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Art Trenkle and Anna Trenkle Interview, August 21, 2006

Art Trenkle

Anna Trenkle

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Oral History 416-01

Badger Two Medicine Oral History

Interviewee: Art & Anna Trenkle

Interviewer: David Brooks

August 21, 2006

David Brooks: OK, it is August 21st and I'm David Brooks. I'm doing the interviews for the Badger Two Medicine oral history. I'm talking with Art Trenkle. Mr. Trenkle, could you start by telling me just geographically what the Badger Two Medicine is, where it is?

Art Trenkle: Well basically it's the head of the north fork of Badger Crick and the Two Medicine River drainage flows through the area, which is on the south end of Glacier National Park. It joins the Flathead National Forest to the west; the Blackfoot Indian Reservation to the east; and to the south it runs clear down into the Ear Mountain and Choteau country, which is the south end of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Basically that's it.

Brooks: And that all started out at one time as part of the reservation?

Trenkle: Oh, no. No.

Brooks: Not all of it?

Trenkle: No. Just where the boundary lines run, I don't know, since it was before my time. But basically that was the boundaries when I went to work there in '43, I think it was, for the forest and worked on that district.

Brooks: And at that time it was already all National Forest, right?

Trenkle: Yeah. It was National Forest clear on south.

Brooks: But you lived there before '43?

Trenkle: Oh, yes. I was born in East Glacier. John Clark he was an Indian sculptor and artist and his daughter has a curio shop in East Glacier today. I went to school with her too. Let's see, I was born there and I lived on the Rising Wolf Ranch, which was a homestead on the Two Medicine. My dad was the caretaker and ran that for two Wall Street lawyers until 1941. And at that time, I don't know who the buyer was that moved on there. I don't know what his name was. I can't remember.

Brooks: Do you know who homesteaded it?

Trenkle: No, I don't know who homesteaded it. I know who owned it for a good many years in there in the 30s and up til '41, '42, and that was this J.F. Nary(?) and Davis—William Davis was his name.

Brooks: And those are the two men your father worked for?

Trenkle: The two lawyers from.. .Wall Street lawyers, patent lawyers. And my dad ran it as a family home in the summers. Get together and took care of it. And of course, at that time, why, there was, let's see, I can tell you the names of most all of the homesteaders.

Brooks: Yeah.

Trenkle: Let's see, I have a map of them but the numbers aren't on them. But that don't make any difference, I can show you. Let's see, up the river to the west was Mel Mullan was the first place up on the ridge. And then a guy and Sadie Wilsie and she was originally Sadie Downs; her husband was killed by a train in the show shed up there in the wintertime. He was walking through looking for his cows. He thought they went in the snow shed to get out of the storm and the train got him and the cows, the whole works. But then the next place down was the Bush place; and the Jack Marquette place; the Pike place; and, let's see, then there was Slim Toban, he was at Lubeck Lake. It's still sitting there. And then in behind next to the railroad track was the

Christiansens, they lived on that place. Now I know that Slim Toban homesteaded his. And the Bush place, they were people lived on these. And then there was—what the hell was that crooked packer that, oh, gee—he was a.. .well, he was kind of an outlaw. He had the place down the river from us and from the Rising Wolf. Let's see, he was a.. .he did a lot of outfitting and poaching and whatnot. Not Weednick—that was another place down there, Weednick was a place. And then I give you Slim Toban. And then down right on the reservation line, the first homestead was where the old.. .oh geez.. .had the barn...

Anna Trenkle: I can't remember either.

Trenkle: There's another one in there too and I can't think of him. Him and my dad got a little gin one time in the wintertime and got pow-wowed. But let's see.

Brooks: And these are all traditional 160-acre homesteads?

Trenkle: They weren't all 160. Like the one that I was born on my dad homesteaded. It was 100 acres and the one next to it, which Dan Smiley had, was 100 acres. See basically at that time when they were homesteading, they tried to set up an area that had the agricultural type land or it was hay, meadowland. Wherever you find meadowland you'll find a homestead, or at least it was started as a homestead. And those homesteads not only went up the Two Medicine along that area wherever there was agricultural type land, not any other purpose, went right on over the Continental Divide. Old Slippery Bill Morrison had a homestead right on top of the summit. And then as you go down the other side it's Bear Creek. Those homesteads down through there, down to Essex, Nyack Flats—they were all homesteads. In fact, the Flathead Valley was homesteaded at about the same time.

Brooks: And when were those being homesteaded, most of the ones you mentioned to me?

Trenkle: Oh in late 20s and 30s.

Anna Trenkle: Dusty's Tavern.

Trenkle: Yeah, Dusty's Tavern is where the .that was right on the reservation line and that was the first homestead coming off the reservation.

Brooks: And the purpose of most of these was to ranch or farm?

