight, small flashlight. I stuck it in my mouth, you know? Had the rifle kind of alongside. Is hot him in the mouth and killed him. I didn't know if he was going to die or not. I was down there real quiet, waiting. Trying to tell whether he was dead or not. Fred was up there, Hey, are you all right? So he helped me get him up on the road. Put a rope on him and drug him up to the car. Put him in the rumble seat of that car and then I went back to Placid Lake to the people I knew. They said, bring him in the house. They had an old house there with a big kitchen. We skinned him out on their kitchen floor.

SV: Was that the Vaughn's? Wilbur. . . ?

BN: Wilbur. That was Wilbur's younger brother. There was three of them. Wilbur, Cliff and George.

GN: No we never monkeyed with bears like that.

BN: Where did you get that name Wilbur Vaughn?

SV: It's in Cabin Fever. There's a picture of him in there.

GN: The only thing we ever did with bears, up at our cabin we had a big bear trap, with teeth on the thingamabob. My brother would jump on the springs and open it up. I'd reach in a pull the pan up, never thinking what would happen. . .

BN: I cut Wilbur Vaughn's hair one time. I was just a kid. I was up there in the winter time. We had, where we had built a cabin in 1936 on Placid Lake. Of course I knew the Vaughn's. Wilbur, he had hair that hanging clear to his hips. I went over there to see him and I had snowshoes on. He said, Hey, I need a haircut. He had some old scissors there. I give him a haircut. (laughs) He seemed to think it was all right.

GN: I suppose he was glad to get rid of it. We used to curl our hair, way back up here? We had a kerosene lamp. Stick the curling iron down in there and get it hot. It would get all sooty then you'd wipe it off on paper of any kind, newspaper. Then curl your hair. Sometimes it would kind of burn your hair, but. . . it worked.

SV: Was that when you were older. . . ?

GN: When I was about fourteen, fifteen, something like that.

SV: Well, every girl has to have curled hair. . .

GN: Yeah, one thing was, it never would curl the ends. So you had this curly hair, straight on the ends.

BN: Well, that was the style in those days.

GN: The style was straight like this, cut the bangs then straight. High on the back. So you'd just have these things hanging down there.

SV: After you moved to Missoula, you kept coming up here?

GN: No. Not for quite a while.

SV: You brought your kids up here?

GN: When we got the place on Elk Creek we brought our kids up here.

SV: You know I've talked to people who have been away, and then they come back, there are so many different things they really like about this place when they come back. Is there anything you really missed?

GN: The only smell I can ever remember, that was after Bob and I were married, we used to go camping up Elk Creek. We camped up in this spruce bottom and the smell of those spruce trees? Ahhh. I'd like to be up there right now.

BN: We used to take the kids and go up in there and camp. I can remember we had a horse, one horse. Packed a camp up in there. The kids were little then. There had been a bear around, close. The horses could smell him. The horse was scared to go to where this grass was, see, which was down over this bank where there was a little spring. So then we'd have to delegate the kids, one kid would be with the horse while he eats for two hours. Then the other kid would take over, you know. The horse would not stay down there where the grass was. So anyway we got short on food so, we came down to the valley. Left our camp there and come down to the valley. Mother Strom had a store out there. We were going to get a few groceries, then go back up. Meantime the bear, it was pretty quiet around camp there. He had come in, we left the tent flaps open. We learned from the old timers that you don't close, tighten up the camp. The bear will tear it all to hell getting in. Well, he went in the open front. He pushed things around. He didn't do an awful lot of damage. But when he went out, he decided he'd go out the back. So he slit the back open and went out the back.

GN: It was the side more than the back.

BN: So anyway, when we come back up there we fixed it, kind of tightened the tent up. That night, Gyda was sleeping up against that place, where that bear had gone out. She heard, what she thought was a bear coming through the brush.

GN: Then they came up to the tent, and the claws went "screrrrrr" across the tent. I went straight up.

