

White Grass Heritage Project  
“Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEE: Judith Allyn Schmitt

INTERVIEWER: Matthew K. Heiss and Roger Butterbaugh

LOCATION: White Grass Dude Ranch, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

DATE: 5 June 2014

Transcribed by Sharon Kahin in 2017

Note: Though this transcript has undergone minor edits, e.g., false starts and other extraneous text were removed to make it more "reader friendly," Judy's complete interview transcript is below.

(0:00) Matthew: Today is the 5 of June 2014. My name is Matthew Heiss. I'm working with Roger Butterbaugh who is heading up the White Grass Heritage Project. Today I'm recording an interview with Judy Schmitt who was here from 1955 to 1960 and then later in the '70s and '80s. We are in White Grass in the Hammond Cabin and I'm thrilled to be talking with you – and just a little bit of context, here I'm breaking my own rule, but it was almost a year ago when Bill Slaughter and I were here in this very cabin and we met you when you were talking with Roger and that's how this whole project started, that's what brought us together, that's the spark that started the whole thing. I think it's only fitting that you're the first person we interview as a part of this Heritage Project.

Judith: Thank you. This is very exciting.

M: Good, good. Listen, before we talk about White Grass, why don't you tell me a little bit about where you were born and raised and tell me about the family you were raised in.

J: Okay. Well, I was born about 35 miles west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. My grandfather was a math professor ... boy's Hill School and my mother was a housewife and family was very important to us. I did have a nanny who was wonderful, she was my second mother. And, of course, this was before the war (World War II); we moved to Marion, Pennsylvania, which is, I think, about a half hour outside of Philadelphia and I just grew up sort of loving Roy Rogers and Gene Autry and the West and I wasn't the cowboy, I was always the horse. So that followed a pattern all through grade school and junior high school, high school. I was very horse oriented, rode every horse I could find.

M: Did your family have horses?

J: My dad had horses growing up and then he showed gaited horses for awhile and after he got married in his mid-30s that was one passion he gave up and then he was called into service during the war. So I just grew up with a love of horses that came from my father. I was always artistically bent and then went to the Museum School of Art in Philadelphia and took all of my academic classes at the University of Pennsylvania. My first major

was fine art and then at the university I had a minor in psychology, so that was quite a combination.

(3:00) M: What years did you go to the university?

J: 1955 through '59.

M: When you say I have this artistic bent, describe that a little bit more – is it painting, is it sculpture, is it photography, is it music?

J: Well, I thought I wanted to be an illustrator, but when I got into art school, I realized my talents were fairly limited. I mean, we had some fabulous people there. So my second love was photography and I was in a photography class for three years with six other guys.

M: The only woman?

J: The only woman, yeah. So I graduated with a degree in photography. Yeah, and (I) did a little work in Philadelphia, did a little freelancing – but when I graduated from high school, my father said – and my mother had passed away (she passed away in 1953) – and my sister was married, so she was gone, so it was just my dad and me. He said, “You can have a car or you can take a trip.” And I took the trip.

M: And where was the trip to?

J: The trip was to Wyoming and the White Grass Ranch.

(4:40) M: That is interesting. Now tell me, first, why did you choose the trip over the car? That's interesting why you would make that choice.

J: Yeah, because I think most kids would have picked the car. But I guess I just had this love affair in my head with the West – and that was my dream, to come west. And everybody was surprised, too that I didn't pick a car, but in Philadelphia you have wonderful transportation and why should I drive in and out of Philadelphia and then I lived in Philadelphia for my sophomore year through my senior year, so there was really no reason to have a car, but there was a lot of reason to come west and see what fancies I had really dreamed up and see what reality was really like out here.

M: I want to explore that in great detail, but first of all had you ever been west before or was this your first time to go west of the Mississippi or west of Pennsylvania?

J: The only place west of Philadelphia was Ohio where my father's parents lived (right outside of Cleveland). So no... You know, America just wasn't that mobile back in those days so it was a rare trip that we took outside of Pennsylvania, but to go to the New Jersey shore every summer.

M: And that's East Coast?

J: Yeah, East Coast.

(6:10) M: So whose idea was it to White Grass? Was that your idea or did your dad know about this place and suggest it to you?

J: He made this my trip. All he asked is which state do you want to go to and I said Wyoming – because you had Thunderhead and Grand Flicka and they all took place in Wyoming. What (my father) suggested – and I did this – I wrote to Cheyenne, to the chamber of commerce, and they sent us about, oh my word, I couldn't tell you how many places that you could make reservations on a dude ranch. Jackson was full of eastern people and some people like Curt Winsor who didn't live too far from us and Matt and Suki Matthews who didn't live too far from us, too. My dad called them and he asked them – and I think it was the list of people who had been to White Grass that pulled us into White Grass.

M: So part of the advertisement you got from Cheyenne was a brochure on White Grass who listed to people who came before?

J: Yeah, they always listed about 15 people that you could call. My dad did that and they all said the White Grass was the place to go and so we did. He called Frank Galey and made reservations and it seems to me it was mid-July. He stayed for 3 weeks and then I stayed until right after Labor Day and then flew home.

(7:30) M: Tell us how you came here to Jackson – so you didn't have a car to drive because you had taken the trip, not the car.

J: Yeah, we had the option of flying or going by train. My dad loved trains and I did too, so we took the train out of Philadelphia and we took it to Chicago and then we took an overnighiter to Rock Springs, Wyoming and that's where one of the wranglers met us – and that in itself was a wonderful adventure.

(8:45) M: Talk about that.

J: Well, I was like Alice in Wonderland. I had taken commuter trains from where we lived into Philadelphia and back again, but I had never taken a train out of the state, I had never been on a sleeper, I had never slept – and my dad gave me the bottom bunk out of Chicago so I could look out the window and, of course, we had an observation car. It was just magical for an 18-year-old who had really spent her life in the ocean and riding horses and writing stories and just sort of living in fantasyland.

M: And, also being in civilization – Philadelphia was a big city back then – skyscrapers, traffic, lots of cars, lots of pavement – and then suddenly you're out here in the west. Talk about your reaction to the landscape, to the environment, to seeing these mountains for the first time.

J: Well, we didn't see the Tetons until the next morning because we got in – I think it was probably right at dusk when we were picked up, so we got to the ranch in the dark. You just had no idea what was going on or where you are. There were a lot of stars in the sky and a lot of yelling and horsing around at the ranch and so you were glad to get into your cabin and settle down. But seeing the bareness right when we hit Wyoming and particularly Rock Springs – oh my gosh! No trees, no grass, it was really pretty barren except for the occasional cow grazing around. I think that's what really struck me – the barrenness. Oh my gosh, what had we gotten ourselves into? It didn't look like the brochure, that's for sure. And, Chicago was such a great place, too. It was smaller than Philadelphia and we just walked all over the place. It was great. The changing landscape was so different for a young girl. It was quite an experience to come out here.

(11:27) M: So one of the things I'd like to ask you about comes from the first stanza of your poem (See end of transcript for poem.) where you talk about the train ride and getting off the train and seeing the cowboy dressed in black. Did you come out here with some romantic notions of the west? And, is this totally accurate?