Trenkle: To farm, to ranch, to work out. Some of them were outfitters. My dad was an outfitter and he outfitted for elk hunting and whatnot up the Middle Fork, or up the Two Medicine and over into the Middle Fork. He used to go over the top from Badger Cabin and, yeah.

Brooks: Do you know where a lot of the homesteaders came from?

Trenkle: Well, from the stories I've been told, why, most of them were kind of shady. They were trying to get away from the law, some of them. Others were, like Sadie Wilsie, she had been a Rockette dancer in New York City when she met this Downs and came out there. And of course it's a hell of a place in the winter up in that area. At that time, why, fifty, sixty below zero was not uncommon. They don't have that anymore due to our change of weather and warming trends. No, it's hard to say. Jennings, he was from Idaho, I know that. In fact, he went to school at Moscow.

Anna Trenkle: University of Idaho.

Trenkle: Yeah, the University of Idaho. And that's where he met his wife. I won't tell you any more about her.

Brooks: Sounds like there's a good story in there.

Trenkle: Well, there is, but I don't want it on there.

Brooks: Alright, fair enough.

Trenkle: Let's see, and then there was Harry and Clara Marple. They lived on the.. .later on the old Weednick homestead and took care of it. And then there was.

Anna Trenkle: Well he worked the railroad.

Trenkle: Yeah, he and. My dad used to work for the railroad in the wintertime because there was no other work, sweeping switches and things like that. Our relatives, Gordons lived on a homestead down the river towards us.

Anna Trenkle: Evidently they didn't work much.

Trenkle: He worked for the Forest Service in the summers, seasonal, as a lookout on the Elk Calf Mountain, in fact. It's still up there.

Brooks: So the homestead you grew up on then was.. .They were outfitters. Your dad was an outfitter. Tell me about that, life as an outfitter.

Trenkle: Yeah. He took hunting parties, he took, oh let's see, the Manvilles(?), which is John Manville's family all over in that country. In fact, my mother went along as a chaperone on that little excursion.

Anna Trenkle: You know, Manvilles have the asbestos siding company. There was a countess of Sweden or something.

Trenkle: Yeah, she became.. .She married the count of Sweden. He was killed in Jerusalem, assassinated years back. And her and that same count got adopted into the Blackfoot Tribe by the Blackfoot hierarchies. And then of course, well, Dan could tell you more about people on the Jennings place. He ran that strictly as a dude ranch. He had a lot of guests from back east. So did the Rising Wolf. The old guy, Wilsie, and Sadie, which she was the Downs, the guy that got killed in the snow shed, they run cows and milked them for cream and sold cream is how they made their living. Practically all of them had a few head of cattle, a few horses, did outfitting.

And the same way coming down from Marias Pass, like Bear Creek, of course, all those areas in there, they all had outfitters and that was basically the means of making any money was having an outfit, a packing outfit, or.

Brooks: So it was largely tourism, people coming into vacation and do an outfitting trip?

Trenkle: Yeah.

Brooks: So did you have horses and/or cows on the Rising Wolf?

Trenkle: Oh yeah. Yeah, we had about fifty head of horses and took care of around 25 guests, and so did the Jennings ranch.

Brooks: Was that year round?

Trenkle: Oh no. That was just.. .Well, you might say July, August. About two months out of the year, because that's basically what the weather suited.

Brooks: So how about the rest of the year?

Trenkle: The rest of the year they trapped and run coyotes. There was a bounty on coyotes at that time.

Brooks: By who?

Trenkle: By the state. And they had a bounty and then they got a pretty good price for the coyote hides. A lot of them raised greyhound dogs and they run coyotes with them on horseback. That was before they used airplanes and shotguns. But that was one of the means. And then some of them worked for the school districts, like the Hughes brothers. They were outfitters in East Glacier, out of East Glacier. Both of their wives were schoolteachers, and of course they did the janitor work on these out of the way schools. We had a school on the Two Medicine there on the

Rising Wolf three or four years in a row. They had one in the old Rocky Mountain Inn, which is up above the Bush place, right on Highway 2. I went to school there. And also in East Glacier.

Brooks: So they had a school on the Rising Wolf?

Trenkle: Yeah, in the bunkhouse. You had to have five students to get a schoolteacher.

Anna Trenkle: Well, I think you still do.

Trenkle: They might still do, I don't know, but if we could get five kids in the area. Of course, most of them would have to walk to get there in the wintertime, but they had schools on the Rising Wolf. And at one time the old Pike place.. .Now this is before my time, but I remember some of the old buildings which are all gone now on the Pike place, which is up close to Falls Summit(?) Falls Summit and that, oh, I can't even think of the name of that lake where Slim Toban lived.

Brooks: Get a map.

