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Oral History Number: 422-062, 063

Interviewee: Bob Love

Interviewer: Samantha Epstein

Date of Interview: October 23, 2001

Project: Upper Swan Valley Oral History Project

Samantha Epstein: —Samantha Epstein, and I am at the Beck homestead. It is October 23, Tuesday, and I am going to interview Bob Love tonight at his home in Columbia Falls.

[Break in audio]

SE: Okay. Where are you originally from?

Bob Love: Western Pennsylvania.

SE: And how long have you lived in Montana?

BL: Thirty years.

SE: And why did you decide to move out here? [laughs]

BL: I grew up as a guy whose grandparents, who lived in Forsyth, Montana, so we decided to go out and visit them and we went to school together in Bozeman.

SE: And you studied fish and—

BL: Fish and wildlife management. I didn't last in it. He graduated with a degree in fish and wildlife management, and now he's a trapper over in Miles City for the government.

SE: Do you still see him much?

BL: No, not too much, it's a big state.

SE: [laughs] So, how long have you lived in Colombia Falls?

BL: Let's see...I got married '75, and then we moved up here in '77, so 23 years. Something like that. Twenty-four years.

SE: In this house?

BL: No, we lived in a little tarpaper shack and a teepee when we came up, and then we just built this place over time.

SE: Have you always owned this piece of land since you lived in Colombia Falls?

BL: Since 1979.

SE: Why did you decide on Colombia Falls?

BL: I'm not sure. I wanted to go to southeast Alaska, and I was...I had all my stuff packed up, one break, I was going to go work up there, and because we'd been looking for land and couldn't find anything that we liked. Then, one day, the last...the day before I was going to go, we went through town and saw this piece of land advertised and just bought it. Seemed like the thing to do. Just circumstance.

SE: Have you ever wanted to leave?

BL: The only place I would consider moving to would be over on east side of the mountains by East Glacier [East Glacier Park, MT], something like that, but she doesn't want to so I don't think we ever will leave.

SE: So you like it here?

BL: Yeah. Yeah, I like the North Fork a lot. It's right off out the back door. That's one good reason enough, here, then park's pretty spectacular. It's a nice place to live close to.

SE: Has the area changed a lot since you've lived here? Have a lot of people moved in?

BL: Yeah, the valley has. Lots more people, and people that don't understand what I would call "traditional lifestyles." It creates a lot of friction and stuff, but I guess now we know what the Indians felt like when white people showed up—that's the way I look at it..

SE: Mel was saying that you guys did some stuff with the Blackfoot tribe?

BL: Yes.

SE: You guys helped with their powwow and stuff?

BL: No, we don't. We go to the powwows and stuff, and then I go over and sweat with those guys, [unintelligible] the sweat lodge ceremonies. We do that. I'd go over there once a month or so, maybe more sometimes, on Sundays. Sweat with those guys, and then...One thing I started doing was fasting. You go over there and fast, and then you sweat too. I'm very comfortable with those ways. I'm inclined that way, and they're not reluctant to share their ways with someone that's interested in it, no matter what race you are. They're very inclusive people, at least the ones that I know. I've been very fortunate to get to know them, get to understand things on a different level.

SE: How did you meet them?

BL: Well, it's a funny thing. I've always had feelings about turns my life would take, and I could see directions that I was going to go, long before they happened. What I've enjoyed is watching how it happens. I always had a feeling that I would be going down this road and I just didn't know how it would happen, but one day here a few years ago, a guy that I used to work with out in the woods just stopped in and we started to visit. He said, "I really don't know why I stopped to talk to you, but something told me I should." So we were just visiting, and he said, "Have you ever been in a sweat lodge?"

I said, "Well, I've built them myself and done that, but I've never done it traditionally. I've never had the chance."

He said, "I've been sweating with these guys over there, and if you'd like to come, you can," so that's kind of how it happened. When I showed up it was kind of like these people expected me to be there. It's just the way things were. It was kind of fun to reconnect with my friend again and start doing that stuff. It's been good. It's really hard, but it's good for you. It's not something you do for enjoyment. It's not like a sauna or a hot tub or anything like that. It's a social gathering, but it's got a very deep purpose. It's nothing to make light of, or take for granted. During these ceremonies and stuff, people are light-hearted and kind of joking and stuff, but at certain times you just pay attention to what's going on and keep your mouth shut, do what you have to do.

SE: Are there elders that still lead the ceremonies, or has the tradition just been passed down?

BL: Yeah, it's like everyone's got...There's different people. Anyone, I guess, could build a sweat lodge and say, "Well, I'm going to have a sweat at my house," and stuff like that, but usually, what happens is that the people that have these sweat lodges have dreams, and they're instructed in the dream how to do it. How to conduct the ceremony as far as how many rocks to use, and how many willows to use, what songs to sing, and stuff like that. Whoever has these sweat lodges over there, everyone does it a little bit different. You can go to one guy's place, and it's like being in a Catholic church and you go to another and it's like being in Episcopal, but they're all doing the same thing.

The people I sweat with most of the time, it's a father and daughter and his children. He's not old, he's maybe ten years older than me, mid-50s. But he's a healer. He's a spiritual leader. I guess you might call him a medicine man, but he doesn't proclaim himself to be one. If someone asked him to help whatever's wrong, he'll do that, but he doesn't wear it on his sleeve or anything. He's just a regular person. He and his daughter basically run sweats over there, and they're known for being pretty demanding about things. It's a pretty tough bunch to sweat with. [laughs] But we have a good time.

SE: It's as mentally challenging as it is physically challenging?

BL: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Because you're not in there for yourself, and you're not in there to enjoy life. The idea between that and also the fasting is to...the way I understand it is that you take suffering upon yourself to alleviate someone else's suffering best as you can, and maybe you...Some people fast for a reason, like if they've got a relative that's sick, or someone, a friend that's sick, or someone...If someone came up to me now, knowing what I do now, and they know what I'm doing, they could say, "Would you go fast for so-and-so? Because she's really sick, and she needs all the prayers. Would you fast for this person for two days?" I would have to say, "Yes, I will." That's kind of what you do. Then Patrick, my friend, might fast for four days in a row twice a month. Whatever is required. Some of those guys will sweat every day they fast also, which is pretty tough. Because when you fast with him, you don't have food or water. The food is one thing, but the water is what's really tough. In their thinking the more you suffer, the more effective the prayers and fast will be. I've been real lucky to be exposed to that, but like I said, I just knew in my bones that it was going to happen. It's just enjoyable to see how it happens.