J: That is totally accurate (laughs). My dad got off the train first and then I got off and I saw a cowboy slouched where you go in for your train tickets, pick up your baggage and whatnot. He was all dressed in black with a black cowboy hat, black cowboy boots, the whole nine yards. And, I looked him and I just thought, “Oh my gosh, there's a real cowboy.” And, it was Ben Norman and he came down from Jackson (it's about a 3 hour ride) to Rock Springs to pick us up – and he did. He said, “Howdy, ma'am.” And, you know, naïve eastern girl going, “Oh my gosh! This is a real cowboy!” And, he was from Norman, Oklahoma. He was the real thing.

(13:00) M: Let's talk a little bit about what you would do at the White Grass Dude Ranch. What are some of the activities? You get up in the morning and, first of all, let's talk about the food.

J: The food was very good. We had a cook named Ellen – and I honestly can't remember her last name. They would ring the bell around seven and for the dudes breakfast was at eight. You could order pancakes, waffles, any type of egg. So, it was very nice. Ellen was a wonderful cook, she was just marvelous and she was here through most of my working years at White Grass. I'll never forget the first time I went down to the corral and George Clover met us and my dad got a big black horse named Coon – you couldn't do that today! (laughs) And my first horse was a black mare named Spade. That was a dream come true. George was very good. He fit a saddle, he didn't just throw you into any old saddle, he had a lot of old fashioned saddles. We got pretty good saddles. And so we'd go out for a morning ride with 6 or 8 other people with a wrangler. I think Ben was our first wrangler. And then you'd come back, have a little free time, have lunch – I think the help ate around 11:30, we ate at 12:30. And then there was sort of a rest period. We went out on rides, around 1:30/2 (they were about 2 hours). They always asked you, once you had been acclimated to the ranch, do you want to go on a picnic? They would take us up to Phelps Lake, Death Canyon... And, so of course we always said yes. We got to know

some lovely people that summer. My dad stayed in contact with some of them. He never came back to the ranch, but when he left I wanted to stay, of course, so I did. His parting comments were, “Don't forget to come home.”

(15:30) M: Before we started this interview, we talked about the importance of the horse. Your horse was Spade – would you have the same horse the whole time you were here?

J: Yes.

M: Is it the case the person builds a relationship with the horse and the horse with the rider? Talk about that. (And I'm a person who rode a horse once and it scared me so much that I've never gotten back on, so I have no clue.) Talk about the central role of the horse here on the dude ranch.

J: (laughs) Well, of course, I think that's one of the primary purposes of ranch, and why the kids love it so much, is because they could ride the horses. Of course, we went into town every now and then and went to the rodeo. George made sure your level of riding matched the horse that they were giving you for your stay. My dad had been a horseman, so Coon was a marvelous horse, a really crafty guy (laughs). I got along really well with (Coon). I had ridden around a lot and I grew to love that mare. We had a good relationship. There are some people who just get on the horse and want to see the country. There are other people like Cathy Penick who rode Captain and if he couldn't ride Captain he would get upset. People came out, had their favorite horses – I think that was more the case than not the case. I think every kid that came out here fell in love with their horse and wanted to take it home (laughs). So yes, you do build a relationship with your horse. Because the stays were so long at that time, they really got to know their horses.

(18:00) M: Would you ride a couple of times a day?

J: People had the option. I always did. I don't think my dad did, as I recall. I think he mostly went out on morning rides. Because there were other things to do in the valley, we had a lot of fisherman on the ranch, so maybe they went out once a day on horseback and go fishing or Frank would offer all-day fishing trips. They'd get packed lunches. Some days we'd go on all-day rides and get our lunches picked and then we'd go way out, up to Death Canyon, to Bradley and Taggart Lake. Those were pretty long rides – and up to Lake Surprise (that was a nice, long ride). They gave you options.

M: So it wasn't really structured? Like the Boy Scout camp I went to – you had time to work on this, you had lunch, you had flexibility?

J: There was a lot of flexibility.

M: What would you do in your downtime as a dude?

J: As a dude I would usually go off with some of the kids that I met here. I met a lot of nice people here. A lot of the time we'd go into town and bum around. Of course, Jackson was sort of one road in and two roads out.

M: Did they have a movie theater that you could go to?

J: They did, they had the Grand. We didn't go to the movies too many times. We would go to the rodeo, almost every Saturday night, and of course the most fun was because Jackson had gambling when I was here, so yeah, that's how I bought my first horse.

(20:00) M: Wait a minute, tell us that story!

J: Well, I learned how to play poker from Fran Strawbridge. Franny taught me the poker face. I was never really a card person. We started playing cards here at White Grass and we would go into town and they never checked your license. They'd just kind of look at you and go, "Oh, you're from the ranch." We would gamble a little bit and I discovered I could have a pretty good poker face. I learned to play poker and I won 50 or 60 dollars that I took home – that was a lot of money for me. I saved all of those silver dollars in a big sock. Kept it in my drawer. The second summer I came out and worked as a waitress I played craps (laughs).

M: And can you win at that?

J: You can win at it if you play with a full house. So, I won more money and with my first paycheck I bought my first horse, Brandy.

M: That is awesome. I do want to talk about your employment, but let's keep going with what it meant to be a dude. You said the food was pretty good, that the cook did a good job – would you eat together? You talked about becoming friends with the kids, but what about the idea of a community? When you're on vacation in a place like this – sort of isolated – it seems to be that it would be pretty easy to form relationships and a kind of family. Is that right?

(22:12) J: Yeah, it is right, we did have family style for dinner and lunch. Everybody ate dinner together except for the staff who ate in the employee room in the back. It was family style and it was good. For lunch you couldn't order anything, you just ate what you got. It was the same thing for dinner. But usually an hour, an hour and a half before dinner, the Galeys always had people down for cocktails. That was a time when the adults really got together and, of course, us teenagers would crash that, too, just because it was fun. Frank was one of the most delightful people, he was just really fun.

M: Tell us more about Frank.

J: He was pretty easygoing, really, really friendly. He loved to play polo on Sundays and he would get other people from other ranches (usually the wranglers) to play polo. He loved pack trips, he used to take a lot of people on pack trips. We went on one with Frank.

M: Was this overnight? Camping up the canyon?

J: Yeah, we went up Granite Canyon. I would say Inga was the strong member of that marriage.

M: Inga was his first wife?

J: Yeah, his first wife.

M: Was she American?

J: No, she was German and came over, I think, before World War II, I'm not sure. Rachel (Trahern) knows a lot more about this than I do. Just such a nice guy. Also came from the east coast and loved the ranch and his mother married one of the owners of White Grass. He always loved the ranch, always wanted to be here. Inga was the spearhead of the ranch, she was the one who really got things done, so to speak. When they hired Rachel (Trahern from England), she managed the waitresses, the cabin girls, she did all the food ordering ... cookout and sometimes we were roped into helping her. Rachel was a very stern taskmaster. In fact, we used to call her "The Whip." (laughs)

(25:10) M: To her face or behind her back?