Trenkle: I got one. The north end of the Rocky Mountain Division. When I was seventeen, the Forest Service gave me that map when I went to work as a smoke-chaser on that district. Lubeck Lake.

Brooks: Lubeck Lake.

Trenkle: Yeah. The Pike place was up close to that at Falls Summit, and that was a post office at one time. Like I said, it was before my time, but I was a native up there then.

Anna Trenkle: His dad used to say that was where wind was born.

Trenkle: Off the east slope and down through Marias Pass there. That basically is how come that piece of land was left. I think the railroad had more to dividing the park and the Lewis and Clark

National Forest than anything else. See 'em way on down through the Flathead. It just followed on, and so did the homesteads. This is where, basically.. .See they more or less followed the valley bottom of the Two Medicine. The Two Medicine turned and it went up here to Badger Cabin. This was where I lived when I was born. And that's Jennings's place. The same guy owns all three of these now.

Brooks: And what roads were in there?

Trenkle: Well, it was a wagon road. It came in off the reservation and went on over to the east. And these, of course, they all had roads running into them off of Highway 2.

Brooks: Now to get to the Rising Wolf now you'd take the...

Trenkle: The Rising Wolf, it's up here. It goes down off of that hill. In fact, where that road turns off is on the old Pike place, where the old post office was.

Brooks: You mean the Heart Butte cutoff road there, the 200? So was that there then, that same road?

Trenkle: Yeah, yeah it was there then. There was a trail cut across there too. In fact, yeah, it shows it coming out here, see?

Brooks: So were there any Blackfeet that homesteaded and lived in there?

Trenkle: Well there was Blackfeet lived on the reservation. Yeah, in fact there was old Dog Taking Gun. This is Dawson Lake on here but they called it Dog Gun Lake and Dog Taking Gun was the Indian's name. He owned this at that time. And the Sancadores(?), they lived down here on Dawson Crick.

Brooks: And were they doing the same thing, just outfitting or ranching?

Trenkle: Mostly cattle.

Anna Trenkle: And horses.

Trenkle: Yeah, cattle and horses. And drawing their welfare checks, of course, from the reservation.

Brooks: So you mentioned that a lot of the outfitters, or the one you grew up on, was mostly elk hunting outfit.

Trenkle: Elk. There were very few deer in that area at that time. Mostly elk. And there was everything you could think of as far as trapping, from wolverine, martin, weasel, mink, and of course coyotes—that was a big item. A few wolves; there was always a few wolves come down out of Canada through the park. And through that area from time to time you would see them. In fact, you still see them over there.

Brooks: How about the grizzly bears that everybody comes to see these days?

Trenkle: Oh yeah, Jesus, there was. In fact, when they got this wild idea about protecting the grizzly bear, why, they actually got too thick in that area. I counted five right in my yard on the place over there at one time.

Brooks: When was this?

Trenkle: Oh that was between '82 and '92. In fact, the bear biologist came in and I leased a cabin to him for the summer and they trapped grizzly and radio collared them and whatnot in the area. That was Mantler Coolie, Hyde Creek, up that Two Medicine corridor.

Brooks: So when you say they got too thick, you mean more recently, as opposed to...

Trenkle: Yeah. Before there was just an occasional grizzly come out of the park down in that area and migrated through into Bob Marshall. But they got to where they were actually beginning to be a nuisance.

Brooks: What changed it?

Trenkle: Protecting them. They just quit shooting them.

Anna Trenkle: The Indians, I think, kept them fend off too.

Trenkle: Well, any time a grizzly got on the reservation and started killing stock, why, the Indians took care of it, which I don't blame them. I mean that was just natural. I never had any problems with them, not with the grizzlies. I had a little problems on our place with the black bear that they'd trap out of the park and take them up on Highway 2 and turn them loose. Within a couple of weeks or so they'd be over in our area and they weren't scared of people, that's all. So you had to take care of them. But other than that, why... And I've seen, oh, I've got some pictures of mountain lion in the front yard. We had all kinds of game around, which was natural, being a corridor between Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. And now, of course, the Great Bear, that's come on since then. But as far as the homesteads, why, they started from the reservation line and extended wherever it was agriculture type land, well, to the Flathead Valley.

Brooks: How about timber use in the Badger Two Medicine? I mean, you said most of the homesteads were where there was agricultural land or conducive to it. Were people homesteading timbered land or cutting?

Trenkle: There was cutting for personal use. See the 1910 fire burned all of that country and got most of the virgin timber. There was a little of it left, patches here and there. I logged some of it off. Different ones did. I had a sawmill on my place that I used to cut.. .In fact, there's stuff over down here at my boys'. That barn is built out of lumber that came from there. There was a sawmill before my time up on that bend of the river, the Two Medicine River. Right up in here.