SE: Do you think that's something that we all can pick up on? Kind of knowing that things are going to happen in our lives, and then just allowing them to happen?

BL: I think so. I don't think I'm gifted or anything. I don't know what it is. I think that everyone is really good at something, and if you're lucky enough, you find out during your lifetime what that is. Like I say, I'm not a psychic or anything no more than anyone else, I don't think, but...when I saw Inez long before we were married, I knew that she was going to be my wife. When that realization came to me, I couldn't believe it, because we were...she was at a social level that was so far above mine. I didn't see how it would be possible, because she knew all the right people and was in the different crowd and I was just kind of like...a wild [unintelligible]. Didn't have anything, and didn't want anything, really. Then I had this realization, and it happened.

Things like that, I've just known. Hopefully, the reason these things have happened to me, as far as being exposed to Native religion and stuff, is so that I can do whatever's in my...whatever abilities I have, if I can use those ways, if I'm allowed to in the future, to help people. That's the best thing that can happen, I think. We're living in a white man's world, but that doesn't mean that it's going to last, and that doesn't mean that it's the only way. I think the reason our culture is having so much trouble...When people have so much stress in our culture is that we're in—whether you like it or not—we're in a process of becoming native to this land, and we're struggling with that. Because when Europeans came to this country, they basically displaced or wiped out 15 or 20,000 years worth of knowing how to live here. Now we're trying to figure it all out. There's people that understand what we have to do and how we have to live, and there's a lot of resistance to being humble enough to accept that way of thinking.

One thing that happened to me when I was young. We used to have to go to church all the time, and I remember one day sitting in the church, was hearing stories about the Middle East—a place I didn't know and didn't understand and didn't really care about. What I wanted to know was what was the religion of the people that lived in that piece of land before we showed up, because it was an incredibly fertile, rich ecosystem there where I grew up. I just was always curious. What did these people think that lived here before we came? How did they worship, and what did they do? It was funny, because I was...just the last time I talked to Bud Moore, we were talking along these lines, and I mentioned that experience. He said, “The very same thing happened to me in Lolo when I was very young,” and he said, “Did you ever read that essay I wrote about that?”

I said, “No.”

He said, “Well, it’s like...” He said, “Your description was just word-for-word almost with what I wrote,” and I'd never read it. He said, “I should show that to you.”

I said, “Well, first what I'll do is I'll write down my experience before I see yours, and then we'll compare and see what happens,” but that's...I'm interested in the spirituality that comes from a certain piece of land. That, to me, is what's valid. I was never exposed to that, so when I was young, I searched it out. I just searched for...I was fascinated with any kind of religion, and I studied comparative religion and I really liked that. I realized from those studies that European people had an earth-based religion at one time, and it was just displaced by the Romans.

I guess another reason that I've really been powerfully affected by the Blackfeet people is one of the first things I heard in the sweat lodge before you close everything down and start, everyone has a chance to speak if they want to. My friend Patrick, one time, he said, “Listen. None of you in here has any right to put down anyone else’s religion.” He said, “If people are seeking god in their own way, that's good, and that's the best we can ask.” And he said, “Don't ever put down someone else's religion.” I thought, I’ve never heard that in any other church, and these people are supposed to be the barbarians, but actually, they have a very sophisticated and elegant spiritual system. It's actually more like pure Christianity mixed with Buddhism, or something. I seem to just naturally understand it.

Anyways, I don’t know how we got there.

SE: No, that’s good. [laughs] I was just about to ask a huge question. I was going to ask what social changes do you think need to come about for our society or for our culture to get back to a relationship with the land, I guess?

BL: An experience I had one time hunting with Orion over on east side near Havre really had a big impact on me. We were hunting antelope over there. All that country’s plowed and turned into just nothing but wheat fields, and the only place they could really find any antelope that you could hunt—that you could approach or sneak up on—was in the , was in the broken (?)

country where it was too rough to plow, so they had basically native prairie—sage brush and stuff. We were in one of these canyons, kind of a rough draw, where it was still native vegetation and stuff. I remember looking off in the distance, and I was looking at all the wheat fields and I saw this this farm. I was looking at it through my binoculars, and I could see the original old homestead place. Then there was a bigger house, and then there was some trailer houses off to the side, so knowing what I did about the country and stuff, I could see that that represented three generations worth of development there. It was probably homesteaded in, say, 1913 or '15, something like that, and these people managed to stick out.

You had three generations of people doing this. Then in the distance, I could see the high-tension lines, high-tension electricity running across the prairie, and then this place is just surrounded by fuel tanks. I thought, we think this...in our way of thinking, this is supposedly sustainable, but it doesn't look like it is to me. I was thinking about that, and then I realized, Orion and I were standing in a bunch of teepee rings. I thought, well, these people that built these teepee rings actually had a sustainable lifestyle for this environment. Proven. It lasted, as far as we know like I say, 20,000 years, and their lives might not have been...I don't idealize that lifestyle at all, I'm sure it was a hard life, but suffering is part of life, no matter. The conveniences we enjoy bring about their own kind of suffering. Everyone suffers in a different way.

I think that, like it or not, we're going to move back in that direction through some combination of cataclysmic forces, I guess. That's the way I see it. What I've always foreseen is what we think of as, or what our culture thinks of as, a catastrophe is basically a cleansing. I'm not alone, because I know, one year, I traveled...it was three different places. It was in Fairbanks, Alaska, and a place on an Indian reservation in Wisconsin, then I was at a conference in Washington, D.C. Every one of these places I ran into Indians who told me about what they call these wisdom keepers. What had happened during that year—I can't remember the year it was, '95 or '96—but elders from all over the world of indigenous cultures got together, I think it was somewhere in Alberta, and they had a meeting. They all agreed that hard times were coming. What we see as catastrophe is a time of cleansing, and their idea is to encourage people to cooperate with one another during these hard times, instead of to be greedy and competitive.

One interesting thing happened when Tom Parker and I were at that meeting in Washington together. This thing still going? [refers to audio recorder]

SE: Yes.

BL: Okay. This lady heard us speak, and she...I don't know what we were even talking about, but she was an Indian lady from California. She came up to us, and she said, "I want to talk to you guys." She was real serious, and we went outside with her and she said, "I just wanted to tell you," she said, "My grandmother told my mother, and my mother told me that one day there would be people among us who knew what our relationship should be like with the earth. She called these people earth people, and she said that they wouldn't be Indians. They may be

white people, but they understood how we had to think and how we had to live.” This lady said, “Now I see, I hear you guys, I see you guys, I see this prophecy’s come true.” That had a big effect on me because she was completely serious.

