

White Grass Ranch Reflections 1917 – 1924
By the niece and nephews of Harold R. Hammond

Transcribed by Nancy Bureson, daughter of Harold N. Hammond.

It has been an honor and delight for me to transcribe these tapes to be saved as part of the history of the White Grass Ranch, now designated as the Western Center for Historical Preservation, and the Jackson Hole History Museum. To once again be able to hear the voices of the people that I love, who are now deceased, my Dad Harold, my Aunt Phyllis and my Uncle Walt, warms my heart and makes me smile.

Harold Nord Hammond, Phyllis Georgia Hammond and Walter Elbert Hammond lived with their parents (Arthur Hammond, Harold R. Hammonds brother) as caretakers of the White Grass Ranch from 1917 – 1919. They sat down with my cousin, Ed Strommen, during 3 separate occasions - August 1994, June 1995, and June 1998 and reflected about their childhood years when they were living at the White Grass Ranch and in the surrounding valley.

Harold R. Hammond's older brother, Arthur and his family moved to the White Grass Ranch as caretakers when Harold was called into service during World War 1.

The people recounting their memories are Harold's nephews, Harold Nord Hammond, Walter E. Hammond and niece, Phyllis Hammond Strommen.

Moderator, Ed Strommen - son of Harold's niece, Phyllis
Harold Nord Hammond - Harold's nephew; named after his Uncle
Phyllis Georgia Hammond Strommen - Harold's niece
Walter Elbert Hammond - Harold's nephew

Ed: In talking about the White Grass Ranch, how about covering the reason that you folks were there and the timing of that. Wasn't your uncle in the service?

Harold: Yes, In 1917, Uncle Harold was called into the service during WW1. We were living here in Opportunity (Montana) and so my dad (Arthur C. Hammond, Harold's older brother,) left his job here and went down to take care of the ranch. We lived at the White Grass for about 2 years and in the valley until 1924. We moved there in the fall of the year wasn't it?

Phyllis: Yes, went down there in October because you and I were just in the first grade. Mom started us both at the same time. I was a year older than you but we started at the same time and we went all the way through high school together. Walt was younger.

Ed: What was your Uncle's name?

Harold: Harold Rezin Hammond. He was a single man at that time and he had this ranch in conjunction with a wealthy Philadelphian, Tucker Bispham. Bispham just came out in the summertime for about 3 weeks.

Ed: Was it an operating ranch or was it a Dude Ranch?

Harold: It started out as an operating ranch and later on it became a Dude Ranch.

Phyllis: It was a Dude Ranch while we were there because remember, the Countess was up there and they had little cabins built and they had the large lodge you know, and the large dining room for people.

Harold: Summers at the White Grass, people from the East lived there. We stayed away from them. We weren't supposed to play with them at all. We had a little cabin that was away from the lodge. The lodge was large, had lots of animal skins hanging on the walls and it had a dining room and a kitchen and two bedrooms. They also had little cabins scattered in the woods, maybe about half a dozen. The dudes at the White Grass probably were no more than a half a dozen people. There was quite a bit of class distinction then. We weren't supposed to go up there. It was a big ranch, cattle and horses that dad took care of. It was kind of a hide away for the rich and famous.

Phyllis: Uncle Harold and his partner had built the cabins. I don't know when they built them. Perhaps it was 5 or 6 years prior to our going there. They were quite new when we lived there. We lived in the valley either on or near the ranch for about 8 years. After our 8th grade graduation, we moved to Anaconda so that we could go to high school.

Phyllis: Since we are eating some huckleberry pie while we are visiting, we should talk about the huckleberries at the White Grass Ranch when we lived up there those two years. We all went out with the wagon and the horses and picked huckleberries.

Harold: We had sandwiches and we all sat on the side of the wagon for lunch. All during the lunch, the three dogs were sitting down opposite us watching us eat. Of course the horses had their bridles off so that they could graze.

Walt: Yes, and I remember after breakfast in the morning, we would usually have pancakes and if there were any left over, which there usually were, mom would take them out and feed them to the dogs in the backyard. There were some squirrels around and the dogs would sit back and wait for the squirrels and then the chase was on. Sometimes the squirrel would get the pancake up the tree before the dogs caught him, sometimes he had to let go and make it up. It was always fun to watch and see who would win the race!

ED: How old were you all then?

Harold: I was about 8 or 9 and Walt is a year younger and Phyllis is a year older.