In fact, you can still see some of the old skid trails coming off this side where the fire missed the original timber, patches of it, and they logged that out. They had a sawmill on the Two Medicine down there.

Brooks: Was your sawmill just for your use or were you doing commercial lumbering?

Trenkle: No, that was just my use. Portable. And I sold it to an Indian down on that Dog Gun Lake, Middle Rider was his name. And I understand now it's in Cutbank. Somebody bought it down there, so that's the end of that sawmill. But I cut timber out of there and Smiley logged some out of his that the fire missed. But there was very little patches of commercial timber. Now it's growing back again in places to where it's marketable.

Anna Trenkle: It was slow-growing and knotty.

Trenkle: Yeah, I took out a number of, well, a couple of truckloads of house logs, you know, the right size for house logs, and sold them. Make a little money.

Brooks: So one of the original interests in this area was both some logging but also for minerals, mineral rights, and you mentioned seismograph roads going in there.

Trenkle: Well, during the 50s there were seismographers all over hell, running seismograph lines, prospecting for gas and oil. They were on the forest, they were on the reservation, they were on the private land, even when you didn't know it. I caught a few of them.

Anna Trenkle: Well, that was even up in the 70s when we first moved over there.

Trenkle: Oh yeah, it lasted. At different times it lasted longer in different areas. In fact, they came back over some of the areas two or three times. There are a few wells that have been drilled on the National Forest and they're capped and who knows what's in them, but from what I've gathered and heard, why, there's an abundance of gas but very little oil. That's just rumors I've heard from here and there.

Brooks: So tell me you a little about your own personal career. You started out on the outfitting business, but you worked mostly for the Forest Service?

Trenkle: Well, I myself was never an outfitter, my dad was. The Forest Service tried to get me to be an outfitter because they wanted to get a guy out that was over there. But I went down and took the tests and got ready for it and they wanted I don't remember how much money to do it. And I had to really go into it in a big way to make anything at it.

Anna Trenkle: Your insurance was high.

Trenkle: Yeah. So I just dropped it. I didn't need the income and I was retired at that time.

Brooks: Why did the Forest Service want an outfitter?

Trenkle: No.. .Well, they wanted to get the outfitter out of there because he wasn't complying with the rules. In fact, he'd leave his camp in there on the Two Medicine and things like that. So they wanted me to put in for it a n d . .

Brooks: To take over the permit.

Trenkle: Yeah.

Brooks: Okay. Who was that, who was the outfitter at the time?

Trenkle: He was a schoolteacher in East Glacier. In fact, he had a service station in there.

Anna Trenkle: Don't ask me what his name was.

Trenkle: I can't tell you what his name is.

Brooks: OK. Well tell me a little bit about working for the Forest Service in that district.

Trenkle: Well, when I started out there, there was two of us on the district.

Anna Trenkle: And you were sixteen.

Trenkle: No, I was seventeen when I went. They made me wait a year to go to work for them. I was seventeen when I started. And I started out by bringing a string of mules from Ear Mountain Ranger Station to Lubeck Ranger Station, which was in the park at that time.

Brooks: What year was this?

Trenkle: '43 or '44, I don't remember; somewhere in there. But anyway, I strung them mules across and this other guy and I—he was from Fairfield, Montana—he and I tore down the old telephone line from Lubeck Ranger Station to East Glacier and rolled up the wire and picked it all up. We maintained.. .They had a grounded telephone line from Lubeck to Badger Station and on up to Half Dome Lookout. And between the two of us, we'd rotate between Badger Station as smoke chaser or lookout on Half Dome and so it didn't get too monotonous, why, we'd switch the parts. Whoever was the smoke chaser had to get the fires out in the area. But we worked phone line trails, we'd cut out all the trails, and pack the supplies in with the mules.

Brooks: So tell me what a smoke chaser is. I don't hear that term used any more in firefighting. And what was firefighting like at that time?

Trenkle: Smoke chaser as a rule was by himself. Had a smoke chaser's cabin, which was Badger Station. And whenever a call come in for a fire that was within. If you were the closest one to it, you went and put it out. By yourself.

Brooks: How did you put out fires then?

Trenkle: Dig a line around it. With dirt, mainly. Because it was usually up high, there wasn't any water. You'd be lucky to have a canteen-full. But that basically was a smoke chaser. And whoever was the closest to go to it. We had an alternate ranger, Archie Munsen, who was at Lubeck Ranger Station and he lived there in the summer with his family. He was in charge of the whole district. If he was the closest one, he usually went by saddle horse because he had a horse available. I don't know, that's basically a smoke chaser.

Brooks: Did you have many big fires?

Trenkle: No, you didn't let them get big because you were all by yourself.

Brooks: It seems hard to imagine fighting a fire by yourself. These days, you have those huge crews up there on the Red Eagle fire. This year, that's the big one anyway.