Then, like I said, I heard this in Fairbanks, and then wherever I was in Wisconsin that time, same type of thing. That's what these leaders, these spiritual leaders and the Blackfeet, among the Blackfeet are saying. It's happening all over. Those people are connected not with what you call the Internet or whatever, but it's what I would call psychic Internet. It's like there's a commonality of thought that connects these people over space and time, because they aren't confined by the same structures as we are. With the some of these guys, space and time are totally fluid. They talk to what they call grandfathers and visit with these people—the spirits, I guess you would say—but it's a whole different way of looking at the world. It's entirely valid, and it's real. Just as real as anything we have.

I guess, culturally, Western culture I think, is just getting on thinner ice all the time, and there are people that understand that and are searching for solutions in our own way. There are people who aren't willing to accept that on many terms and are fighting the awareness. They know. Subconsciously, I think people know, but they just...most people aren't honest enough with themselves or anyone else to accept it. It's a big problem. A lot of the troubles we have arise out of fear. People are afraid.

SE: Afraid to change?

BL: They feel threatened by change, and they feel they've...people have come and trust so much, or to have so much faith in themselves, or their government, or their money, that they lost faith in, I guess you could say, the Creator. Because I look around me, it's like Jesus said, “The birds and the animals don't work or harvest or anything, and they're taken care of.” I think we'll all be taken care of if we just let ourselves be and trust in that. But you have to do your part. It's a lesson I've learned in my life is that I've got to do my part, but there's forces out there, spirits or whatever, that take care of you. I know a few years ago I had...it was right after I started working for myself, and I was getting vocal—more and more publicly vocal—about things I saw wrong at the timber industry. I was taking a lot of chances, I guess, and putting myself in a precarious position. But I was saying what I said because I thought somebody had to, and I believed that it's right and I knew I was right. A lot of people knew that, but I was kind of off on a limb all by myself, and—

[Break in audio]

BL: —they would challenge the wisdom of what I was doing. One night, I had this dream, and I dreamed I was in a desert with all these people, and we were all standing on a mesa. I've never been in the desert, but this is...I was there in my dream. It was like thousands and thousands of feet to the ground, and this mesa wasn't very big and we were just all up there together. In the distance, I could see this...it wasn't a bird, but it wasn't...it was like a wing or something. I could

see it out there, and I said, "See that out there? It's funny, it's just kind of floating around out there."

These people said, "No, we don't see anything." Whatever it was, this presence, came over to right to the edge of this cliff first, and it just hovered there.

I said, "Look, it's right there."

These people said, "No, there's nothing there. It's just thin air."

I said, "Watch, I'll show you, I'll prove to you that it's there." In my dream, I stepped off the cliff, and I didn't wake up. When I took the step, I panicked. I was fearful. But then, I didn't wake up, and I didn't have a sensation of falling. I just stepped on this thing, whatever it was, and I turned around in mid-air, and I said, "See? Everything will be taken care of if you just believe." Then I woke up, and I just never turned back. That dream just verified my thinking. That was my realization, that as long as you do what you know is right in your heart, then everything's going to be taken care of. No matter how crazy it seems at the time, if you just do that—your heart tells you to do that—then do that and you'll be taken care of. But if you resist that, or if you're afraid, then you're going to struggle.

I think that's what someone like Gandhi realized. He had some kind of realization like that, because he was so focused on what he wanted to do and he had so much faith in a greater power, I guess, or whatever it was, that he performed miracles basically. And what he did, just one person. So I'm not trying to compare myself to him, but I'm saying that I see...When that dream was given to me, then I understood. I could understand in my blood how someone, with the dedication and skill, could really change a lot of things if they had some awareness. I've been real fortunate, because I've met some incredible people, and I just continue to meet them. Like I say, I'm not on the Internet or computer or anything, but people just show up and get to meet new people and go different places and learn new stuff. It's good.

SE: Do you think if you're a person who has accepted finding what's right in your heart, or you've found what's right, you believe you've found what's right, do you believe that you should take it upon yourself to teach other people, or do you think that's something that they have to come to?

BL: It has to be done by example, I think. Some people are really good teachers. They're inclined that way. They look at someone like Bud Moore, teaches by example. That's the most effective way. When all you guys were up here and stuff this last time, Melanie was asking me what I'd been thinking about because she has this impression that I'm some kind of philosopher, or something. I said, "One thing"—and I had been thinking about, just this summer, been thinking that we waste a lot of time in comparisons. That's human nature. You don't understand where you are unless you compare it to someone—something else, or someone else—but at a certain point, it seems like it would be more enjoyable and more effective to just drop all that and say,

"Well, this is me and this is what I'm doing, and here it is." That's what enlightened people do. That's the realization they come to. They drop all the comparisons. So I was thinking about that. Then I thought, well, the best I could do would be...best I could do with my life would be to be kind to people, and useful to people, and have a positive outlook, and don't be judgmental, and drop all the comparisons.

Melanie said, "Well, that sounds like Bud."

I said, "Well, yeah, there you go." [laughs] How much better can it be? Simple things like that take a lot of thought. I try to keep that in my mind. I'm saying I'm not a very complex thinker, but simple things can occupy my brain for a long time. Something like that, if you just try to do those things, how much better can it be? I don't want to be rich, or famous, or anything. I just want to be useful if I can be useful, kind if I can be kind, stuff like that.

Somewhere I read, "When the student's ready, the teacher appears," and I think that's what happens. That's what's happened with me, and that's what...Then I read also, somewhere, "Don't follow in the footsteps of wise men, seek what they sought." Now, see, that makes a lot of sense, too, because you just...Let's say, using Bud as an example again, you know, you could...there's a lot of similarities between me and him—the path of our lives. Also with Tom. It's like we're all kind of been on parallel tracks. But I realized that Tom's Tom, and Bud's Bud, and I'm me, and everyone has their own facets. You can waste a lot of time and energy and talent emulating someone else. You can see what they represent and try to go in that direction, that's the best. As far as your question, I don't think of myself as a real gifted teacher or anything. I don't know if I have all the answers. I just do what I think is best as far as my work and stuff. I do the best I can with the knowledge I have at the time, but I'm not saying it's the absolute right way.

I think what I do, as far as my work, is...I think the philosophy behind my work is probably essential if we're going to survive. I think if we don't embrace that type of philosophy, we won't survive, but I think we can embrace that philosophy on different levels of scale. I'm not positive, but I think we can. Not sure. I know if we don't have a philosophy that demands reverence for the land and respect for the land—which ties in with reverence and respect for people and other creatures—and if that's not coupled with humility, then we don't have a chance. So it's a matter of maturing, I think.