BN: Woke me up and I jumped up and I had a .45 pistol hanging on the tent pole. I had a .22 also. I grabbed the .45 and went outside. Here was a big porcupine. He'd come down there and pushed the inside of the tent as he went along. Put that .45 away and got my .22 pistol and I decided that I'd have to kill the porcupine. Here I was in my bare feet and skivvies. It was moonlight enough that I could see around trees and through the brush. I followed that porcupine, it must have been fifteen minutes, finally I caught up with him and I killed him. I

didn't realize, we were on kind of a swale, on top of a ridge. I didn't realize where I was then. I couldn't get my bearings to know where camp was. So I kind of stood around and I listened and everything was real quiet. I knew our horse had a bell on him. So I said, "Chuck" that was the horse's name. "Move or do something. Ring that bell." And by gawd he did. I heard that bell and then I got the line what way to go back and made it back to camp.

GN: You know some of the things that we used to do, we didn't have flashlights then. Way back. So you'd take like a coffee can, or a tobacco can, and make a little hole in the bottom and in the side, and hook a wire over it and put a candle up in there. That was your flashlight.

BN: You know what they called them Sue?

GN: They called them a "Pa-loot-ser". (Palouser?)

BN: I always thought about that later. The Palouse country was mining country over in Idaho. Miners used similar lamps like that. That's possibly where it came from.

GN: You could make one real easy. Tin can with a hole.

BN: Handle. Inside of the can reflects the light out of it.

GN: The wire handle goes from one end to other.

SV: You didn't get burned on top, holding it?

BN: Your can is laying down. Hole on the side. Candle inside, reflects the light out in front of you.

GN: It worked pretty good, too. If you haven't got a lot of things you can make do with a lot of things.

SV: Did you guys ever go backpacking with your kids or take horse up on these trails?

GN: We went up to Elk Lake one summer, wasn't it? Kids were seven and nine. Boy that's a long ways in there.

BN: That would be 1949. Larry was nine, he was born in forty.

SV: Did you see other people when you'd go places like that?

GN: The Forest Service had a camp in there.

BN: Forest Service employees were the only people we saw. They, I had some fishing equipment and these two guys in that camp, wasn't it, Gyda? They'd camped in there for a week. Maybe once a week they'd take a day off and come down into the valley and just clean up and do whatever. I had fishing gear. Those guys had a lot of groceries up there. So, they said, why don't you stay here tonight? We made our first hike, kind of late in the afternoon, when we finally got up to their camp. We told them we were figuring on going on up to the high country.

GN: We didn't have a horse that time.

BN: We were carrying backpacks. The kids had little packs. They said, Stay here tonight and we'll kind of cook up a feed. They were kind of lonesome, I think. So I said, "You guys like fish?" Oh, hell yeah, they said. So, I said I'll fix a mess of fish and that'll supplement the mess of groceries. So I took my pole and I went down into Elk Creek and got a hell of a mess of fish and they cooked them up along with bacon and other items they had in their larder there. The next morning they cooked a big breakfast for us. They also had little cans of peaches, pears and whatnot. We ate them right away. A few days later. . . They'd told us when we came back to fix a meal if they weren't there. . .when we came back around, we'd been gone about a week. We were just bushed out, you know. Clothes were all tore to hell. I had a pair of bib overalls and about all I had left was the bib on them, from going through those thickets of (Devil's Club). . .

GN: Devil's club. . . built like a cranberry bush, or a . . . got big leaves on them and got stickers all up and down the stem. Stickers on all the little branches. Leaves are big.

BN: So when we got to their camp they weren't there. We decided to not stop there but to go on down to our cabin on Elk Creek there. So we did take a can of, was it hash? Dinty Moore's corned beef hash. We took a can of corned beef hash out of there supply, we knew we'd have to have something to eat when we got down to the cabin.

GN: I don't remember Bob. I remember we got to the cabin, you and the kids were both, all so tired, you went to bed. You know, Sue, it was rainy. It rained so you couldn't walk on the logs, cuz they've got all that little moss on there. We would come by so close to bears, they were just like a wet dog right beside you (talking about the smell). They didn't bother you. Most of them grizzlies. They never bothered us. Kids, we had to kind of make a little game out of it, you know. "You're riding your horse, your feet are your horse" and stuff like that. That was quite a ways for two little kids.