Trenkle: Yeah. I used to be on fire crews. In fact, I used to be a union liaison officer. I took a lot of Indian crews. California, Arizona, different places, to fires. And I will say that the Indian crews are darned good on the trained fire crews. But a smoke chaser was basically just for the initial attack. Now if the damn thing took off and got away from you, why then, why, they called in, well, the smoke jumpers even then. They had the old Ford tri-motors. They'd get people in to work on it. And then when they'd take over, why, you'd go back to your guard station, which was Badger, and you were ready to go. Initial attack, that was the big thing—to get it before it got of any size. And in those days, we used to fight fire at night, day and night, it didn't make any difference. Now they don't want to fight fire at night because somebody might fall down. They got a lot of screwy ideas when it comes to firefighting.

Brooks: So you mentioned your first job was taking down a power line in '43, '44.

Trenkle: Well that was an old telephone line, grounded telephone line from East Glacier to Lubeck Ranger Station.

Brooks: Was there telephone or electricity in most of these homesteads?

Trenkle: Oh no, there was no electricity then. In fact, I was gone from there in Idaho working for the Forest Service when they power went into most of those areas. Yeah, there was no, well, I think Dusty's Tavern was the last place—that first homestead—was the last place that had power. And we didn't get power into our place until after we got there, a couple three years. I cut out the power line and got it set up and they put it in.

Well it wasn't any... .Because the war came along and there wasn't anybody to run power in there.

Trenkle: Well, there was people to do it. The power company still had...They had it on the reservation.

Anna Trenkle: They maintained what they had, maybe.

Trenkle: Yeah. East Glacier had power, of course.

Brooks: How about other uses of the area? Now there are, of course, four-wheelers, snow mobiles. How has that changed or when did that changed?

Trenkle: That changed, oh geez, basically after I left over there.

Anna Trenkle: We moved over here in, what, '82?

Trenkle: '92, before the four-wheelers started coming into the area in our area. That was due to the fact that I sold it to a guy that had four-wheelers and.

Anna Trenkle: And money.

Trenkle: And money.

Brooks: Gotta have some of one to have the other.

Trenkle: Yeah. No, in snow, it was either saddle horse or foot when I was raised over in that area. In the wintertime, why, unless you kept up horses to ride, why, a lot of them run them out on the reservation in the winter where the wind blew the snow off.

Brooks: So you mentioned how much the changes in regulation of or putting in regulations about hunting grizzly bears changed the population. What about other hunting regulations or species? Every bit as much hunting now as there was, or more?

Trenkle: Oh, I think there's more. Yeah, I think there's more because there's deer there now, which there wasn't in the early days. Very few, let's put it that way. Once in a while you'd find one down along the river, but there was very few deer. But quite a few elk.

Brooks: So how are there more deer now if there's more hunting? Fewer elk?

Trenkle: I don't know. Probably, yeah. Probably. I know there was an abundance of elk around our place when we were there. This last, from '82 to '92. I had no problem getting my elk every year, right there.

Brooks: Is that what people still primarily go up to hunt?

Trenkle: Yeah, yeah. I don't think there's anybody doing any trapping anymore. It's kind of a.. .There's a few people trap, but they got so many people on their butts about trapping animals that.. .You notice down here at the fair they had, some trappers had.. .It's a group. They had a few hides laying around there.

Brooks: So how did your job with the Forest Service change up there, from starting with two people and string of mules?

Trenkle: That was basically it. Of course this was during the war, too. They couldn't get people. In fact, that's why at seventeen you could go to work for them. And being raised on a ranch and handling stock and whatnot, why, I hired on as their packer and smoke chaser and lookout, you name it.

Brooks: And how long did you work up there?

Trenkle: I worked there two years. Then I went in the service and then from the service I went to Idaho and went to work there and that's where I met her. And, let's see, then to Priest Lake and then to over here at Libby and then on the Flathead.

Brooks: And then did you eventually move back up there, or have you?

Anna Trenkle: When he retired.

Trenkle: Yeah, when I retired I moved back up there and built a house on the place.

Brooks: So what had changed from when you had left to World War II to when you retired?

Trenkle: Well, there was a lot more people around. Course, there was.. I didn't know what an environmentalist was until I went back up there after I had retired, until we got involved in some of the stuff that they.. Yeah. I don't know, it's hard to say what the basics were in the beginning when they first started homesteading, why they picked that area, other than the fact that it had access to a highway and a railroad and it was agricultural type land along that corridor that goes on over and down to here.

Brooks: So you said there were more people when you retired back there. What were people moving there for, what were they doing?

Anna Trenkle: Well, I think the government was building houses for the Indians also.

Trenkle: Yeah, that was one thing on the reservation.

Anna Trenkle: For \$35 a month, wasn't it, that they paid and they got a new house? And then when it either burnt down or got too dirty, they'd build them another one.