J: Behind her back. And if we saw Rachel or Inga coming up the path together we all fled in different directions. (laughs)

M: Now was this as an employee, a dude, or both?

J: Both. Both times I hung out with the employees. Most of my interaction with Rachel and Frank and Inga was on an employee basis. That changed in mid-August because I substituted as waitress.

M: During your first year?

J: Yeah, that was how I could stay here.

M: Oh, okay. So when your dad went back, your last couple of weeks you were sort of an employee there.

J: Yeah, I was employee. Probably went down on bended knee to Inga (laughs) and asked her if she could possibly find something for me. I would do anything – make beds, I didn't care – and taking pity on another person from the east coast she said, "Yes, I'm sure we could find something for you."

M: We're going to come back and talk about that and why you wanted to do that. Let me get a little bit of information on what living conditions were like. The cabins – did you

have indoor plumbing, electricity, clean sheets, warm towels every night? As a dude – we'll talk about what it was like for an employee later.

J: Well, I shared a cabin with another gal – Fricky Irwin. She married Frank's cousin (Chick Galey) who was out of Sheridan. She wound up marrying him and staying in Wyoming. So, we had a double – twin beds, running water, electricity, and a bathroom.

27:30 M: So it wasn't really roughing it.

J: I wouldn't say it was really roughing it, but I think they had only gotten electricity in '52 or '53, so there was still remnants of kerosene lamps around. It was very comfortable. Cabin girls were Rachel's tutelage; they were very good. We had our cabins cleaned, our beds made, but we didn't get clean sheets every day. It was very comfortable.

M: Were the dudes expected to do work? Did you clean up the stalls, put away the saddles, do any kind of chores or farming? Or was it more of a vacation, more of horseback riding?

J: It was vacation. I always loved to groom Spade and I had saddled her a lot of times. I have pictures of wranglers haying the field – and we didn't do that, it wasn't in our job description. But it was lot of fun to go out and tease them and hang around (laughs), so we did a lot of that. The kids and the teenagers – we became very involved with the help. There were times when I would go into the kitchen to help with the dishes. You know, just to give one of the waitresses an early evening off. Inga and Rachel were fine with that. We were close. At night most of us would get together in the main cabin – help and dudes alike.

M: And do what? What was that like?

J: Well, somebody would play the piano, somebody would be singing, they'd go into the card room and play cards, the ping pong table was always up and had a sort of library (it wasn't a very big one). There was a lot of camaraderie in the evening, some people went into Jackson – we would usually go into town Friday or Saturday night for the rodeo – but for the most part we stayed on the ranch. We would go to the Bar-B-C for a cookout.

(30:05) M: That's another dude ranch, right?

J: Yeah, that was across the valley. And (we would go down to) Our Lazy S and one of our favorite stops was Dornan's. We'd go over there sometimes for lunch. But I would say most of our time was spent here on the ranch.

M: So you said you and the wranglers and the staff got along well. Was it the case that the wranglers treated the dudes well or did you find them condescending, like, “Oh these big western guys and these weak eastern people come in and they are afraid of mosquitoes and snakes.” Talk about the dynamics between the two.



J: As a dude, they were marvelous. But you have to realize, when I first came out in 1955, the three wranglers were going to Princeton University and were from Philadelphia (laughs).

M: So you're not having the real cowboy experience.

J: Yeah, Ben Norman, as I say, he was from Oklahoma and George Clover (our head wrangler), he was born and raised in the west. And (George's) wife Elise was from Philadelphia, so there were a lot of Philadelphians out here. I'm sure George at times could tear his hair out with the university boys (laughs).

M: Wow, that's interesting. So how would you get into Jackson? Would this place have a bus, would you ride horses into town, or would you guys pile into cars and go?

J: People would pile into cars and go. We'd sort of all get together and cram ourselves in. There was always a car, someone would always have a car to drive. Ben had his own car, Rachel would come in sometimes, the Galeys would join. There was always a ride. There were always a few dudes, but not too many. So it was always catch as catch can.

(32:38) M: As you got together with the other dude ranches, would you kind of compare notes and say, "The food at White Grass is like this or the guys are like this or the wranglers are better looking than these ones..." Anything like that?

J: (laughs) No, it was just great fun to come together. And sometimes we would ride down to Our Lazy F and bug them or they would ride up here to the White Grass, but when we would get together it was just always fun and, you know, share what was going on. A lot of the time the help would get together at night and play games... What was the game where you were given, like, "Birth of a Nation" and you had to act it out?

M: Oh yeah, charades.

J: Yes, charades. You ask Fran Strawbridge about charades and Birth of a Nation – he had everybody in total hysterics. So we did stuff like that. It was really good fun, just really good, clean fun.

M: What about a romantic aspect to this? That's kind of eluded to in the first part of your poem.

J: Well, Ben decided I should be his girlfriend and I decided I should not be his girlfriend, so Tony Fox and I got together and went to the dances and we'd go into town together and a lot of times he would be our wrangler on luncheon trips. But, then we'd get back east and I'd be going back to college and he'd be going elsewhere and so they were just sort of summertime flings. Nothing really serious, but I was just really interested in horses and I had never really had boyfriends (laughs). So to be out here and not have to worry if my hair was perfectly combed, and I didn't wear makeup. Tony didn't care – nobody cared.

(35:00) M: Was that kind of liberating?

J: Oh, totally.

M: To be out of society and some of the societal norms, to be able to live?

J: Yeah, it was wonderful. I didn't care if my blue jeans were dirty. It was a great feeling. It was very liberating for an 18-year-old.

M: What is it that made you want to stay, that made you beg Inga and Rachel if you could do something to stay?

J: Well, I fell in love with the country, I think number one. It was all I ever expected. I still haven't gotten over looking at the Tetons.

M: How long have you lived here?

J: We've lived her for over 23 years. We never get tired of those gray rocks outside of our window. To me, this was just magic. It was a dream come true since I had been a little girl. And, of course, I fell in love with my mare, she was probably one of the most important things on the ranch. I had never had a mare that I could say, "Well, gee, I'm going to have her to ride everyday." And, then the next year (my mare) had a baby, so I had another horse which I of course fell in love with. The ranch was just everything I had ever dreamed of. And it truly changed my life.

(36:40) M: How?

J: I always thought as a kid and even all through high school even before I got out west that I would not stay in Philadelphia or probably the east coast, that I had hoped and dreamed that I would move west and after college my first husband and I got married and moved to Denver. So that was really a dream come true and I think a lot of dreams you work around them, peripherally, or you visit the areas you have fallen in love with, but I feel so blessed because I did come west and I never missed the east coast afterward. I loved it and I still love to go back and see family, but I don't miss it and I never miss it.

(37:40) M: Is there anything that you can point to that drew you to the west back then?