Walt: Remember about the barn incident? The Countess had a black lady as a maid, **FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTESS SEE PAGE 11.** housekeeper, & cook. She slept in a little tent there. I remember we were interested in the fellows operating that Jackson Fork barn where the hay would slide in on a rail and they would jerk the rope and dump the hay into the loft of the barn. So, here was a rope in the front of that little tent. One of one of us, I don't remember who, grabbed that rope and gave jerk on it and the tent collapsed with the lady inside. (laughing)... Boy did we get out of there in a hurry!

Harold: Speaking of pulling on ropes, I remember that we were playing down the field and looked back at the cabin where we lived, a little three-room log house, and I saw a bell up on

top of the house. I'd never seen it before and so we came back to the house and started ringing that bell. A couple or three of the fellows working out in the field, they came running in. That was a signal that there was a fire, but we didn't know that. (laughing) So we got in hot water.

Phyllis: Well it was a large bell with the rope hanging down. It was also used to call the men to meals. Just at the odd times, it was used as emergency calls.

Walt: I remember something that Harold told me I should holler into the barn about during milking one morning. I went up to rap on the barn there. I hollered out this word, I don't remember what it was but evidently the men doing milking knew cuz my dad came out and paddled me for it. (laughing) That's the kind of older brother I had! (laughing)

Phyllis: I remember a milking thing. This is kind of ridiculous. I approached my dad when he was milking and he looked up and he turned and squirted me right in the face. (laughing)

Harold: There were two or three cats that used to hang around the milk too. Phyllis liked the warm milk but I didn't care much for it.

Walt: I remember those cats sitting around every once in a while, every once in a while the guys would squirt the cat in the face with the milk. (laughing)

Phyllis: In the spring we had several calves and we were naming them names like Rosebud, Daisy and our dad got kind of sick of those kinds of names, so he named the next one Umqua. They had a big, gentle bull that stayed right in the barnyard and we played around that thing. He was a red bull. Durham Red. He was sure gentle, at least he was gentle with us.

Ed: What kind of milk cows did you have?

Harold: They were red faced, a variety, but mostly from the Hereford strain.

Harold: One evening after Uncle Harold came back from the service he left to pick up the mail at Phelps Lake. It was evening after dinner when we started out for the mail and I got on this big horse and we rode up there two or three miles. He visited with the people there for quite a while. I found some funny papers there I was reading and then we took the mail and some other things. We had a packhorse with us with a couple of packs on it, you know. We put all the mail in there and he brought some other stuff, I don't know just what it was anyway and then we came on back. It was pitch black when we came back and he was in the lead, leading the pack animal and then I brought up the rear on this other little horse. She was a dandy little mare. So I just sat there for that two or three miles getting home, it was black as the ace of spades and I was pretty tired but it was a nice experience.

Phyllis: In the wintertime, people would take turns going for the mail. That way they didn't all have to go down to the post office. People helped each other out.

Harold: In the winter, the snow got real deep there. We used to go follow the buck fences and we used to get underneath those fences perfectly level on top because the snow was that deep and sometimes there was a little hump where the buck swayed and we used to get out there and dig down into the air spaces underneath and we'd dig along under the fence for, oh, 100 or 200 feet. We had a great time.

Phyllis: We pretended we were mice.

Harold: Miners and that sort of thing.

Ed: Is that typical of that whole valley, getting that much snow?

Harold: Yes cuz we're right under the Tetons there, right at the foot of the mountains.

Harold: In the meantime, in the fall of the year, we were snowed in up at the White Grass Ranch and the horses couldn't get in or out so we just fed our stock there and everything had to come in by snowshoes or dog team.

Ed: I'd never heard about dog teams. I thought dog teams came down with the Eskimos. Was that something that was a necessity in that region?

Harold: No, that was the only dog team in that area. Mrs. Lukas, had this dog team. Her son was a captain on one of the fishing boats in Alaska. He was the one that got her started with the dog team. He used to send down this frozen salmon, and that's what they fed the dogs. She had that stuff stacked like cord wood out in the sheds. They fed the dogs one piece each day or something like that.

Phyllis: Remember when they took you (Harold) up to stay with them for a week and then they took me up to stay with them for a week? That was really fun, riding behind the dog teams on the sleds.

Phyllis: She would come down to the White Grass once a month to go on down to get the mail.