Brooks: How about on the homesteads? Were there more people on the homesteads? What had become of those?

Anna Trenkle: Mostly they were occupied, weren't they?

Trenkle: Yeah, most of them were occupied.

Anna Trenkle: With either second or third generations.

Trenkle: Or they'd sell out.

Brooks: Still being used as outfitters or as ranches? Farming?

Trenkle: Basically. I don't know what they were doing. Just summer resort kind of...

Anna Trenkle: Like Jennings got too old.

Trenkle: Oh yeah. Well he sold it to this Tex Hughes, who was a.. His wife was a schoolteacher and he was an outfitter. He bought it and had for, I don't know, fifteen years or so.

Anna Trenkle: Until Dan come along and bought it.

Trenkle: Until Dan came along and bought it. Well, he died and his sister-in-law inherited it and she sold it to him. But I think basically it was a summer resort for most of these people. They built some pretty good buildings on some of them.

Brooks: Any of them divided up yet, sold off as smaller lots?

Trenkle: The only one that I know of is the one that Dan inherited down on the end of Dog Gun Lake. His aunt, he inherited it from her, he and his brother.

Anna Trenkle: Cousin.

Trenkle: Cousin. And the cousin wanted his money so they split it in half and he sold his half and then Dan sold his since then. But that's the only one that I know of that's been split in half or divided any way.

Anna Trenkle: Well, actually, Jane owns that 70 acres on the old...

Trenkle: Oh that's right. Chaney(?) bought part of Jennings, thirty acres of Jennings. It was 100 acres.

Brooks: So you said when you moved back you had never heard of an environmentalist. Then you mentioned you started getting involved in some of the issues there.

Trenkle: Yeah, to where they'd come out, the birdwatchers, for instance, and they'd tell you if they wanted to walk through your place and look at the birds, which didn't bother me any but some people it did. There's a lot of, well, the rest of it's all National Forest land; they can go, you know, there's nothing stopping them from using that. Not a thing. In fact, there's even what they called a lane from that Pike place up on top of that hill where you go into the Rising Wolf. There's about a thirty foot lane that goes clear down and across the Two Medicine river and up the other side to National Forest land again. So it's got free access right from Highway 2. There was no road on it, but it's probably four-wheeler.

Brooks: Do people use it, fish?

Trenkle: I don't know.

Anna Trenkle: Well Chris, the grandson was over there.

Trenkle: No they went in up by Sawmill Flats. There's a four-wheeler trail. In fact, I think how it got started was from the seismograph days. What they did is they took a 6 x 6 truck with a thumper behind it and drug them around the country—or a cat—and just went on a compass line testing these thumping machines. And wherever they went, why, of course they had the blade down. Well now a lot of those have developed into four-wheeler trails and things like that. That's how it got there. Now when I worked on that district, the trail was all on the east side of the Two Medicine River. And I understand now that that 4 x 4 trail crosses the river six, seven times. Well the trail didn't cross the river. Neither did the telephone line. It went straight up the trail. So there's been some changes. And I haven't went back there in that area. So that's how a lot of them get around up in there now is four-wheelers. And those trails, from what I understand, originated from seismograph for oil and gas.

Brooks: Well oil and gas is certainly back in the news in that area.

Trenkle: Oh yeah. It always will be. I'm sure til my dying day that there's gas in a lot of those wells they capped. Some of them are on the reservation. Some are on the forest. Unfortunately, there wasn't any on my place or I'd have been using it.

Anna Trenkle: Yeah, but they seismographed it a lot of times.

Trenkle: Oh yeah.

Brooks: How do most people feel about using it, developing it?

Trenkle: I don't know about the other people. As far as I'm concerned, I think that any place we can get a—I don't care where it is—look at them. They're up in the north slope now trying to run the caribou out. Well, maybe it won't bother them a bit, but there's a lot of areas. Like from what I understand that runs clear from way up in Canada down through Utah. That eastern front. And

it's all got gas in it. Oil, who knows? But the only way they're going to find out is drill for it. And they can put some test holes in and, hell, it isn't going to ruin the country I don't think.

Brooks: Yeah, I guess what people are worried about economically is that so much of the economy up there is tourism and that it would effect that, having tourists coming in where they're drilling.

Trenkle: I don't think so. Well, other than these four-wheeler trails that you see going around the country, that's all you know that the damn seismographers were ever there. And if you were to live there you'd basically know where they went. Well, if they crossed your land they paid you for it. I don't think it would bother it a bit.

Brooks: So the opposite thought on the Badger Two Medicine is to just turn it into wilderness and just connect the park on down to the Bob Marshall and the Scape Goat and all that.

Trenkle: I disagree. I do because it basically was set up for a homesteading strip through there and I think it should be left that way. That goes back quite a ways.