SV: Were you following a trail?

GN: No! (laughs)

SV: Tell me how you went in there.

GN: Well, we just kind of went. . . .

BN: We didn't know that country then. We'd heard that there was an Indian trail through that country. But we didn't know where it was. There was a trail. But, we just went up. . .

GN: We went up to that camp, then didn't we go down to Elk Creek?

BN: There was a forestry trail to where these guys were working. They had an old Forest Service trail that ran the length of the valley and they were brushing out and working on trail I guess. We just, when we took off, we just followed, probably mostly a game trail. The Indians had used it over the years, and I spose some of the old trappers. We followed that for a ways up there and then we went down into Elk Creek.

GN: The creek forks up there. One end goes from the north part and the other from the south and they join right down there at the bottom.

BN: Where the creek forked, what we wanted to do, was go to Elk Lake. So we took one of those forks.

GN: We took the South Fork I think.

BN: Eventually, we made a camp right on top of a ridge where we could look right into Elk Lake, wasn't it Gyda? Did we go down to the lake?

GN: Yeah, we did, cuz I saw fish in there, Bob, that big! (holds hands two feet apart.)

BN: Yeah, but we didn't stay on Elk Lake. The weather was bad. . .

GN: Those logs, try to walk on a log. . . .can't do that.

Bog: One night, we were laying by this game trail on top of a ridge. Nice flat spot there. It was rainy. It rained just about every day we were out there.

SV: What time of year?

BN: Probably in June, maybe. So anyway, we were wet every day.

GN: Do you know what our bedding was? We took one down blanket for Bob and me and then we had a shelter half underneath that that we laid on. I had one sleeping bag, down sleeping bag, for the kids and they were both so small, we stuck them in that. Then it rained, and it rained. We took the shelter half out from under our bed and put it over us.

BN: We made kind of a little tent out of it. A shelter half, by the way, is a piece of Army equipment. You can make a little cook tent out of it if you want. So we were laying in this game trail. We'd had a fire there and we finally just kind of went to bed under this shelter half, trying to stay as dry as we could. The fire was away from it, out away from the little tent there. The fire had gone down to just coals, I suppose. There was no breeze that night. No wind. Here was a big stick went, "bang!" I knew that somewhere close to us there was a heavy animal. I tried to think, now, would that be a bear, or would it be an elk? Possibly a moose. I was thinking, now, does a bear when he steps on a stick, his foot's soft. So I kind of discounted it being a bear. Finally, I just thought, well to heck with it and went back to sleep. In the morning, there was a big bull elk track. He was standing right over us. He walked right up almost to us. His tracks were so close, his head was probably right up close to the little shelter half, just trying to figure out what we were doing there, I suppose. We knew it was an elk.

SV: Did you see any other game?

GN: We did, didn't we, Bob? We saw fish in Elk Lake. That was about it. But you know, those logs, we had kind of planned we were going to walk logs, and which would have been good. But that rain made those logs so slippery we couldn't stand up on them. So you'd have to crawl over a log and go down to the ground. Poor little kids, they were so darned tired.

BN: We didn't see any . . . we might has seen deer and not paid attention to them. . . but we didn't see any bear but we knew they were around.

GN: You can smell them. Like a wet dog.

BN: Every summer when we'd go into that Elk Creek fishing, we'd see grizzly tracks. There was grizzlies in there all the time.

GN: There were grizzlies down here, too.

BN: We always had a resident grizzly around our cabin up there. Every year there'd be a grizzly or two come through there. But they never bothered us. We always kept a pretty clean camp there.

SV: What did you do with your garbage?

BN: Well, when we were building that cabin we dug a garbage pit. It was about, probably, six feet deep, with corduroy logs across the top of it.