Harold: She also had her niece staying with her. Her niece was about 15-18 years old, somewhere in that neighborhood. She used to take me for walks every now and then and she also took care of the dogs. This was in the late fall. There was a little pond down there and there was quite a bit of snow. She had learned to skate and was skating on the frozen pond - this was toward the end of the week that I was staying there. My dad and this other fellow came up to get me and of course, they had a pony tied to a toboggan to get back home. They got a big kick out of it. I was outside and Naomi was down on the pond skating, when I saw Pa coming, I yelled, "Hey, look Pa, Naomi can skate backwards." He got quite a kick out of my greeting him like that.

This Mrs. Lukas was quite a lady. She was a white haired lady then, wasn't she? **

**Geraldine Lukas was the second woman in history to reach the summit of the "Grand". She left her mark - G. L. Lucas - 1924 etched into the granite at the top. **

Phyllis: Yes, she had been a first grade teacher and she had all kinds of books. I can't remember hardly anything up there except that I read book after book. That was during the week that I was up there.

We used to rely on them for mail, about once a month or so. The closest mail depot was Phelps Lake, a quite deep lake, about 2 or 3 miles from the White Grass. Not only did we get the mail

there, but in the fall of the year, late fall, they used to cut ice there. There was no electricity and so they cut ice on the lake and you had these ice houses and they would pack ice in between sawdust, blocks this size (laughing, indiscernible) 2 ft. square, huge, and fill the ice houses for all the Dude Ranches, enough ice to last them over the summer.

The Lukas place and the White Grass were both taken over by the Park Service.

Harold: In the winter, we did a lot of skiing. There are a lot of potholes around there and we used to ski down in the bottom of those potholes. Since they are nice and steep and you get a nice little ride. Sometimes, you had a little trouble getting back out of the potholes. And in the spring of the year when it started to thaw, it would freeze overnight and there would be a big crust on top of the snow for maybe several days or a week, it'd be hard enough for the horses to walk on it. We had to be careful to let the horses out in the morning to run around and be sure to get them back in around noon. Otherwise, they'd have to stay out overnight. They'd break through that crust.

Phyllis: There'd be 6 feet of snow under that crust.

Phyllis: We loved to ski.

Walt: We made our own skis.

Phyllis: Walt was kind of small, he had skis that were at least 6 to 8 feet long. (laughing)

Walt: I can remember them bending the front of the boards over a steaming kettle of water on the stove to get the boards bent so you had them turned up on the front of the skis.

Harold: So it was a pretty rugged time. So it was quite an experience. Quite an area there. The time of my life!

Ed: How many years did you folks live in the Jackson area before you moved back to the Anaconda area?

Harold: Eight years.

Phyllis: About that. We came back to Anaconda (Montana) in 1924. We lived at the ranch two years you know. We didn't go to school when we were at the ranch. Then we moved into Jackson and stayed the winter with our aunt** who moved to town in the wintertime so that her kids could go to school.

(**side note: their aunt was Harold Rezin Hammond's older sister, Juliane A. Hammond Tanner, who has been called the "Mother of Teton County" for her work in creation of the county in 1922. She was the first clerk and also the county's first librarian.)

Phyllis: and so we lived in the town of Jackson that winter and all of us went to school then.

Ed: So that would have been when you were in 4th grade?

Phyllis: Since we couldn't go to school during those winters at the White Grass, our dad taught us. We did a lot of reading on the ranch. We read everything we could get ahold of. And he taught us arithmetic and times tables.

Later on, we stayed in the Tanner house in Jackson so that we could go to school. When we went to school, we started in the second grade because we had only gone to school to first grade. Within a couple of days, we both went into the third grade because we could read way beyond the second grade and we knew math. In about three weeks, we were in the 4th grade, which is the grade we should have been in anyway. So we didn't really lose those two years that we weren't able to go to school because my dad had taught us at home.

We used wood for heating and everyone had wells for their water. Kerosene lamps in those days.

Ed: So these were the years at the White Grass Ranch that you didn't go to school though.

1920-1922 Curtis Ranch:

Harold: The Armistice was signed, November 11th, 1918. After that, we stayed at the ranch until Uncle Harold was back from the service. We then went on down to the town of Jackson and the next fall we went out to the Curtis Ranch. Uncle Carl, Uncle Harold's other brother, was out of the service by then too so that's when our Dad and Uncle Carl formed a partnership and leased The Curtis Ranch. We went up there and stayed there for 2 years and went to a little country school out there.