Brooks: Any idea about how most people up there feel about that?

Trenkle: No, I don't because, well, in fact Dan's the only one I know of the originals, of course, they're all dead. The only reason I'm around is 'cause I was just a kid at the time and there weren't very many kids. Most of those people were older people that homesteaded. Like I say, I heard rumors that a lot of them were shady with the law, so that's how come they ended up in that area.

Brooks: So there weren't that many families.

Trenkle: Oh no. Nope. In fact, other than the Christiansens, They had some kids. They lived down below Lubeck Lake. And us.

Anna Trenkle: Well there was only two of you.

Trenkle: And that Marquette.

Anna Trenkle: And there was one of him wasn't it?

Trenkle: Yeah. And Dolf Gordon of the Gordons. There was one girl. And that was about it out of the whole shebang up through there.

Brooks: So you said your dad was outfitting or running the ranch.

Trenkle: Rising Wolf.

Brooks: What did your mother do?

Trenkle: Well she did all the buying for groceries to supply the kitchen and she hired, of course, help. And then the rest of the time just a housewife. And then of course in the fall my dad took hunters out and they had cabins, well, tents too, camps. And Jennings was the same way. But they didn't do much but chase coyotes in the wintertime.

Brooks: Somebody told me that there was a lot of whiskey-making going on up in there.

Trenkle: Never heard of it. Nope. Not that I know of.

Brooks: To sell on the reservation.

Trenkle: Well, there was a lot of whiskey came out of Canada down across the reservation that you'd hear about going into Great Falls and Cutbank and different areas down there, but I never heard of any of it. And I don't know of any other than for home use, you know, like home brew or something like that that was made up. No, there was... I don't know of any.

Brooks: So tell me what it was like growing up as a kid out there with not many other kids around.

Trenkle: Well, you learned to entertain yourself.

Anna Trenkle: Like jumping your horse off into the creek.

Trenkle: Yeah, there's a good swimming hole down on the Two Medicine. We used to jump our horses off this cliff into the river and the hole's deep enough that a horse would go plumb out of sight underwater. Drag him out.

Brooks: What other kind of things did you do growing up there as a kid?

Trenkle: Well, let's see.

Anna Trenkle: Well they were busy in the summer with all the dudes.

Trenkle: You worked on the, like you rounded up the horses in the morning, brought them in and saddled them for the dudes. My dad or my mother, and sometimes both, would take them for a morning ride and then they'd come in for lunch and go out in the afternoon for another ride. Maybe some would go, some wouldn't. There were always the cows to milk and there was no electricity. It was all kerosene lamps, gas. No, and there was wood to split. In fact, we had a cook and a waitress both on the Rising Wolf, besides my folks, who worked with the guests, as a rule. And they'd take them through Glacier Park excursion trips, motor trips. So did the Jennings. No, there wasn't any time to really be piddling around.

Anna Trenkle: With only five kids in school in the winter.

Trenkle: Yeah, and most the time you was walking from home to school and back. And it wasn't an easy place. They never kept Highway 2 open for snow. They never plowed the roads. You

couldn't even drive to East Glacier in the wintertime unless you happened to know where to get off to miss the snow drifts, go around and whatnot. Most of it was a saddle horse.

Brooks: More snow then?

Trenkle: Oh I think so, yeah. And a lot colder weather. Well, even right here, this has changed since '72, when we first came here. We used to get snowed in right here.

Anna Trenkle: Thirty below here.

Trenkle: Yeah. And that's very rare anymore. My boy lives here, and grandson. No, the weather's changed.

Brooks: What were the toughest times up there? You mention a lot of things that sound like pretty hard work. Any stand out in particular?

Trenkle: No, not as far as the. Course when I went back to the homestead after I retired, why that was kind of a.. We had to build a house and we had to build a road in. The old, well, the crick coming across from Smiley's place, the old Jennings place, that had beavers had dammed it all up and you couldn't get across and I had to build a bridge and a roadway. I tried to get it in so that the ownership that I was on my own place where I built my bridge, rather than on somebody else or the reservation, cause it happened to follow down along the reservation line. But that was kind of difficult. Then the process: of course, I took out some timber because I had to cut some of them big trees out that the 1910 fire had missed. And then we didn't have any electricity in there for a while either, until I finally got that in.

Anna Trenkle: Our grandkids now they think that was the most wonderful place to go when they were growing up.

Trenkle: Well we really enjoyed it there too because there was so much game, wildlife, there. We'd see wildlife every day of some sort. It might be a raccoon, which don't belong there but

they're there. Or a mountain line or a herd of elk or, you know, there was always something moving around. We miss that, but we don't miss the rest of it. From what I understand from Dan Smiley, the Indians want.. .He and I got a right-of-way out of there after a two and a half year battle.