GN: That's what we always had around my dad's place.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

BN: It was nice. (discussion off tape of how families then didn't have much garbage. Wasn't much waste.) When we had bottles or cans, we'd break the glass, smash the cans, then put them in this pit of ours.

GN: We weren't so wasteful as people are now.

BN: We never did have trouble with bears digging into that. The only trouble we ever had with the bear, there was a rock in front of a cabin and every time you'd come in there you'd stub your toe on it.

GN: It stuck up about like that (holds hands about six inches).

BN: And I started digging, digging, digging it. It got bigger and finally that rock, we had a hole a good three feet deep, and I drug the rock out with a vehicle, car. I didn't have brains enough the dig the hole a little deeper and drop the rock back in there! I went and I got rocks and filled the hole. The next time we come up the bear had figured that we buried something there. So he dug it up again. We could see his paw prints on the ground. That's the only time we ever had a bear that actually dug anything around there.

GN: You know, this fall, a lot of people were having bear problems. So there was a family back over here, had a lot of bear problems. Fish and game come over and put a trap there. We went over there, took our dogs, we were thinking with the dog around, the big white dog, chasing bears all the time. We took him over there and we looked and they had had on the ground, I bet they had fifteen sacks, big sacks of garbage. So they thought they'd get it away from the bear and they put it up on top of the shed. The bear came back. But we've never had trouble with bear. The only real trouble we had was with that bear that they, that tame bear.

BN: The only actual trouble with bear was about 35 years after we built that cabin. Must have been about '76, because we were building this shop out here. This bear that was, he was a released bear, a grizzly, from Glacier Park. He broke into our cabin one night. Our son and his family, Larry was married and had two kids then, they came up and it was getting towards dark, and he went over to the cabin. He got over there and he sees where the cabin had been vandalized.

GN: He had dogs with him and the dogs acting real funny.

BN: The dogs acted like they were scared or something. Larry took a look around with a flashlight and he saw that the windows were broken. Some windows were broken in the cabin so he didn't stay there very long. He thought he'd better come out here and alert us.

GN: He said "We got vandals over there."

BN: It was dark by that time. He said, "Somebody's vandalized the cabin. I think they're still over there and the dogs are going crazy over there. They are scared and they know somebody's hiding." So anyway, I had some guns around here. So Larry takes a gun and I take gun. We figured we were going to catch human beings there and Larry went in one road and was in there and another road came around. I went in this other way so I'd catch somebody. We get in there and finally I heard Larry call me. He said, "Hey, Dad, come on. I found out it's bear, not people." Went over there and here's grizzly tracks around the cabin. There was even wet prints on the logs. The logs were light colored. You could see the print on the logs where the bear had put his feet up, after he'd broke the window out. What the bear did, those bears they knew people. They'd come up to a building. They'd smash a window out. Then they'd stand and they'd listen.

GN: He was a tame bear.

BN: Then he'd go around and he'd break another window out. He'd go clear around and break all the windows out. Eventually, he decided he'd go in. So he climbs up, and that's where we saw his paw prints on the logs. He climbed up and went in the window, on the south window of the cabin. After he got in there, he decided to. . . he was in there when we came back over there, see. When Larry called me, and he saw these grizzly tracks, about that time the bear decided he'd get out of there. But he went out on the opposite end. Here was a propane stove, and right alongside of it was the sink.

GN: He turned the propane on.

BN: Well, he climbed up on this propane stove and the sink and he smashed the sink right down almost into the floor. He upset the propane stove and the top part and broke that all the hell. But we didn't know where this fifty pound can of dog food. . . we had a big lard can of dog food. . . it was gone. He took it that night and he went out through that window. We were wondering about that can. We didn't see the can anyplace. It was probably at least half full of dry dog food. We knew there was that much in there anyway. I said if we ever find that can we'll see teeth marks where he had that in his mouth when he went out that window. Sure enough, about a week later Gyda found the can. We still got the can someplace over there. It had, just like I said, he bit through the lid. Big fangs underneath there and he had that can. He took it out in the woods with him when he went out in the woods. The dogs around there, they knew it was a bear, so they just stayed away from him. They barked. . .