J: Back then, well, I think the cowboys probably and the knowing that it was wide open country. Having lived in Philadelphia with narrow streets and big tall buildings, but I loved that too because of the culture that's one thing I miss here – we don't have a symphony, we don't have a big art museum, we go to Salt Lake periodically because our son lives there now, so I still get that gut feeling that there's something bigger, but then I think, "Oh no, I'm thankful that it's not anything bigger." (laughs) But, I think it was the wide open spaces and that feeling of, "Oh my gosh, it's not going to be run over by some taxi or some crazy bus driver." And yeah, what the cowboys represented, that western

feeling of the “good guys” and the “bad guys” and that wasn't here at all. That's what really drew me to the west. And the scenery – oh my gosh! The east has some beautiful scenery, but there's nothing like Jackson Hole.

M: What's it like going from dude to hired help in the same season? It's not like you go back to school for nine months, come back and it's a different clientele. You went from vacation to worker – what was that like?

J: I thought it was wonderful because I got to stay longer. I got to stay with friends I had made at the ranch – it had been my huge dream to go to a ranch and I just think it was the feeling of freedom and independence and being around people that felt the same way that I did. I could have really stayed, but knew I had to go to college. But, I was so thankful that the Galeys let me stay around and help.

(40:05) M: So, you were here for three weeks as a dude and an additional three weeks as a waitress. As a waitress, could you also go out on the morning rides and ride the horse and keep riding Spade, or were you working 8, 9, 10 hours a day?

J: No, you'd get up early, go in for your breakfast and sometimes I would go out wrangling with the wranglers and bring in the horses. But, as a waitress, I had to set up the dining room and set up the help's dining room and take orders from the wranglers and cabin girls and usually the other waitresses would eat early with Ellen.

M: How many wranglers would you take orders from for breakfast?

J: Well, that would be four and sometimes George would come in and have breakfast and you would always have cabin girls.

M: So, seven or eight max?

J: Yeah.

M: You had to work with the dudes –

J: Which was great fun, I loved it. I've always been a people person and I had never done anything like that. I had to take orders and keep them in my head, but it was fun and a great learning experience. Ellen, god bless her soul, was very patient with us because we were all so young and I'm sure she counted us as her chickens. I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was just great fun.

M: You were taking orders, you were delivering food, and you were cleaning up afterward – were you also doing the dishes?

J: Oh yeah.

(42:10) M: So it was taking care of the whole meal except for the cooking?

J: Yeah, and we had an hour, an hour and a half (waitresses had less downtime than the cabin girls did), so I got a ride in, sometime in the afternoon, after lunch and after the dishes were done. I didn't have to be back in the kitchen until about 5:00.

M: Did you ever get a day off?

J: We didn't get a day off.

M: So working 7 days a week?

J: Yeah, and we did that for the first four years I was here. I believe it was in 1958 when we asked Inga if we could have Sunday afternoon off.

M: Just an afternoon?

J: Yeah, just the afternoon. And she was perfectly amenable to that. But you didn't think about that at the time because you were having too much fun. It was work, but it wasn't work. There were so many benefits. I mean, look at where you are! Look at your backdrop, at your new friends and, of course, that's when I figured out that the help played great tricks on each other (laughs).

M: That's the first story I remember you telling me last year – Why don't you retell that one (about) the moose head in the window?

J: Well, we had a wonderful family that stayed in the Hammond Cabin. There was mom, dad, and I think three kids and we were always playing (tricks). It depended who the dudes were – I believe it was the bishop of Connecticut who came out – and we short-sheeted his bed, but then, he went and put leaves in our bed, so you had to feel these people out a little bit. This one particular family were delightful and the kids...

M: Can you remember their names?

J: You know, I can't, but I bet Rachel can remember their names. It was in the evening, and the kids were very young and impressionable and we had had a bear scare so Frank said everyone in their cabins before dark and this was right at dusk and I can't remember why, but the wranglers decided that this family was the perfect family to do a trick on. They got the big moose head down from the main cabin and we all trucked over here and their window was open and the two wranglers stuck the moose head in and one of the kids said, "Oh look, Mommy! Can we feed it a cookie?" I don't know if Inga and Rachel really appreciated it, but we did stuff like that to them and they loved it, they just loved it. We dressed up one of the dudes one time as a jockey and put him in front of Big Coon and led him to the main cabin. They were all for this, most of them were all for this.

(45:50) M: I get a sense that none of these things were ever mean spirited.

J: Oh no, never.

M: This is the kind of thing you do to your brothers and sisters, the kind of thing you do at home and have fun, build a relationship.

J: Yeah, and that's what we did.

M: So what is "Rachel's Toad Sandwich."

J: The good friend of good friends (Frank and Inga Galey), was Bob Lewis. He was a fishing guide, had a small airplane and used to buzz the ranch often and regularly – when you could buzz the ranch (laughs). Rachel and Bob became very good friends. I'm not quite sure what precipitated this, but she was making a lunch for him one day and she put a toad in his sandwich. He was really flat, a "road kill toad." (laughs) So things like that weren't uncommon. When I was still waitressing, I made Fred Matthews (he always ordered scrambled eggs in the morning – and a pancake and bacon) and he was a great teaser –

M: And Fred was a dude or a wrangler?

J: He was a wrangler. So, one morning I was getting back at him for hanging a dead bat on the light switch in the girls' cabin. I had gone in there in the dark and had grabbed the bat instead of the string. So, the next morning I thought, "I need to get back at (Freddie)." I asked Ellen because you always clear it with the cook. She thought it was hysterical and tended to have a smart mouth, so she said, "Sure, go ahead." So, I had found a dead mouse and she made a double order of scrambled eggs and I put the dead mouse under the scrambled eggs and he just put his fork into there and there was the mouse (laughs).

(48:14) M: That's great (laughs). What about bananas in George's boots?

J: Well, sometimes they would pull tricks on us, like when I was a wrangler with Sharon Crary. I think I was starting the kiddie wrangler program. We stayed in one of the wood-sided tents that hold two canvas tops. The wranglers had pulled our covers down and exposed our sheets. Frank had chickens at the time and they put about six roosting chickens over our sheet on this pole over our bed. We went up after dinner and there were these chickens sound asleep over our bed and so we had to wake them – you know what happened next. The next day we decided, "Okay, it couldn't have just been one person..." So, we took retribution on all the wranglers. We put bananas in the toes of their boots, we went up to the boys' bathhouse and put Vaseline on all the john seats and before we went out we coated the door handles with Vaseline. So, that was our retribution. I believe Inga stepped in and said, "That's enough." Every now and then she had to say, "That's enough." (laughs)

(50:05) M: What about pigs in the girls' cabin?

J: That's when Inga decided one year – well, you have to understand that we all got along so well and formed deeper relationships than others – I married one of the wranglers eventually. We all went out together, we did everything together. One summer we got an influx of girl dudes – “dudennes” – and Inga decided that the wranglers should date the dudennes. And, we who were dating the wranglers took great umbrage at this. They had to date the girls and one night they were out at a square dance, so we changed the light bulb in the girls' cabin to red. They decided that we probably shouldn't have done that, so they put the pig in our cabin.

(51:20) M: You mention a bear scare – In the photo album there was a picture of a little bear hugging a tree and the caption was “the begging bear.” Talk about the wildlife and bears.