Phyllis: We moved up onto the Curtis Ranch before we moved up to Kelly. The Curtis Ranch is where our baby sister, Norma spent most of her "baby years".

Ed: Is the Curtis Ranch near Jackson?

Walt: It was about 4 miles out of Jackson. Between Jackson and Kelly. My earliest recollection of our little sister Norma was time that she had disappeared and they were all looking for her and finally someone noticed that way out in the pea patch, there was just a hat between the rows. There was Norma sitting out there picking the pea pods off the lines and eating peas.

Harold: The Curtis Ranch, where we lived for a few years, is now owned by the Park Service. It's part of what is called Teton National Park, just below Yellowstone Park and is an adjunct park.

Harold: Phyllis and I graduated from grade school in Kelly. We moved back to Anaconda before the dam broke. We were starting high school and our dad wanted us to go to a bigger school. Phyllis and I were ready to start high school and Walt was in 7th grade. By that time we had a little sister, Norma, who was born in Jackson in 1920. We walked a mile to the Flat Creek School. It was a one-room school with 8 grades in it. We went to school there for 5th & 6th grades.

Walt: The school house in Kelly had two rooms, first to 4th in one and the 5th - 8th in the other. The schoolteachers hired Harold and I to janitor the place. We were supposed to sweep it up in the evening and mop it once in a while. One evening we got the bright idea of instead of

mopping it, we'd make it look like it was mopped. We'd just pour some water on the floor. So we dumped a couple tubs of water on the floor and went home. In the morning when we came back to light the fires in the stoves in the school, we had some skating ice. (laughing) We worked awful hard that morning.

Harold: I remember once that the two schoolteachers borrowed our saddle horses to go riding one Sunday. Of course they weren't used to horse back riding and we had a couple of lively horses. So they headed off the country road on the horses and it wasn't long before they came walking back leading the horses. They'd had all the riding they wanted. (laughing).

Harold: I got on that horse once to go to town. I was in a hurry. I had just gotten a brand new pair of really nice spurs. I got on the horse and so I slapped those spurs on to go on down to Jackson. I needed to get down there before the stores closed. I jumped on the horse with my new spurs on. I touched her once and could see her ears go back and I thought aw shucks, and boy did she start to buck. I grabbed the horn and hung on and pulled her head up and got her settled down. I took the spurs off and climbed back on and then headed down to town. I decided, to hell with those spurs. As it turned out, I could use the spurs on my horse but not on that little one, on Buck, she was a little buckskin. Phyllis was trying to mount her and she would reach around and nip you. She was a dandy. If she didn't like the things you were doing, she'd let you know.

Ed: Coming from a different world, I didn't realize that you folks had and rode the horses so much.

Phyllis: Yes, living out in the country, it was the only way to get around, you know.

Phyllis: There was a nice church and a new hospital in 1920. That's where our baby sister, Norma was born. We spent that winter there and then my dad and a friend took a big herd out into Idaho and wintered the horses out there. That was how he made a living that year. The Idaho climate was milder in the winter than that of Wyoming.

After that winter, our dad was hired to take care of the Curtis Ranch while the owners were going to back east for the winter.

I remember we lived on elk meat all winter long. Back then, if you didn't have enough food for your family, no one would pay attention if you killed an elk so your family could eat.

In 1922-23 we homesteaded in Gros Ventre canyon. Our dad filed on a homestead further up the valley. We lived in tents in the summertime. We then rented a little house in Kelly during the fall and winter so that we could go to school.

Dad was a forest ranger and he also cooked for the line camp as well.

Kelly was a small community of perhaps 75 people. There was a two-room school, 8 grades. The school was up on what they called the bench. We went to 7th and 8th. The schoolhouse and church were up on the raised portion above the river. In 1926, there was an earthquake and landslide. It swept away all the buildings in Kelly and the Lake that formed, covered our homestead in the Canyon.

Phyllis: One of those years at the Curtis Ranch was the time we were on our way home from school. There were a lot of elk that came down from the hills and were feeding in the area. See in Jackson, there was an elk refuge. And so this one time, we saw several elk coming right toward us and we went under the buck fence and those elk jumped right over us.

Ed: Is that where you had the horse that you rode to school?

Harold: Yes, we had a big horse. I was just going to say that. It was about a mile and three quarters. The three of us hopped on top of that horse and off we went. The kids in the school yard would get a kick out of seeing us riding in like that.

Phyllis: We also walked a lot too.