GN: That bear broke in there four times in that cabin. Every time we'd go up there and clean up the glass, fix up everything.

BN: He kept coming back. Then of course the human beings they come around, those places vandalized anyway, they'd come in a steal stuff.

GN: Tried to make it look like a bear did it. Push in the door and stuff like that. That's about the only trouble we've ever had with bears. More trouble with people.

BN: I think that was the same bear that got over to Bud Moore's and got himself shot one night. That's another story entirely. In 1976, Bud had just come up here. He was starting a . . . he had a tent he was living in. But he wasn't staying up here. Go down to Missoula and come up here. . . that bear went over there, too. We figured it was the same bear.

SV: They didn't put out a trap to try and catch him?

BN: They did, they caught him.

GN: Hauled him up to Hungry Horse.

BN: But he was down to Salmon Prairie. He had a circuit around here. He'd go from one place to another. So they caught him and they took him and hauled him up to Hungry Horse and dropped him off. Before he went to bed that winter, he vandalized hunters camps. . .

GN: This is the bear (Gyda showed me a newspaper clipped from *Hungry Horse News* October 23, 1975.)

BN: That guy come back into the valley, got himself shot over there at Bud Moore's.

GN: That's a big bear.

SV: Did the fish and game ever tell you when they put him down here?

BN: They wouldn't admit it. Somebody told me that they had a way of saying that, where they weren't lying. The Park Service did the hauling or did the dirty work. And of course we knew about it.

GN: I asked the fish and game one time about dumping bear out. They said, oh no, we don't do that. They didn't. It wasn't really a lie. It was the Park Service guys.

BN: But these guys knew about it. Somebody told me also that one of those guys involved in that bear service, said "Those people up the Swan, they'll take care of them animals. They're tougher than hell, those people up there." See, if the bear got unruly or wasn't. . . .the people would just take care of it.

GN: Did you ever have bear problems this fall?

SV: It was the first time. We move there in 1980 and I planted apple trees. Everybody told me, "You're going to have trouble." We never had any trouble until this fall. We picked the apples, and the bear still went up the tree after that smell.

GN: They can smell what's been there. We have an old apple tree down over the hill, but it doesn't have hardly any apples. Our big dog has been very good at keeping bear and lions away from here.

SV: Did you always have dogs then when you came up in the summer?

BN: Yeah.

GN: We had that little fox terrier, then we had that beagle dog. Beagle dog up here's not good. (laughs) Then we had one that was kind of like a German Shepherd. Had an airedale. One winter, it was winter vacation for the kids? The kids came with me. We drove up to Melton's and we skied from there on up to the cabin. We stayed for most of the week.

BN: What was the name of that trapper that used to live where you live. . .

SV: Fred Messerer.

GN: I remember him. He was kind of a thin, wizened up sort of a guy. But he was very nice, very clean.

BN: Did he dispose of that property before he left the scene. . .? Who did you acquire it from?

SV: Daly. Before that Gene Mace. I think Gene Mace was the one that actually bought it from Messerer. There were several old bachelors around.

GN: Fred Herrick, Messerer. Oscar Southern, Ole Semling.

BN: There was two. . . Blackie and Red (Davis). (laughs)

GN: Mainly old bachelors would come in here. A lot of the wives wouldn't come. Well, I don't blame them. . .

BN: Do you know who this person would be who was the nephew of Martin Kettleon? He built a cabin over here on the old Pete Rude place? By the girls' school over there.

SV: No. I've heard the name.

GN: He used to work, originally he was the one who put the road into Lindbergh Lake. (Kettleson). My brother and I lived with him. After that he was the caretaker at the Gordon Ranch.