SE: As a culture?

BL: Yeah, and individually. It happens individually, but culturally, too. You see we're at a cusp right now, where you see the clash of two different ways of thought. Where you see someone like, let's say, Rush Limbaugh, for example, is a good example of the last dying gasp of this old way of thinking—and not an old way, an aberrant way of thinking. Then you have people who actually represent, I would say, a more traditional, older way of thinking. Someone like Wendell Berry or Gary Snyder, people like that who I'm familiar with, that are reaching further back and

actually have some familiarity, and are insisting on some reestablishment of what I would call truly traditional values, as far as our relationship with the land and each other. I see that clash all the time. It all depends. It's going to be interesting to see which way it falls, which way it goes.

At this point, I'm not optimistic or pessimistic, one or the other. I'm just trying to be as objective as I can, and just...not try to save the whole world. I can do the best I can within my little universe. Within the circle of people that I know, I can do the best I can. That's about it. At some point, I think fasting and sweating and praying is just as effective as being engaged politically. For me, it's the way I'm inclined, so that's what I do. I'm not comfortable with the political process and all that stuff, but I am comfortable with my way of doing it. If people think that's naïve, I guess that's okay. That's what I do.

SE: As you kind of learned and discovered your values, maybe, and ethics, do you think it's hard to discover those and live them on the ground?

BL: Oh, yeah. There's a dilemma that...I use hunting as an analogy a lot. When I put my rifle sights on an animal—a deer or an elk—that I'm going to kill, there's a time there when I really regret having to take that life. I mean, it's just...When you're younger, it's...the adrenaline's going, and you're not...You don't have the depth of experience to draw back on, so it's more of an instinctual thing with, okay, there's an animal. Young men and boys are the most overlooked predatory force on the planet, I've always thought. Eventually, hopefully, you evolve through that—some people never do. You can get over that stage and become more thoughtful. At a certain point, you have so much affinity with these animals, you'd hate to kill them. Then, it's like, well, I can...you have a decision. I can kill this animal thoughtfully, respectfully, and feed myself and my family and my friends, or I can go to the store and buy meat that's not killed in this manner and do that. So there's a certain point where you pull that trigger, you're just...that is the defining moment of our lives.

Unknown Speaker: Robert?

BL: Yeah?

US: You have a call.

[Break in audio]

SE: So, hunting.

BL: Oh, hunting. Hunting is, like I said, that moment when you pull the trigger is like...it's very similar, at least in my experience, or when I decided to cut a tree down, because once I put a saw in a tree then I'm committed. It's just like a bullet going out of a gun. When I put a saw in a tree, that's it. You learn pretty fast that you can't stand the tree up once it's cut, so if there's

question, a doubt in my mind, then I don't cut it. But at a certain point, you only have so much time for deliberation, because you have to eat. The tree feeds my family in the same way as a deer feeds my family. It's similar, except the tree is converted into money, so that's sustenance in its own way. So that's a dilemma you're faced with when you're directly involved with resource use, so the idea is to...As far as loggers go, I think, is to—what we should be aiming for us to...we should be focused on forest retention instead of forest removal so that future generations will have forests working. It's foolish to believe we can just plunder things at will and expect to have anything left. You have to maintain a reservoir of genetics out on the land, whether it's deer or fish or elk or trees. You've got to maintain that reservoir of proven genetics. If you compromise that, then you're compromising the future. We have compromised the future too much. What I'm trying to do, on my own small little scale, is to retain those genetics best I can.

SE: Do you know if the way you work...I know farming, and I know that farming was one way historically, and then it got horribly manipulated. Now I would say that small-scale farmers, like Wendell Berry maybe, farmers are coming back to now a new way, but also a historical way of farming. Can you see that in logging, too, or has logging been kind of...?

BL: Well, it's the same with...I don't know as much about, say, farming and commercial fishing as I do logging, but I can see comparisons between those three, because what we've tried to do is take the factory out to the woods, or out to the ocean, or out to the fields. You turn the farmer, or the fisherman, or the logger, into a so-called businessman. See, what that does when you...if you can achieve that, if the corporations can make that happen, then it makes their lives easier, because all of a sudden, that person out in the field is a numbers person. He might as well be on an assembly line in a factory, and he fits in better with the system. But if you have people like me, that are more traditional, then...and we have some affinity with the land and see the land as something...see trees as something other than board feet or numbers, then that clashes with the established...with the system that's in place now. It's a big clash.

What they want is people that might as well be in the sawmill out there in the woods, and you can see it with the machinery. The machinery's gotten so expensive, and so big, and so complex, that these guys are just working as fast as they can to make payments. The only ones that I can see that have really benefited are the banks, the equipment companies, and the sawmills, because the machinery gets more expensive, the logging price goes down because the machinery is more efficient, so you can't get the same money for logging. The logger works for less, and he's got less free time. So it's just right. That's the way the big companies like it.

Doing the kind of work that I'm doing, I'm always swimming against the stream, because the whole system is stacked against people like me, that somehow or other we survive. If I just looked at everything from a strict economic viewpoint, I'd probably just have an auction, and sell everything, go to work for somebody doing something. I'm too ornery to work for anyone else, so I have to make my own way no matter what it costs.

SE: I remember when we were here last time, you said that you worked for Plum Creek for a while logging for them.

BL: I worked for a company called Royal Logging, which did all the Plum Creek logging. Worked for them for ten years as a faller. Then I worked for a friend of mine for about five years, and then I went off on my own. I've done a little bit of everything. I've never cut for helicopters, but I cut for everything else.

SE: Did you know the whole time that you wanted to work for yourself?

BL: I kind of did. That was the beauty of being a timber faller back when I started, is you were kind of like a free agent. We were all very independent, and kept our own hours, get paid for what you did, so if you wanted to work an hour or ten hours, it didn't matter, as long as there's logs to skid. The attitude among the cutters back then was if the boss didn't like the job, there were the tools, and if he could do it better, then fine. He had a right to criticize, but if not, then he could either quit complaining, or we'd go find another job. It was just the way it worked, which is one reason that the industry went towards this mechanization, because it was so difficult to get along with people like me, like it or not. I've heard some of the logging contractors say that. Rather than have sawyers on the job, it was just easier to go out and get a machine and do it, and then have a guy run it that didn't know a thing about cutting trees. Might as well be in a combine in a wheat field. That's part of what happened there. Now, I'm like the last of a long line of people that do things by hand. But there's a demand for what I do, and I think there will be an increased demand in the future. The danger we face right now is losing the skills to do that work the way it should be done. Hopefully, those skills will survive so we can do that kind of work.