J: We had bears. We had a big garbage pit in those days and sometimes after dinner we'd go down in cars and you'd see 8 to 12 bears in the garbage pit and that's actually where you have the road coming up to the main ranch now, but it was known as the dump road. We were starting to get a lot of bears around the cabins and I have no idea why, but this one little bear (he had probably just been kicked out of the nest) just discovered that the cook would get angry at him and throw rolls at him to keep him out of the kitchen. Hey, this is free dinner, free lunch! Frank tried to tell him not to do that, they he's encouraging the bear to stick around – that's when I took a picture of him up the tree. We had a mother with a couple of cubs on the west side of the ranch and they were around for quite awhile. We had to get the park service to eventually come in and take her out of there. There were other single bears around, which was very unusual, so Frank asked the dudes to please be in their cabins by dusk (around 9:00). One evening, Suzie Barner and I (we were cabin girls together) had one of the tents up behind the cabins on the west side – we walked smack into a bear standing up on his hind legs. And, he was just as surprised as we were! We ran down into the boys' side of the bath cabin and (the bear) must have gone the other way because we never saw him after that. Silly us, we thought, “Who needs a flashlight? We don't need a flashlight.” But the bears were way too close to the cabins, so the park service had to come in and trap some out.

(54:00) M: I would think that if you're living in a canvas tent, that it's not a lot of protection from an angry bear.

J: We did have cub come up (to one of the cabins) and (one of the girls) thought it was her boyfriend knocking on the door. We didn't have electricity, we just had candles. She opened the door and said, “Oh my god, a bear!” And slammed the door and blew out the candle and jumped back in bed. (laughs)

M: Isn't it interesting the difference (between then and now)? Now, you avoid bears completely, have separate garbage bins – it's unthinkable to dump trash out, to be without bear spray. Did you ever have an incident where somebody was injured or attacked by a bear?

J: We never had an incident. Even the bears who came around here (although it worried Frank about the sow and her cubs because they could get very angry), but, when we would have individual bears come around, I don't think anyone was really afraid of them. We didn't have the hype back then that we have now. We didn't have bear incidents, so to speak, so we didn't really think about it.

M: Did you have grizzly bears?

J: There are more grizzlies now than I've ever seen. No, we had black bears and they aren't nearly as aggressive as a grizzly bears it made life a little more interesting that summer for all of us with the bears (and how they would) sort of walk around and come up and you'd go, "Okay." I had a bear come through the window, the screen, when I was a waitress. I was doing waitressing at that time and I was setting up the helps' dining room. It was the same little bear; he smelled the food and he came right in through the window, walked across the helps' dining table, I dropped the plates, went screaming through the kitchen and went out to Frank and said to Frank, "There is a bear in the kitchen!" And, the cook started to throw the rolls at him and Frank just ushered him out the back door.

M: I want to ask a general question and then I want to talk about the next four years you came back. Was there a hierarchy among the staff? Were you at the top of the pecking order if you were the cook or the wrangler, were you at the bottom if you were a cabin girl or was it more egalitarian, a sense that we're all here to help?

J: Pretty much all here to help but you always paid deference to the cook, even Rachel worked with the cook to order the food, work out the menus... She was the special person. She could raise havoc with you if she wanted to. No, there was never any hierarchy. We were all on equal planes, loved the place, loved the dudes (for the most part).

(57:50) M: What happens if you got a bad dude? What happens if you have one who came in thinking he or she knew everything about horses, Wyoming, bears, etc. Or somebody who's just really out of place – or out of his mind?

J: Out of place or a little cocky? You just had to do your job. Be very nice to them, crab at Rachel or Inga or the head wrangler. The head wrangler would roll his eyes. We had one dude who came in who just thought she was the cat's meow on a horse and wound up falling off the horse and breaking her arm or something and got a bad concussion because she was galloping her horse back to the ranch. You don't do that; you walk your horse back to the ranch. The horse thought it was great fun, I'm sure, and she got thrown. So we had the occasional dude who was a little stand-offish or out on the edges, but we always tried to include them and be nice to them. And, as a kid wrangler, I would run into some kids that were pretty snotty.

M: How many years were you a kid wrangler?

J: Two years (1959 to 1960).

(59:40) M: What does a kid wrangler do?

J: A kid wrangler takes all the kids who don't want to ride with their parents and we would go out on our horses for morning rides. I'd play games with them – we'd put sticks on branches and see if the stick could make it to the back. We'd go on picnics and go up to Bradley and Taggart and go swimming. A lot of times I'd take the kids to the rodeo or I would take them down to the lopsided house in the Hoback. It was a house if you walked into it and felt like all the floor was slanted, that you were half-walking on the ceiling – and they all loved that.

M: So you were taking the kids on field trips?

J: Yeah, and we'd go up into the park sometimes and sometimes I would just take them swimming occasionally we'd take our horses down to Lake Ingeborg and swim the horses, which the kids just loved, they just thought that was fabulous. And, I could only do it with kids who were a little savvy about their horses. When Cindy Galey and I did it together, sometimes we'd split the younger kids off from the older kids. But for the most part, they all went with us and we watched them. It was always good to have two of us.

(1:01:00) M: Did you always have two in case of an emergency?

J: Yeah, Cindy started with me right off the bat. She loved to go on the rides.

M: Were you the first kiddie wrangler? Did they do this before you started or was this something that started with you and Cindy?

J: They never had it when I was a dude, so I think Cindy and I were the first ones that started it.

M: Was it to give the kids and the parents a break by separating them a little bit?

J: Oh, they all loved it. And a lot of times after hay season we'd get our horses and go out here in the hay field and the kids that were brave enough would all jump the ditches (on the horse) and they loved to do that, that was great fun. And the better riders, I would let them do it bareback. It's a great way to teach a kid how to ride a horse, actually.

M: You raise an interesting thing and maybe I should have asked when we were talking about you as a dude, but is there a certain kind of learning that happens? Does a dude, especially a young one, gain a kind of self-confidence coming out to this kind of experience as opposed to just going to Disneyland or to the beach or something like that?

J: I think so. I was pretty much of a loner as a kid, very involved with any kind of horse I could ride on my grandparents' farm. I worked sometimes at a riding stable and would get a horse to ride now and then, but I didn't have a lot of friends. Two really good girlfriends was about all I had throughout high school, so I did a lot on my own. Coming out to the



ranch, I know I blossomed and got a lot of self-confidence. Not that I didn't have a lot of self-confidence because I always liked people, but I think I really grew in my own self-confidence that I could handle myself with a whole group of people, which really helped me when I went to college. So that was very key for me.

(1:03:30) M: For those last three weeks that you worked here, going from dude to employee, did you get paid? Or was your pay just room and board?

J: It was room and board. I would have stayed in a tent if I had to. I would have slept on the ground or up in the hay loft! (laughs)

M: So, what about coming back next year? How did you arrange to come back four more years?