BN: There's a lot of little incidents that come along. Martin Kettleson was an old timer up here. Eventually he went to Columbia Falls where he owned a bar. Anyway, it was after our kids were on the scene. We came up here one summer and I stopped into Liquid Louie's bar, which was on this side of the highway. It was just a little shepherd building. Martin Kettleson was in there. Not only Martin Kettleson but Frank Hollopeter. He was the senior member of the Hollopeter family. Kettleson bought me a beer. We'd sit around talking. There was juke box there. (discussion. Kettleson buying drinks, etc.) Kettleson told me, "I own a bar, and I never drink in my own bar. He said, "That isn't a good policy. I tend my own bar and I don't drink in my own bar." He said, "When I take a vacation I like to go in the other guy's bar and I like to drink in his bar and do whatever I want." That's the kind of guy he was.

GN: Kettleson had a road grader and horses that they used to make that road. Then he bought the old Dunlap place, which is the girls school now. His land extends to the east. He still owned some when everything got sold, after he sold that property to Dunlap (talking about Chip Dunlap, guest ranch). Now, that's the one that this nephew is living on. There was an old bachelor there, another old bachelor by the name of Pete Rude.

BN: Someday we'll have to go down there and meet those people.

(discussion)

Did you know Chip Dunlap and his family?

SV: I interviewed some of them for the Cabin Fever project.

BN: That's been a long time ago. Chip and I think her name was Bess.

GN: His son was around here. (Married one of the Keywayden gals.)

BN: Dunlap himself was a character. He rode a saddlehorse down there at Louie's bar one night. He was showy as hell. He had a .45 on his hip all the time. There was some guy outside the bar and ol' chip rode his horse. Guy was lying down. Old Chip was jumping him with the horse. The guy had a gun, and he fired the gun about the time Chip's horse was right close. The horse threw Chip and broke his leg, I think it was. Another time he had an incident right here on this road. People thought they owned the road and kept it closed. Chip backed them down with a sidearm. Riding a saddlehorse. Then another time, we came up, I'd been working 16 hour shifts down in Missoula, I wanted to let off some steam. I can remember a twenty dollar bill looked pretty damn big. Gyda and I and the kids. . . did you sit out in the car while I was in that bar?

GN: I must have, Bob. I don't drink (laughs).

BN: Anyway, we came into the valley here and we went by Dunlap's road. Here was Dunlap's vehicle. I think he had a pickup truck. I recognized it as we went by. I said, "There's Dunlap. You watch, I'll paint you a picture here. I stop at the bar. Dunlap saw us come by. I said, "That guy don't miss anything. He's a trapper, he's a welder (?) he's a packer. That guy, he's just aware of everything. He don't miss anything. I said, "This is what'll happen. I'll go in the bar. Dunlap will come up to me with a smile on his face. "Oh I just happened to see your car in here and stopped into say hello." But he's in a hurry, see, gotta go someplace. This is how it'll go, so I'll buy him a drink. So we're drinking whiskey and we're drinking beer. I got this twenty dollar bill and I figure when it's gone, and Dunlap still hasn't bought a drink, I'll start charging and see how long he'll go without buying a drink. Anyhow, I started charging after the twenty was gone. He never did buy a drink. And he always had this, "I gotta get going. . ." I came out of that bar, and Gyda said, "Did you prove a point?" I said, yeah, I proved a point. Ole' Dunlap would not buy a drink." (Laughs)

GN: And ole' Bob had a good excuse to go on a big party. (laughs). He'd pull that stuff on me all the time. He thinks I didn't notice, you know. (laughs) (discussion)

SV: Liquid Louie's up here was sort of a social gathering spot, wasn't it?

GN: There wasn't a bar up here until they put that bar in there. That was a log house where Bill Logue's place is.

SV: Strom's store was here?

BN: Mrs. Strom built that first building there for a store. She was a hell of a woman. Tauno was his son. He was just a young thing. She was a hell of a carpenter.