SE: How did you learn your skills?

BL: I was kind of born with the skills—a lot of them, I think. Because ever since I was young, I was in the woods. I just always had an affinity for trees and stuff. It just turned out that I could make a living cutting them down. If I could have made a living planting them, I probably would have done that. I was interested in forestry, but I never really...I always just had an interest that was more practical and hands-on type of stuff. I always wanted to know what kind of trees grew around me and stuff like that. I cut firewood a lot when I was younger, and then back East, I guess. Then when I was in Bozeman, there was actually a logging industry there, which I didn't really have where I grew up. There is now, but there wasn't time, so I just kind of started working around Bozeman there. Inez was in Whitefish, and this is better timber country than Bozeman, so we came up here. Then you just work at it. Probably out of 100 people that start in that trade, maybe two or three continue, because it's dangerous, and it's hard, and the pay's not that good. You just kind of have to be inclined that way, in other words. Then the more you do it, the easier it gets, in a way.

What I wanted to do is move beyond...at a certain point, I wasn't satisfied with the work that I was forced to do to satisfy the boss, who was out to satisfy whatever sawmill there was. I saw that I was being used, that I was kind of caught in the middle. On forest service sales locally here, what would happen was the Forest Service would set up some sale, and it was a disaster. Not always, but in some cases this thing should have never got off the ground. They would get it through, and then the sale would go up. We'd be up there hired by a sawmill to do the logging, and you'd come back home and have to go to town to get fuel or something. I'd be driving through town, and the sawmill guys just think of me as a stupid log cutter, kind of a pain in the neck, and the environmentalists are throwing rocks at me. I thought, this is stupid. I'm tired of being used like this. I just basically said, "No one's using me anymore. I'm going to do what I want to do, how I want to do it." So that's kind of what happened. Everyone thought I was crazy—

[Break in audio]

BL: —I'm not what you call comfortable in social settings, so just as soon be out in the woods working. What tends to happen is when there's an outside threat, they present this illusion of solidarity as an industry. The loggers with the mills and the logging association, and it's all very ephemeral, because there's no love lost between loggers and the sawmills. No sawmill cares about the loggers. They basically just want the logs as cheap as they can get them. The loggers are a necessary evil. I don't like to play those games. I've got probably more in common with a lot of these environmentalists than I do with the industry, and that's just the way it is. The position I've gotten myself into now is that the environmental groups look at me as a logger, and the industry people look at me as an environmentalist. So what am I? I'm just out trying to make a living.

I don't know if they're still doing it, but a few years ago, people in the logging association here were calling me the eco-logger and the environmental logger—all this nonsense. Didn't realize that it's just free advertising. I mean, that's what people want to figure out. Everyone's afraid. It's, again, fear. Afraid to step out, be yourself.

US: [unintelligible]

BL: Oh, yeah?

SE: You mentioned that loggers used to be kind of a more ornery bunch. Do you think loggers today exhibit as much passion for the job?

BL: Some might. For the most part, they've been tamed down. They're like businessmen. That's the mold they've chosen to fall to into, a lot of them, and I think it's kind of sad. Some of those old guys, like Bud says, some of them are real bastards. [laughs] Some of them were wild, and they drank too much and one thing and another, and they were crude, but that was the way it was, and it's not like anymore. In some ways it is, but some of those guys that were pretty

coarse and hard were honorable people. You could trust them. Some of them you couldn't, but it was just a whole different thing then than it is now. People who were out there on the ground were working, scratching, and scraping, building stuff. If they couldn't afford to go buy something, they'd have to build it, or make it last, or do some improvising or something. These days, guys are, like I say, businessman, and got real good equipment and all this stuff and everything, but I'm not sure if anyone's any happier or making any more money. There's the illusion of more money, but I think it's Ralph Waldo Emerson that said, "Sometimes money costs too much." It's kind of like that.

SE: Being from Pennsylvania, what do you think about what's happened to the East? This is a history project for Montana, but is there anything to be done back there, as a logger looking at the forests that have just been...

BL: Oh, yeah. There's loggers, all kinds of loggers, back there doing good work. Way more back there than there is here. See, in the late 19th century, Pennsylvania was essentially a clear-cut so that the timber frontier, I guess you call it, moved from the east to the west. They went through the eastern seaboard to Pennsylvania, mid-Atlantic states, then into Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota. Then they jumped the prairie, and most of them went clear over Montana and landed out on the coast, and then there was a backwash that came back into the Rockies. This area was kind of like the last timber frontier. Well, that frontier's over, and, see, the people in the East have realized that longer than we have here. I was at a conference last spring in the Adirondacks, and there was most of the loggers...there wasn't loggers, but the foresters there were mostly from the East. I was really impressed because everything seemed so civilized, and I told them that that's what really impressed me. They had plans. It was like they had a vision for the future and all these things they were doing. They asked me what it was like here, and it was like I was describing Boston here or something. They just couldn't believe it.

Right here in this area, we come right up against the frontier. It's over. So everyone's hysterical, or at least a lot of people are hysterical. "Oh, we're losing all this. We're losing all that. We're locked out." Well, yes and no. It's about time. We have to learn to live within limits. It's a hard lesson, but in the East, they've learned that. At least, forestry-wise I think, for the most part. There's some raping and pillaging going on, don't get me wrong, but there's really good work being done. Then they have higher value products than we do, higher value resource, so it makes it easier to do that kind of stuff.

But we can do the same kind of work here. I think my vision for the national forests, at least in the West, is that we've displaced and destroyed native forests in the Southeast and turned them into tree plantations. In the Northeast, that hasn't happened quite so much. I would say that, maybe, the native forests in some places are returning under management even. I've seen that in the Menominee Reservation in Wisconsin. Those guys are restoring the native forest through management. They're actually working with the [unintelligible], but here in this area, we have a place where we can...we've got wild forests in the sense that they've got all

this...watersheds that are fairly intact, good fisheries to some extent, we've got wildlife, we've got people that care about the land. We can maintain these wild forests, especially on national forest land, and we can—I think, at least, as people—we can manage them intelligently, and...not manage them, I mean, management has become kind of an [unintelligible] term. We can, I would say, interact with the land in such a way as to preserve its wildness.