J: Generally, (before the) help left and if we knew we were going anywhere with family the following summer, we would ask Frank and Inga if we could come back and work. Other than Sharon Crary (who was only here one year as a cabin girl) and Franny Strawbridge (who was here two years), the rest of us were quite a crew for about three or four years. So that's how that worked and then sometimes Inga – well, I knew a gal I was going to college with and that was Suzie Barner and she came out with me.

(1:04:45) M: And you invited her out here?

J: Yeah, and she called Inga and got the job. That's how a lot of people were hired.

M: As employees were you paid?

J: Oh yes. We were paid and we also got a lot of tips from the families that would stay here.

M: I'm interested in salaries in the late 1950s. Were you paid by the hour, were you paid by the season? And what was your pay?

J: It was \$200 a month and whatever tips we got. Actually, all the tips were put in a big pile and then subdivided between us.

M: Was that a decent salary for a college kid?

J: Yeah, for me it was. I had \$600 to take for most of the school year because my dad paid for my school and books. I paid for my clothes and I spent (my money) on food and things of that nature.

M: So, when you came back, did you come back as a waitress again or as a cabin girl who was a kiddie wrangler?

J: I came back as a waitress and I came as soon as I could. I flew out that first summer. If college was over on Monday, I was out by Friday. (laughs)

M: Where would you fly out to?

J: You'd fly into Salt Lake and then you'd take Frontier Airlines from Salt Lake to Jackson. I'm not sure the runway wasn't still dirt back in those times. (laughs) It was very small, a two-engine plane. Because I came out early (right around Memorial Day), that was when we opened all the cabins. We had to wash down the logs, get the beds made, just clean up the entire place. The worst place to clean was the big, main cabin because of it's size. There was a lot to do. Clean up the kitchen, and Rachel was always here early, which was great.

(1:07:15) M: Did you come early all four years?

J: Yeah, couldn't keep away. Sometimes it would still be snowing. And mud season... I soon learned what mud season was all about! Mud season is rain and snow and you could literally me up to your knees in mud.

M: How would you keep your cabins clean in mud season?

J: Well, you'd take your shoes off. We'd take a hose and hose the inside of the cabins to get them clean. Now and then you'd disturb the bats that were in the cabins. One of the wranglers would have to come and stuff something in their holes. But, we'd have bats fly over our shoulders sometimes. One gal who had never experienced something like that had a bat land on her back and ran screaming out of the cabin. We kept saying, "Stop! Stop! Wait!" (laughs) Those were fun (times). And, new people who were here (were the times when) you'd really get to know the workers who had not been here. That was a time of closeness that we all spent (together).

(1:08:38) M: What about the return customers? I've read that people would come year after year. In fact, you returned as an adult and continue that relationship.

J: The Winsors came every year, the Matthews came, Cathy Penick and his wife and son were here for years and I think even years after Jay (Matthews) and I got married. It was wonderful because you knew them, you knew the families. It was just a wonderful get-together. I was telling you before that a lot of those people wanted their horses.

M: During the fall, winter, and spring when you weren't here, would you write letters to these people and maintain that relationship? If you were in the Philadelphia area, would you get together and reminisce or would only see each other during the summer period at the ranch?

J: We used to get together for parties. Then, I was dating Franny Strawbridge at Princeton first and then I dated Jay Matthews at Princeton. (Jay and I) did get married in 1959.

M: And, 1960 was your last year here as an employee because you were married and it was time to move on with life?

J: Yeah.

1:010:15 M: So let's jump ahead to a new topic. Talk about you coming back with your family as dudes once again. And first, tell me a little bit about your children.

J: Well, Jay and I have two girls. I hate to tell you their ages, but one is 52 and the other is 49. (laughs) And, (I'm) grandmother to seven great kids. Jay (Matthews) and I departed each other in 1976, so we had been married for a little over 15 years. Ed, my husband, has a son so we're a blended family. But, when Jay and I were married we came up right after Lynn (our first daughter) was born. She was three months old when I first brought her up here. It was very different being a dude with a family. I didn't know the people who worked here, the kids were all different, Inga was gone and Nona Galey was here (Frank's second wife).

M: You talked about Inga really being sort of the strength behind the place, a real strong personality. Was the tone different when Inga was no longer here and Nona was the second wife?

J: Inga embraced all the dudes and, as I mentioned before, we would all go down to the Galey cabin for socializing. Nona did very little of that. She was a little more off to the side. So that was different. They had built a dude bar in the main cabin and had put a porch in for everyone. That also kept us away from the Galeys. In a way that was very sad because you lost that camaraderie with the owner. I didn't know the kids who worked here. They had new wranglers, they had new horses. Spade wasn't here anymore, (but) her offspring was. So yeah, it was just a little different atmosphere. I'm going to say it wasn't quite as homey as it was in the '50s.

(1:13:24)

M: You came back after the birth of your first child? I had a sense that you took a break and then came back when the kids were older.

J: Yeah, after Rebecca was born in '65 I think I missed two summers out here and didn't bring her out until she was walking and I wasn't afraid – because she loved the horses! She loved going down to the corral and poking through the fence, which was a little scary. Jay and I had horses. (My kids) really loved (the ranch) when they got older. They were just on horseback all the time. And (my other daughter) Lynn worked here when she was in college, which was in the early '80s. Right before Frank (Galey) died. My ex mother-in-law and I were still very good friends and I would try to be here when she was here and bring the girls. She ran afoul of Nona and stopped coming and I just couldn't come back after that. When Lynn came to work up here, I came up not to stay, but to visit. It just wasn't the same.

(1:15:00) M: How do you recapture something that seems so idyllic?

J: Those are all magical memories that you draw on. I think I can see almost every face of every person I worked with and a lot of the dudes. Sometimes, I can't remember the dudes' names, but you draw on those memories. Of course, I have my album that I go through. When all of this (rehabilitation of White Grass) started, we were just ecstatic. This has always been a magical place.

M: That's the final big topic I'd love to explore with you. Your last time would have been when? When your daughter Lynn was working here in the early '80s?

J: Yeah, in the early '80s.

M: Because 1985 was the last year when (White Grass) was fully functional. Frank Galey dies in '85 and is that when (White Grass) returns to the park and is no longer a ranch?

J: I think it was '86 when Nona held the auction and then it was done.

M: I heard you and Roger (Butterbaugh) in the kitchen talking a little bit about the demise of this place. Talk about that, as a former employee and dude, what that meant. First, how it happened and then what it meant.

J: Well, after Frank died that summer, the dudes were still around and Nona did not want to stay on the ranch. The main house burned down and (Nona) held an auction. I did not come out for that. She auctioned the bed, the tables, the horses – everything.

M: But not the land because the park took that?

J: Yeah. So the ranch went to wrack and ruin. Nobody kept it up. But we would come up every summer for picnics and we would walk the ranch. We moved to Illinois in '85, but I would come back for about six weeks and stay with my good friend Elise Clover. Rebecca was going to Denver University at the time and so we would come up and we would walk through the ranch. Rebecca would always say, "I know Frank is here, walking around with gin in his glass." (laughs) There were just very special memories that we could all share. Rachel and I decided that we needed a reunion. This was when the barn was still here (in '88). There was a group of us, like Deborah Lopez, Rachel, and myself, Elise's daughter (Cici) – we pulled in a lot of people (much to our surprise). We decided maybe this shouldn't go into wrack and ruin.