GN: My brother and I stayed up at Strom's, you know. We'd have to go out after the cows. That darn Tauno, he didn't do any of the dirty work! (laughs)

(discussion)

GN: You know it used to be when we had dances at the Community Hall. People that owned this place owned the community hall, too. They gave that land to the county, they gave the roadway to the county. The land that wasn't used had to go back to them. So they had that hall built on there. But the stipulation was no drinks. No alcohol in that hall. A lot of people accused us of doing that. We never did that. Before the bars were here, you'd go to a dance there in the hall and everybody would have a good time. They'd always have packsacks or something with homebrew in it. One time at a dance up at Rumble Creek School. My brother and me. . . the men came with their packsacks full of booze. So you know what we did? We went out and we switched all those packsacks around. Talk about a bunch of mad men.

SV: Rumble Creek School? Didn't you hike into Rumble Lakes. . . bear story?

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

BN: The year we had the encounter with the grizzly bears we left the kids over at Placid with John Anderson. We came up from Missoula. We were going to hike into Rumble Lake. We left the kids at Placid Lake and we came over here and made out hike up into Rumble Lake. It was in July 1953, or '52? (discussion. Gyda thinks 1944, 1945.)

BN: Anyway, we got up to the. . . I know it was in July. I was looking at the ice and snowbanks and we get to the lake. . . the lower lake. It was frozen over yet and snowbanks. So we worked out way around and went around to the upper lake. The upper lake we climbed up alongside the falls. You had to jump across the little creek that was coming out from under the ice. On the upper lake, there. We walked out onto the ice on the upper lake. We got out down there and I realized that there was fresh bear tracks there. I started looking at them and I knew right away that there were grizzlies, they had them long nails. I knew they were fresh because it was warm enough that the top of the ice was slushy. This track would be made and fifteen minutes later it would obliterate. I knew those bears were right close. But there was great big chunks of snow and ice that were kind of on the lake there. I don't know what caused them. Probably during the winter fell off. . . or something, anyway. You could not see anything. You couldn't see the bears but you could see the tracks. And I knew that they were right close. They had to be. I wanted to see these bears. I had a twenty two pistol and I started shooting up in the air.

GN: Now that's a dumb thing to do.

BN: As we progressed following these tracks out onto this lake, and we come onto the snow and ice there, we could see there was five bears, if I remember right. Two adults. They were big. There was three that were smaller, probably two year old cubs. There was one track out of that five, left the bunch. I could see this. Four of them went on over to the north there someplace. We couldn't see them or anything. We knew they were over there. This one track circled in and come in behind us. I'd hunted elk and deer for years. I wasn't really thinking until then. Then I started thinking, "Where the hell did this bear go?" I could read sign enough to know that he went over this direction. I got to looking and he was over where we had to go to get out of there. He'd gone in behind where we'd come in. Then I started getting real cautious. I gave Gyda the sign to be real quiet. (laughs) What we were going to do was try to get out of there without having confrontation with this big bear. I knew he wasn't running from us. That's where I first decided that we were in trouble. So I had to back over to the headwall and we had to jump across this stream, from over the falls there. We didn't have much room between there and a clump of jackpines.

GN: Not jackpines. They were those bushes that grow up. . . There's kind of this upper lake here, and there's a ledge that goes all around here like a big fortress. And there's those little trees down. They aren't any taller than I am. They are small.

BN: That bear's track went right into that little clump. We had to go within fifty feet of the end of it to get out where we'd come in. There was no other way out. You couldn't just jump over the cliff. You had to climb out alongside of that waterfall. We went over there to climb down, why, I kept looking over at that little bunch of trees. I knew that bear was in there. There was no way he couldn't be in there. He could look right down over the valley, right down on the other lake, clear down into the valley. I started down over there, jumped across. Started down. I kept looking back and finally, Gyda, she said, I saw a big head there. And I looked and I said where, and she pointed right to the end of that clump of trees. I knew the bear was in there but I didn't want to say too much to Gyda until we got out of there.

GN: Bob, I knew he was in there, too.

BN: I looked but I didn't see him. He may have pulled his head back. Anyway, we were within fifty feet of him when we went around and climbed down. We got onto this snow field and we started sliding down that and boy we felt good to get some distance. We kept looking back and we never did see that head again. But we knew he was there.