It's like when Gifford Pinchot was chief of Forest Service. He imported the German idea of sustained yield forest, which is...it's good idea, but the Germans just carried it to extremes, and basically depleted their soils, and sacrificed the health of the forest by cleaning things up too much. Aldo Leopold was a big fan of European forestry until he went and actually looked at it, and then he saw what was happening to the land and stuff. He said, "This isn't going to happen in America, if I have anything to do with it." He started moving in the direction like I am. Same type of thinking. But the Forest Service, now, is stuck with the...I mean, Gifford Pinchot had a utilitarian focus, which was fine for it's time. Then Leopold came along, and he had a more holistic type of vision. The Forest Service, now, is trying to operate within a framework that was suitable for Pinchot's way of thinking, but the social pressure is moving it more towards Leopold's ideas. They're kind of stuck in a house that's not quite comfortable for them. They've got to retain, I think, some of that utilitarian philosophy but also blend it with a more holistic philosophy to be successful, or else they just going to evaporate, which is what some people want I think.

I've done what I can, to some extent, not to say to the government, "Well, this is the way you should do it," but to be given the chance to do that, like that Cedar Flats project, you do, but what I thought was right to the land, and then have the input of regular folks to say, "Yeah, this is good, this makes sense." That validates my position with the Forest Service to say, "Well, look, I've got public support, and you don't." What's the reason? It's because I'm using...lots of reasons. Basically, it boils down to how much thoughtfulness you apply. I can't compete with the Forest Service, in terms of analysis and the input of all the specialists and stuff, but I think I was a lot more thoughtful than those guys are because they're not trained to be thoughtful.

Bud and I were talking about a sale down in the Swan [Valley] called the Meadow Smith Project. We looked at the environmental assessment, or whatever—impact statement. We were talking about the language in there, and he said, "Well, I went to the Forest Service and I said"—Bud told them, he said—"you've got to change the language you use and talk about the spirit of the place, not just the numbers and stuff."

This guy said, "We don't have anyone who knows how to write like that." See, they don't have anyone that knows how to think like that either. It's a big problem.

SE: It seems like everyone that fits with the...such a specialist, [unintelligible] fits under such a certain label, and no one's...There's no label for that, I don't believe. How do you find someone that—

BL: It used to be the ranger did all that, and the ranger was someone that kind of grew up, usually, in that area and had some familiarity of the land, and was basically a woodsman. Had all the skills that were needed at the time. We've kind of lost that to the political process and stuff. Some people really resent having a woman in a district ranger position or whatever. It doesn't matter to me, as long as they're competent. A friend of mine, Debby Manley (?), the ranger at Spotted Bear, and she's one of the best rangers I've ever seen. Then you have a guy with all these credentials or whatever, and he's a dud. Doesn't really matter to me. I really don't know what the solution is with those guys.

[long pause]

SE: Do you write much?

BL: Not as much as I should. Or more than I should, I'm not sure. [laughs] I'd like to do more in the future, but as time goes on, I really wonder if anything I have to say is worth the paper, so I'm not really excited about it. I do it if I have to. You don't get real good at it unless you do it a lot, just like anything else. So far, I haven't...I have little project, once in a while that I do. Writing projects, some articles and stuff, but I've got lots of ideas that I'd like to explore, but I just haven't. Since I've had a family to raise, it's tough, it's pretty tough, but maybe in future it'll be easier. If it happens, it happens. There's people that have expressed my thoughts far more articulately than I ever could, and I read some stuff and I say, "Yeah, that's exactly right. What can I add? What's the use? I'm kidding myself." All I could write from...and it is valid, in ways. The best you can do is write from your own experience, and hopefully your own experience has something that's noteworthy, or unique, or something entertaining. It's like William Faulkner. He was astounded that anyone would pay money for his writing, because he was just telling stories to himself. That's what he said. I can see it from that point of view, but I don't have any illusions that I'm a famous author. If I could write something that would be instructive or entertaining to somebody, that's worth it. I've been paid for it, but I think so far I probably average about 50 cents an hour. I'm not real fast, and I'm not very prolific.

SE: Have you tried to teach your beliefs and your values to your children, and pass them on?

BL: No, they're too stubborn. They're just like me. It soaks in. I don't sit anyone down and beat them over the head, especially them. They've got good ethics, and they're good people, so that's the best you can hope for in your children. I think that what I've tried to teach them has soaked in. Like I said, I've never beat them over the head about thinking a certain way because it's not effective. But I remember a few years ago, Orion went hunting up in North Fork, and the place is pretty tough hunting and he went by himself. It was the first time I had never gone with him. I knew he was capable, and I knew it was time for him do it on his own. He came back, and he had just a beautiful, beautiful deer. He got home by himself and got it off the mountain all by himself, into the pickup all by himself, and it was no easy thing to do. It's this big animal in rough country. We got it all hung up and he was outside skinning it, and Kailee (?) came out and she was watching him skin it and everything. She was never really interested in hunting, and

she'd been raised seeing all that stuff since she was a little kid. It always kind of disturbed her because she's very sensitive. She looked at what we were doing and visited for a little bit, and then came back in the house. When we'd finished, I came back in, and she'd written a poem about that deer. It was just really good, and I saved it. It was just one of the best poems I'd ever read. It was just about the deer, and the [unintelligible]. It was a very satisfying day.

SE: Did you see any of yourself in the poem?

BL: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you could see...On one level, it was satisfying to see that Orion had learned enough to be able to do that, and then on the other level, it was satisfying to see that she'd come to an understanding that this is how we eat. So it was just one of the best days I'd ever had. It was just very simple. I didn't do anything. Kind of like that. It's kind of like when I go over there and fast. I don't do anything for two days. You sit there and you're hungry and you're thirsty, and you get bored and you're tired. Basically, you don't do anything, but it's some of the most productive time I've ever had. So it's like that. You sit and kind of let things come to you once in a while and it's kind of fun, but you have to work to get there, too. That's another essay I've been wanting to write about, just that day, and maybe that's what I should do next.

SE: Like it came to you on that day? [unintelligible].

BL: Yes. Just write about what happened. Pretty simple. You don't have to make it up.

SE: I guess another question I have is when our class met with Bud, a piece of advice that he had for us that he really stressed, getting to know a place like that, that can really give you a lot of answers, is if you intimately get to know a place. I guess, first, do you feel like this place where you've made a life here, has had a large effect on you and has molded you and your relationship with it, I guess, this land.