Anna Trenkle: We bought it.

Trenkle: Yeah, we bought a right-of-way and surveyed it and the whole damn works, found all the corners. But now they want—the landowners, which is not me anymore, nor him—to come in and gravel that road. Well, it goes into two homesteads, not to anything else, well, other than National Forest land behind and around. I don't know how they're going to make out getting it graveled. It's, hell, fifteen miles of damn road. Well that costs a pile of money to gravel that. Apparently, Dan did gravel some in the middle riders, which is down to the end of Dog Gun Lake, before he sold out. But other than that.. .I did all the maintenance work. I had a Cat and did the maintenance work on the road so we could get in and out, plow the snow, until I left. I sold the Cat with the place. I figured he could [inaudible].

Brooks: So what do you expect is going to happen up there? We've talked about two of the possibilities anyway, either developing it for minerals or gas or oil or putting it into wilderness. Do you expect either of those will happen?

Trenkle: Well it's hard to say. It's hard to say. I would hate to see it go to wilderness. I think myself with the amount of gas and oil we need that if it's there, develop it. On a hidden, you know, use a little bit of sense about it. Just don't start drilling holes right along the highway; kind of hide things. But I think that could be done. And of course those pieces of private land that are there, I think they should stay there as they were intended to begin with.

Anna Trenkle: But the Indians now want to keep that a sacred ground is part of the problem.

Trenkle: Oh yeah, they've got all kinds of stories. Christ, they use that all over the nation, though. Down there at Flagstaff. Goddamn, that one hill where they ski up there out of Flagstaff

in Arizona, why, that sacred area, you know, they want to get that out of there. Well more power to them if they can make it work.

Anna Trenkle: They've been making it work.

Trenkle: What they need to do with these reservations—and I've maintained this all along—is deed that land to those Indians and put them on the tax rolls just like everybody else and I think that'll solve a lot of problems.

Brooks: Just get rid of the reservation?

Trenkle: Yeah.

Anna Trenkle: Well like when you were buying the right-of-way, there would be like eighty owners to an allotment.

Trenkle: And one of them I'd only have, what was it...?

Anna Trenkle: It was like 23 cents she had coming and she lived in Alabama or someplace.

Trenkle: Her share of that, to buy just right-of-way through the damn place, a sixty foot right of way. Why, cripes.

Anna Trenkle: We had to send her a check for 23 cents.

Trenkle: It was a good experience, though. I learned a lot. And the biggest problem we had was the tribal council had all changed hands in the middle of this.

Anna Trenkle: So then we'd have to start over.

Trenkle: And the gal that was in charge of real estate, you know, right-of-ways, she up and retired. They got in a new one, so we started over again. And finally we got her.

Anna Trenkle: And then they wanted us to buy right-of-way clear to Browning.

Trenkle: Oh yeah, there was no right-of-way on that road that runs from East Glacier to Heart Butte, so they wanted me to buy that god damn...well, the two of us to survey that all out.

Brooks: Even though the road's already there?

Trenkle: Yeah. The road...

Anna Trenkle: They don't have a legal claim to it.

Trenkle: See the basic road that goes into our homestead was a wagon road when I was born. They hauled me out there in a wagon on that same damn road, yet that didn't have a thing to do with the laws of the Indians. Anyplace else, after seven years it would have become an established road. Well that don't mean nothing on the reservation. So we had to go back to.. .But it was there, it was a wagon road. In fact, basically that's where the road is today. It was the only feasible way to go, you know.

Brooks: So I'd like you to finish up. You said your grandkids used to go out there and love that place and just thought it was great. How about for growing up young there. What are some of the best memories of it? Because it does seem ideal for a kid now to go out and be on a homestead.

Anna Trenkle: Well, yeah, because we didn't have running water in the cabin for a long time. We did when we sold it. They'd have to take their toothbrush and go down to this little creek and brush their teeth. They thought that was great.

Trenkle: Well, see like on the Rising Wolf, where I was really raised, 'cause my dad moved from the homestead over there and ran that, we had water in the summer because they had a

water tower and they pumped the water up to it and gravity feeds the cabins. But there was no electricity. It was gas lanterns. But it was just a, I don't know, well, actually you don't know any different, so what else?

Anna Trenkle: You had your chores to do, like getting in the wood and.

Trenkle: Yeah, milking the cows and rounding up horses and guiding occasionally, even as a kid. I used to enjoy that. Of course, if there was some nice sweet young ladies to guide around, why, about my age. And there were some. And I enjoyed the days that I worked in the Forest Service up there, those two years on that district before I went into the service in World War II. But, like I say, you really didn't know any different, so.

Brooks: Great, well I appreciate your time here.

Trenkle: I don't know what else to tell you.

Brooks: Alright.