GN: You know I went with a group of people, must have been about six of us went. I was showing him the way this one day. Then the next day, this one gal had not been able to go with us. So I went back up there the next day. After that I had an accident with a horse and I broke ribs. I went back up there. That was a tough deal, you know. The doctor said as long as I didn't puncture a lung it was probably a good thing. You gotta breathe deep and it expands the ribs out.

(misc discussion about broken ribs.)

BN: You know Sue, there was a rifle. . . the Mercantile used to have a real good gun department down there. And this rifle, it was a new model. I knew it was there. It was a gun that was designed for African big game. So I told Gyda, I want to go back up there and see if the grizzlies are around. But I didn't want to go up there without any protection. I didn't want to shoot a grizzly. . .

GN: It was just an excuse to buy a new gun!

BN: I went down there and I bought that rifle. About a week later we went back up there. There was no bears around. (discussion about guns)

GN: Now I'll tell you my bear story. You know a doe here had twin fawns here. She dropped one and a mountain lion got it. She went out in the field and dropped the other one, and a mountain lion come and killed that one. So then, those deer were starting to get kind of stinky. A bear was bothering around them. I came in here and got the gun, said I'm going to chase that darn bear clear out of the country. I really did, too. I chased him clear up Glacier Creek. When I come back, Bob said, "What have you been doing?" I said, well I chased that bear clear out of

the country. He said, "With a twenty-two?" I had a twenty-two pistol. I thought it was a .45. (laughs). I showed him, he better not hang around here.

BN: That was right over in this field here. Spring of the year. Larry and his family were here and we were shoeing some horses out back. We had dogs. Two or three dogs. One dog was a collie. Gyda came out and said there was a bunch of ravens out there. We didn't know this doe had twin fawns and a lion had got them. So we walked out there the whole bunch of us, and that dog was with me, you know? Running out there, happy as hell. The dog got out there just off the road and started out into that field. That dog did a backflip and run, damn near run over me. Went back on the road and stood there. We knew damn well there was a lion around. Just knew it. We found the two fawns, what was left of them. That dog had smelled that lion. We knew the lion was right close just because the dog told us that.

GN: Do you know about his old trail that goes, must go pretty close to where you're building your cabin? My dad, when we lived on Lindbergh Lake Lookout, we used to have to go from Lindbergh down to Glacier Creek. Then it crossed the creek and it went all along the foothills over there clear over to Elk Creek, then down to my Dad's cabin. When the weather was wet and kind of cold he wouldn't have to work or anything so we'd come through that way.

SV: He cleared it all out?

GN: Well, that trail. He dug it all out. Coming down the hill it was, that was a long hill, cuz I used to get awful tired.

SV: Did you run into bears or wildlife?

GN: Nope. No, my theory is if you give a bear enough room . . .won't bother you.

BN: Most of the animals were normal. Nowadays, you know, if you run into a grizzly you don't know if he's an implant from the park. . .

GN: But they don't implant them anymore Bob.

BN: Yeah, but you don't know.

SV: There's been a lot of changes. What do you think people could do to keep things normal?

GN: Be careful with their darn garbage.

BN: Well, they gotta learn to live with these animals. The animals were here first.

GN: People see a bear. . . we never even, when my dad had that place up there and my brother and I lived alone all summer, we didn't have any bear bother us or anything else. No mountain

lions. People, the minute they see a bear, "we gotta set a trap and get rid of that bear". Or else they'll go out there and the bear happens to be around getting into their garbage at night, they'll shoot and kill it. Anyway, you gotta learn to live with the animals. The animals were here first and we're intruding in their territory.

BN: You gotta take care of your garbage. (discussion) You can't store a bunch of garbage, that'll lure a bear right in there.

(misc discussion. Chickens, gardens. growing cabbage, broccoli, peas, rutabagas. Clay soils six feet deep. etc. Put Eko compost on to build soil. Also went to Martin's peat. Also Manure from corrals. Didn't have greenhouse. covered plants if frost. Pear trees, no pears. Rabbits would eat trees. Have apples, raspberries. Not too good of luck with strawberries.)

[End of interview]