BL: Yeah, that's a pretty big...See, I don't have a lot of land like Bud and Tom do. Of course, they think in terms of a larger landscape, too, but, in a sense, I've worked over so much of this country in the past 25 years that I don't...there's some places I know very intimately, and other places that I'm just kind of familiar with. Over time, you have a sense of familiarity with the whole region, and I'm...I never got down towards Missoula too much. I worked over by Plains and Thompson Falls some and up towards Libby, and up towards the Yaak and Whitefish range, and South Fork, and west of Whitefish, and stuff, so I'm pretty familiar with the area. Like I say, intimately familiar with a lot of it, and this this place here and this land just seems to be like the central point. It's the headquarters, and you just branch off from here. So, yeah, it is important to be a member of a natural community, and a human community at the same time. It's kind of a pain in the neck sometimes, but I bring that on myself too. Dealing with the local politics and stuff because I get drawn into those arguments. I do write letters to the editor when it's required, and usually, my letters don't express the prevailing point of view. But then, I almost always get good feedback from people who appreciate honesty and clear thinking, so that's

why I write them. They have to be written, and it's too hard work. I don't do it for fun. A letter to the editor is a lot like poetry. You got to condense some deep thoughts into just a few words.

SE: [unintelligible] might make people upset.

BL: That's okay. It's more interesting. I got a pretty good collection of them.

SE: You sent all of them?

BL: Oh, yeah.

SE: Would that be kind of, I guess, a piece of advice you'd give to younger people, or other people, is becoming a part of the community? A natural community, and making a community?

BL: Yeah. Circumstances dictate that a lot of times. You can only make so many things happen. You kind of have to know that when the time's right and when the place is right, and just go from there. A lot of young people move out West and stuff. I did for lots of reasons, but I've got a brother that's back there in Southwest Pennsylvania in some really nice country who's part of that community, on all levels. I'm glad he's there, because we need people like that everywhere, not just in the West, but in Rhode Island and Florida and Utah and everywhere. When I went to that conference last spring in the Adirondacks, I met people from...like I say, mostly from the East—all the way from Georgia to Maine—and they were good people. They were foresters. They were good foresters. They were really doing some good things there. That's what's—

[Break in audio]

BL: We've got grizzly bears and wolves and wolverines and lynx. You name it, we've got it. Endangered fish. We've got national parks and wilderness areas and national forests and traditional industries and new industries and tourism, and all these things coming to a head right now. It's pretty interesting, because we're the top of the head of the watershed up here. Ideally the same issue should be discussed and explored all over the country, no matter what. Just because you don't have Glacier Park next to it doesn't mean that there's land-use issues that need to be addressed in that area. I mean, that's like Wendell Berry's message, right? He's a lot like my brother. He stayed right where he was raised, and hopefully his family's going to be there a long time. That's what we need is people like that. I think there's a new word, just heard a guy on the radio talking about re-inhabitation. Gary Snyder's the guy that came up with the whole concept. At least he's given credit for coming up with the idea, becoming native to the place, learning how to live there, and now the new term's re-inhabitation. Same kind of concept.

SE: So going back to your home maybe?

BL: Making a home where you are, maybe, wherever that is. Because one of the big problem is we're too mobile. No one puts roots down anywhere, so it's just...it's like they grab what they can and then they run, and that's not workable. There's no such thing as "away." Everything's right here. I was talking to some guy this summer, and somehow I ran into the subject of a big elk. I can't remember what the elk had done or something, but this guy says, "Well, I'm sure that animal's no longer on the planet." And I thought, no, everything's on the planet in some form. That's the way you have to think. Whether it's nuclear waste, or elk, it's on the planet. When we die, we don't disappear. One life just folds into another. That's the way I look at it. That's the way we have to start thinking.

SE: When I was interviewing Dixie¹ yesterday, and Harold Haasch the day before, that's one thing I noticed about the people they talked about and about them, was that they were extremely native to their place. They don't talk about travel much at all, and they were completely happy to still be in the place where they were either born or had spent their entire life. People [unintelligible].

What would you also tell kids who are kind of moving around and searching and going off to school and travelling? Would you just tell them to open up and listen to themselves a little bit more to find that place?

BL: People seem to be able to afford to do that, and that's a problem, I think. One part of my family came from Scotland, one whole side is all Scottish. My grandfather's family had 14 kids or something, and basically all of them left Scotland. I mean, they landed at every corner of the world. It wasn't because they wanted to, it's because they couldn't afford to stay where they were. They were going to starve to death. Well, now, it's different. People seem to have the most freedom to travel, especially young people. They just, "I'm going to go here and over there." When I was that age, I traveled some, but it wasn't what you call first class by any means. It was however you could get there, and I basically just couldn't afford to travel much. When I got married, I was only 22 so I didn't have a lot of free time.

Again, like I say, it's circumstance, and I think it's good to travel. I encourage my kids to go some...travel and see the world a little bit, just so they can appreciate where they grew up. Because, if they don't, they'll always take this for granted and never know what they've got here. I think travel's important [unintelligible], but I think the reason so many people want to travel—young people—is that it's kind of human nature at that stage of your life. The reason, maybe, they don't want to move back is that there's nothing to return to. They don't see any future. It's like the reason I left where I grew up is some parts of the land I really liked, some places were extremely beautiful, very fertile, productive. A great country, but the climate didn't suit me. I always felt better when I'd go north, like in Canada or that country, or up in the higher country I feel better, so I came to Montana. I thought I liked it a lot. Then I came up here, and it seemed kind of like being in Canada, but being in the mountains. So I guess that's why I stayed here.

¹ See oral history interview OH 422-061.

Hopefully, in the future, young people will have a reason to stay in communities, and they'll be able to make good lives for themselves where they live. [unintelligible] around all the time isn't going to lead us anywhere. What will people do for money, these people that are involved in all these high-tech businesses and stuff just move from one city to the next and get more money. They never really establish any lasting relationships with anyone or any place or anything. It's just a very empty type of life I think. I don't know, like on a treadmill. Making lots of money, [unintelligible].

SE: What year were you born?

BL: '53.

SE: Along with place, do you think that family is one of the strongholds of—

BL: Oh, yeah. That's another thing we've lost is family. There's so much divorce and stuff, that kids don't...Can't blame the kids, because no one asked to be brought into this world. When you choose to bring someone into the world, ideally, you have a sense of obligation to them. Seems we've lost that. Without family, you don't get a strong sense of affinity for a place either. Some people, you know, I never got along with my family that well so it was natural for me to leave, but if you get along with your family, it's a good reason to stay. Like our kids, they seem to have a good sense of family, and hopefully they'll find a way that they can stay here if they want to.

SE: You think they'll move back here. Orion still lives here?

BL: Yeah, Orion, I think...you just never know what's going to happen. I guess I'd be happy if they're happy, whatever they do. That's the main thing. If they wind up getting married, I just hope they're lucky enough to find someone who's [unintelligible]. That's all I can ask.