(1:18:50) M: There's a positive feeling that maybe this can be preserved. You are a bunch of citizens looking at what is now federal property.

J: That's when Pam Holtman started to work at White Grass. She was a historian (Cultural Resources) for the park. Somehow Rachel got ahold of Pam, we talked this over, Pam got ahold of Barbara Paul in Denver.

M: Who is Barbara Paul?

J: She does a lot of fund-raising for historical preservation (The National Trust for Historical Preservation) like the White Grass. Rachel was the key person to get all of this started.

M: What did you want to do? To rebuild the cabins or start a dude ranch? What did you have in mind?

J: We just wanted to save the cabins. If it could be used by the park, that would be great. We would need the park support in all of this. It was quite amazing how much money Barbara Paul raised and individual members that had either worked here or stayed here, like Dick Quast and his wife. They really chipped in and saw that this ranch should be preserved. It was a part of Jackson's history. We had a superintendent who tried to undermine all of that history.

M: A park superintendent?

J: Yes.

(1:20:45) M: And was his approach just to let it all go back to nature?

J: Yeah, and take down all the buck fences and let the buildings fall down. To heck with what Jackson used to be. He wanted it to be like it was before anyone came into the valley, I guess. There was just a small group of people that said, "Yes, let's really try to save this ranch." The ball got rolling and it took awhile, but the park was behind it and it was so exciting. (The Hammond Cabin) was the first cabin that we could go into, (where we could) get together and have a barbecue. Barbara Paul gave a luncheon around early 2000 – Rachel would remember, she has a memory like a trap door. (laughs) We had a luncheon and we had it very carefully in the main cabin. It was a little tricky, the floors were very uneven and you had to be careful where you walked. The builders came in and said it was okay to have some people in there. The park had copied a lot of my pictures and they had big boards up on the wall full of mostly my pictures from the '50s. Rachel and I stood in front of them and cried. It was the first time we'd been in the main cabin since probably the mid-70s. That was such a special time. We knew then that this was going to fly. We didn't know how many cabins were going to be restored, but we knew the ranch was going to be saved, a part of it anyway. Norman and Carole Hofley had taken the barn at that time from a kid who took the barn down because the superintendent said he was going to bulldoze it down if somebody didn't take it down. And they restored it and it's on their property.

M: And it's out in Wilson, right?

J: Yeah, and we've held a lot of our barbecues down there in the barn – potlucks, I should say. So that was wonderful.

(1:23:41) M: Tell me how you felt (when the ranch) became the Western Center for Historical Preservation.

J: I'm hoping that the White Grass Ranch can be a model for other ranches or for other historical sites that we can show the public, the parks, whoever is involved – that this is a possibility and that this can be done. It preserves history. It's our heritage, it's my kids' heritage, it's my grandkids' heritage. We all love it, we all come up here and just absolutely groove on what's happening up here. It very, very exciting for all of us.

(1:24:45) M: You told me at some point you moved to Jackson 23 years ago. What brought you to Jackson? You were living in Denver?

J: My second husband was involved with zoos, so he was the curator of the Denver Zoo and he was offered an associate position at the Brookfield Zoo outside of Chicago. He was doing work internationally, like working with China to get their panda program in order, going to Russia to help get their zoo in order, particularly their reptile exhibit. He was in and out of Australia for three years, putting the Melbourne Zoo together. So when he came back from Australia, he had been in the zoo business for like 27, 28 years. It was at a time when politics were really bad in the zoo business. They weren't hiring zoo people. They were hiring more fund-raising people, people that had no background in zoos at all, no background in animal management, so he felt that it was time to move on. I knew the gentleman who owned Grand Teton Photo. (I was) still being a photo nut and I was doing photography on the side, so I called Francis and said, "Do you still want to sell your store?" And he said, "Sure." (laughs) We ran a mini lab and the store and then I ran Jackson Hole Custom Color Lab where we did custom work and big negative stuff.

(1:26:45) M: Are these portraits or corporate photography?

J: The color lab was all pro stuff. Photographers would come into the valley. We would develop their slide film, their 4x5s, medium format.

M: The kind of stuff they sell there on the street, in the galleries?

J: Yes, we would do that. We did some of Tom Manglesen's work and Henry Holdsworth, who has a lovely studio here. Our mini lab served people off the street. We did one-hour photo developing and we had the store. So that was fun.

M: Why did you choose Jackson? Because the business was here or because of White Grass?

J: I would say it was an opportunity to get back to a place that I loved and that Ed had learned to love. He wasn't really sure. I was kind of hoping that he would go into consulting, but he had just had it with the zoo business at that point. I said, "You know, Francis wants to sell his store." And (Ed) said, "Fine, let's do it." (laughs)

M: Wow, what a husband!

J: Yeah, and my daughter and her husband took over the store in the early 2000s. Along came digital and we decided that we weren't going to invest a lot of money into new equipment, so we got out of it.

(1:28:22) M: But you stayed.

J: We stayed, yes.

M: Do you stay in the winter?

J: Oh, we stay in the winter. We stay full-time. We love the winter. We do cross-country skiing, see my horse everyday, bug him, sometimes get on him now and then. My granddaughter goes to Colorado University and she comes up and rides him – she's another horse nut. (laughs)

(1:28:50) M: Before I ask my last question, is there anything important we haven't discussed?

J: I think touching on that this place still holds magic for me 59 years later is really probably the most important thing for me that I was able to stay in touch with this place and that it still holds the magic and the connection to the people that I've met and to people that have passed away and just all of the beautiful memories I have of this place. It's very important – my children love it, my husband loves it and I am so blessed that Ed loves it. Of course, there are a million stories to tell of when I worked here (laughs), but some of those that I've told you are some of the most outstanding ones. Except for when we closed the ranch, we had dudes coming and we overturned the oil drums that we used and we hung laundry outside of the Galeys' house – that was when Inga was still here and she was up for all that stuff. I borrowed George Clover's big old horse. (When you drove up the driveway) to the ranch, it looked awful. We had to undo everything, but I said, "You know, the ranch has fallen on hard times and don't be surprised what you see when you go in." It was just great fun. That was one of the better we had done. A dude had been out here for many, many years. I think those are the key points we've touched on. It was just an 18-year-old's dream that came true.

(1:31:15) M: That was sort of my last question – what you call the magic of the place. I don't know if you want to define it a little bit more or leave it as it is, but it seems to me that the magic of the place has to do with the people and the relationships that happened in a place that's a little bit isolated, very much different from the city – and perhaps the natural beauty of the place (creates) a perfect storm in a positive way.