[long pause]

SE: All these questions are in my head, I'm trying to think of them. [laughs; long pause] Even if you didn't get along with family, do you think they still had a big effect on you?

BL: Well, sure. Yeah.

SE: I guess they had to [unintelligible].

BL: Yeah. I didn't have a tortured childhood or anything like that. I just wanted to get on with my life, and I was ready. After 4th grade, I had enough of school. I thought, "Just let me out. Let me do something. Let me live." It was just very difficult for me to get through it. Trying to

graduate through high school, it was just really hard, and I didn't really like where I was living that much. I was just impatient to move on.

SE: Did you finish college?

BL: Oh, yeah. I finished. Finishing college was probably easier than finishing high school. I thought that if I could have just spent half the time in high school, I'd got just as much out of it. There's so much time wasted on nonsense. Drove me crazy. But I always liked to have good people around me and good influences. Then circumstances [unintelligible]. So I always told my kids, that certain times in their life where one decision affects the whole course of your life, and you just have to be lucky enough to make the right decision and let things happen. [unintelligible] the wrong decision.

SE: Would you have done anything that [unintelligible]?

BL: Oh, yeah, of course, [unintelligible]. In retrospect, look back at the things you said and the things you did. You'd change that if you could, but if you can't change it, you try to learn from it. It's like I learned cutting timber, I always thought one key skill a timber faller had to have was good memory, because there's so many ways to get hurt or killed that you had to be able to recall certain similarities between situations and how [unintelligible] daily basis. I remember something like this—this happened, and then that happened, and then I almost got killed. In order to survive, you had to learn from those instances. You had to be able to learn and remember and synthesize it all in what you're doing at that moment. That's the way I look at life. No one's perfect. I just heard Leonard Cohen reading the other day on the radio. He was reading something, and he said, "Nothing has been perfect since we were expelled from the Garden of Eden," but he said, "That's where the light comes in through the cracks." I'm just trying to learn [unintelligible].

As far as the general course of my life, if I would've had the choice, I would've spent more time with my kids when they were growing up and stuff, but I spent as much time as I could. You've got to provide for your family, so you just have to do what you have to do, and work wasn't around here, it was always somewhere else. I might be living not that far away, but I'd have to stay in town, because I couldn't afford to travel back and forth. It was just the way that you did things. I wish they could've changed that, but they can't. Just the way it was. If I had a choice between going off to the bar or staying home with the kids, I'd stay home with the kids when I could. Just do the best you can.

SE: Do you think you have any [unintelligible]?

BL: No. I work hard and I like to work hard. I'm not as busy as I want to be. I'm busier than I want to be sometimes, but that's okay too. Seems like I've always got work, we're all healthy, we have a house that the rain's not pouring through. We got wood [unintelligible], so what the

heck. Got lots of nice friends and know lots of good people. I don't know what else I'd want. Don't really want anything for myself, other than just be able to get used to people somehow.

SE: Did you know you were going to meet Bud?

BL: Yeah. Yeah, I saw an article that he wrote in *National Wildlife*, I think I was about 15 or 16. Used to get that magazine [unintelligible]. I read it and I really liked it, and there was a picture...actually it was a picture of him walking up to this an injured buck in the snow, it's dead. I thought, I'm going to meet this guy someday. It was just a thought, and it was gone. Then I met him, and I told him about that. We were in the bunkhouse, and I told him how that happened. He said, "Oh, I think I remember that article," so he went over his files and dug it out, and there was the picture and everything. It was just exactly like I remembered. See, Bud and I have a very complex relationship. Very simple but complex, and I don't claim to understand it, but it's like destiny or something. It's just really special relationship. It's like the relationship I have with Tom, except it's a different level, because Bud's another generation. The sense I've got is that he takes the time to sit and talk with me, share his experiences. Then along with that time, with that gift that he's given me, then I have an obligation to do the same with someone else. That's the way that works. But there's so many ways that our thinking is alike, and you just can't explain these things so you don't even try to.

Friend of mine over in Whitefish, she's a very gifted psychic. The way she works is through names. You tell her your name, your full name, or someone else's name, and she gets an impression and just gives you kind of a read-out. I said, "I met this guy, and we just have a lot in common, and really just enjoy being with him, and [unintelligible]," and all this stuff.

She said, "What his name?" and I told her. When she's doing this, she kind of goes somewhere else. She's there, she's present, but you can see in her eyes that she's somewhere else. It only took a second, and she says, "Oh, yeah. It's a love affair." [laughs] I thought that was pretty good. That's what it is.

One time he was...we were in the bunkhouse there, it was me and [unintelligible] Bud with some other people. For some reason or other, he referred to me as his best friend. I thought, "God, that's the highest compliment anyone's ever paid me," but it's true. Like I say, there's just something there that I can't explain.

SE: How long have you guys known each other?

BL: Not that long. Six, seven, eight years. Seems like we've known each other our whole lives, so it's on a different time scale. It seems like we've known each other before we were even alive, or something. I don't know. I've always had a strong sense that he's doing some very important work there, and it's kind of up to me to carry it on. Not to just follow in his footsteps, but to interpret that in my own way and go with it. Tom's got the same obligation, and so does Mike

Stevenson (?), and so do you anyone that gets to know him very well. I mean, it's just infectious, and it's a natural treasure.

SE: Do you know Mike well?

BL: Stevenson?

SE: Yes.

BL: Not real well. I know him fairly well. Not like Tom does. [unintelligible].

SE: So this [unintelligible], because you just touched on that, is when we die, [we're physically always here] on earth. Do you think, like you said maybe you'd met Bud before, and what our souls, in terms of our souls and spirits...

BL: Where do they go?

SE: Yeah. [laughs]

BL: Nowhere and everywhere. [long pause] I guess. I don't think we're supposed to figure that out. [unintelligible] six or seven times so who knows [unintelligible]. Can probably tell you if he wants to.

SE: [laughs] I don't know if I want to know.

BL: One of my favorite quotations is from Buckminster Fuller. He had some pretty crazy ideas that I didn't agree with, but one thing he said that is never very far from me, he said, "God is a verb." That's a very profound thought. [pauses]

I was thinking today...this book called...it's *Primitive Mythology* by Joseph Campbell.

SE: Joseph Campbell?

BL: Yes. He's not talking to this guy, but [unintelligible] is just talking to this Knud Rasmussen, this arctic explorer just talking to a shaman in Alaska, an Inuit. He asked him, basically, if he believed in god, and this old guy said, "Well, yes, there's a power that we—"

[End of Interview]