J: It really, really is. When I'm feeling stressed or when I just want to get away from the tourist's in Jackson, I come up here. Sometimes Ed and I come up here in the evenings and just walk around the cabins. We might bring a picnic dinner – we haven't done that for a little while, but White Grass is sometimes a place of refuge, you can just get away. Jackson has grown – not that I don't still love Jackson, because I do, but (White Grass) is

just a place to get away and sort of go back into positive memories. I think it is a blessing that Roger (Butterbaugh, Seasonal White Grass Caretaker) is here to take care of this ranch and to see his positive reaction about it. To me these are all positives, and to keep a place that I sometimes feel is where I really grew up.

M: Beautiful. Well, thank you very much. This has been an enjoyable interview.

J: My pleasure.

(1:33:10) Roger Butterbaugh: I know you as a very spiritual person, which is something I respect greatly because I know you don't just talk about what spirit is about, but you live it. Are there ways you can talk about being in Wyoming, being on this ranch, over time (because you came here as an 18-year-old). I'm very curious if you have anything to say about your spiritual evolution in this place that you call White Grass. Did it have an impact? If so, in what way? How has it shaped your spiritual life?

J: As a youngster, I always felt that I was being watched over. Sorta grew up in a dysfunctional family and I think that's one of the reasons why I was a bit of a loner. But I always felt like I had a guardian angel. And, if anybody led me out to Wyoming, it was the spirit. I know when I was here when I was older (as I got into my late teens and early 20s and had my kids), (it felt like) a magical place. You could say White Grass became a spiritual place for me. Living in Denver, I became very active in church activities; my children grew up going to Sunday School in the churches. When I married Ed (he's such a family man), it was quite wonderful. We are both very active in the church and I've just always felt that whoever is watching over me is still by my side and has led me to this place. I really believe that I was led to the White Grass. I can get so enveloped with just the feeling of God and the Holy Spirit, everybody here at the ranch – it can all come together. And, my youngest daughter, who is a yogi, feels the same way. And, my oldest daughter, who is studying to be a priest in the Episcopal Church (also feels this way). The girls and I are just so connected by this wonderful feeling of spirit and unity between us. You could say this is my spiritual home and has been for a long time. It's also my magical place, the White Grass.

(1:36:30) M: Are you doing volunteer work here in the park? Roger mentioned that you have something to do with the Chapel of Transfiguration.

J: I'm a lay minister up there. As a matter of fact, I'm up there all summer for the 8 and 10:00 services every Sunday. I'm a Stephens minister at the Episcopal Church.

M: What does a Stephens minister do?

J: If somebody is going through a divorce or if, say, your wife or husband has died, we do one-on-one support. I'm also a healer. Laying on of hands.

M: Do you think you would have become that if you had taken the car instead of coming to White Grass?



J: I don't think so, I really don't. I think I was meant to come to White Grass, meant to come to Jackson. I just think I would have taken off in a different direction. I look back on that and think, "The Lord knows what he's doing." Thank you, Roger.

(1:37:00) M: That's a great way to end this interview – on a spiritual high. Thank you very much.

J: This was wonderful, really enjoyed it.

Judith Schmitt, Part Two

M: The machine is back on, we are still talking to Judy Schmitt about her White Grass experience. In our post-interview conversation, Roger thought of a question that we wanted to capture in this moment.

R: My question was what is it like for Judy to be interviewed by Matthew about her experiences here in White Grass?

J: I thought the interview was fascinating for me because I had never really gone over the experiences of White Grass. I mean, you give them in bits and pieces to people, and some of the pieces you don't tell your kids (well, when they're younger, but now they know it all). But this was good, I said before I think the questions were spot-on, things I hadn't really thought about too much, but it was really great fun, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

M: Let me ask you a question – and again, this is a part of our training, so this is kind of a good thing, but how would you have felt if there had been a tripod with a video camera here? But just you and me – I'm off camera and you're on, and you're looking at me trying to ignore (the camera) – would that have changed the dynamic or the answers?

J: Oh, I don't think so, no.

1:26 M: How about having all this audience here?

J: Oh, I think I told you before I was interviewed that I love a stage. (laughs)

M: Because sometimes that can impact (an interview). I felt like it was you and me, which was really awesome. The fact that he's flipping pages and taking notes and I could hear people rustling around a little bit... To do (the interview) here, to do it in this building –

J: It's ideal, yeah.

Interviewer: Because off in a setting like a sanitary hotel, the memories aren't going to come (as vividly). Here you can just look out the window and have memories.

J: Yeah, I think that would be too sterile. I think people would be put off. I might not remember all of those wonderful things, you know, like putting the moose through the window and doing silly, odd things, short-sheeting the bishop's bed. (laughter)

R: Did the process of sitting for an hour and a half and talking about your experience with White Grass – did you learn anything about yourself or affirm anything about yourself or did something come that you didn't realize?

J: Well, one thing I didn't realize was that time had gone so fast. And, I think this whole experience just affirmed how I feel about the ranch, the people that worked here, the people that were dudes and this place. This place in Jackson Hole.

3:00 R: Beautiful. You're place.

J: (laughs) Our place, yeah.

M: Well, I think it also goes back to the title Roger's come up with for this project – the notion of heritage and I think that you've done a wonderful job of conveying your heritage in this interview. I think it was a great interview.

J: Well, I have believed for years that the destruction of our history is really quite reprehensible, that we need our history, our kids need to know, my kids need to know what I did when I was a teen and young adult and what this place means to us. I think it's very important. It's like going back to Philadelphia and seeing the Liberty Bell and going to Liberty Square and realizing that a lot of the history that I grew up in is how our country was formed. I think it's all connected.

4:15 Interviewer : Who's the superintendent who fought this?

J: Jack Stark.

Interviewer: Where did the buy-in come from?

J: The buy-in came from after Stark and it was a gentleman (Superintendent, Steve P. Martin) who wasn't here for too long, but he stopped all of the destruction (such as the taking down of the fences. I think he was here right when Pam was first here.

Interviewer: What year?

J: I'm trying to remember... approximately in the mid-90s, yeah.

M: We could probably actually look up some of these dates online.

J: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure you can.

R: Because for a short time it Steve Martin.

J: You know, I had never met him.

R: Jack or the other one.

J: Oh, it was Jack Stark who was –

R: You never met him?

5:25 J: Oh, I met Jack, oh yeah. (laughs) As a matter of fact, Rachel and I sat across – this must have been right before he retired – Rachel and I can be really juvenile together, to put it bluntly. (Jack) had left his hat on the desk and I picked it up and put it on my head and Rachel said, “Oh, my dear! When he comes back in are you going to have that hat on?” And I said, “No, I guess I better not.” (laughs) So we didn't have a whole lot of respect.

Interviewer: (jokingly) You were on a closed-caption camera somewhere.

J: (laughs) Oh, I'm sure we were! I'm sure our conversation was being recorded at the time. That's when we were asking him if we could have the reunion up here; we had to go get permission.

Interviewer: Yeah, because we would come up from Death Canyon and I remember seeing this off to the side and wondering what the hell was this thing. In my mind I remember the dilapidated buildings and anyhow, that's beside the point. That's interesting, wow. What a journey!

J: It was Mouse City. Ugh. Gad.

M: I can imagine. Roger, anything else? No? Okay, that's it.

See Ballad of White Grass by Judith Schmitt on page below.