Harold: The only time we used the horse was in the winter when it was really cold. And part of that time, we would catch the mail stage that would come through. And grab a ride on it. The driver kind of didn't want us to do that but he wouldn't kick us off because somebody ahead of us had a couple of kids that they paid him to take their kids to school. We didn't pay him. We'd just get out there when he'd come by, we'd stand outside of the ruts of the sled until he went by and then we'd jump on the runners of the sleigh. The thing was we got pretty cold back there. The driver had covers for himself and the kids.

Ed: So you really were, hooking a ride.

Phyllis: He let us into the sled when it was really cold

Harold: Yes. He was pretty good that way. The rest of the time, of course when the weather was nice, in the fall and spring of the year, we walked most of the time.

Ed: Now, you mentioned Uncle Carl, he was Hammond also?

Harold: Yes. There were three brothers. Arthur, Carl, and Harold.

Walt: Remember the time Pop took us out with him on one of those trail cleaning expeditions, trail blazing or whatever it was? That was a nice trip

Harold: Oh yes, he was working at the forest service at that time out at Kelly. We had our ponies then.

Walt: I remember we had to ford a stream and the horses were in almost up to their necks and then we set up a campground by a little creek. My goodness, by the morning we could catch fish out of that creek as fast as we could pull them in. Talk about virgin country up there back then. It was great. Pop cooked biscuits in a dutch oven, I remember he dug a hole in the ground, filled it with coals, put the dutch oven in, put coals on top, and left it there. I was sure it was going to be black when it came out. He went around and did some business and when he came back, those biscuits were just perfect. He was quite a camp cook.

Harold: Yes he was. He could do almost anything. He could cut hair, fix all kinds of leather goods.

Walt: I remember one time in Kelly he had a toothache and he got a pair of pliers and grabbed the tooth and yanked it out. (laughing)

Ed: It hurts.

Harold: It hurts just to hear about it now!

Walt: I remember one of the haircuts he gave me. He set a chair out in front of the house and went into business when he was home for a weekend. Everybody in town got a haircut. (laughing) He probably made more that day than he did the rest of the week.

Harold: Except that he probably did it for free.

Phyllis: Yes or 25 cents a haircut.

Phyllis: We were isolated for two years. We spent 2 winters at the White Grass. We couldn't go to school because we lived below the mountains and the snow got to be 6 feet deep. There wasn't any school in the area. So we spent 2 years there without any schooling but we tried. We had learned to read. Uncle Harold had a lot of books and we read all kinds of stuff. Dad taught us mathematics. We could even recite the times tables.

Phyllis: We lived at the White Grass from 1917- 1919. Then we moved into Jackson so that we could attend school, I was 9, Harold was 8 years old, Walt was 7. We moved in with Aunt Lu Tanner for the first month. They had a ranch down on what then was called South Park. For the first month there we went to school with the Tanner children, so there were five of us going to school. We drove in a horse and buggy. We lived about 5 miles outside of Jackson. The school was in Jackson. The Tanners had a house in town so that the children could attend school. It was almost impossible to get to school in the winter from the Tanner ranch. Aunt Lu had a baby, Wayne, that winter, so our mom took care of the five of us kids attending school in Jackson, plus the two who were too young to go to school. She was taking care of 7 kids. Some of us went to the Ranch on weekends to work or help out.

Aunt Lu had a separator for separating the cream out of the milk each day. The cream was so thick so that if my aunt didn't have something else, she just made sandwiches with about 1/2 inch of thick cream. She made all the bread and I've never forgotten those delicious cream sandwiches. I thought those were just great. It was kind of like cream cheese, I think. We also had a lot of scrambled egg sandwiches.

Ed: What type of things did you have back in those days? Did you have things like waxed paper?

Phyllis: We didn't have a regular newspaper, or waxed paper. We just put sandwiches in the basket and covered them with a cloth.

Harold: We had Montgomery Ward catalogs in the outhouse. That catalog had nice soft paper for the outhouse. (laughing)

Harold: I remember one time when we went to school a bunch of elk, they had to drive them back in the spring because they had stayed there on the ranches so when the weather got

pretty decent in the spring, the high snows melted off and then they hired these cowboys to drive the elk back up on the summer range. They'd come right across Flat Creek range, right where the little schoolhouse was. Just before the schoolhouse they'd be coming up there and the valley would be full of elk and sometimes they scared us and then we got used to them and never paid much attention to them.

Ed: If that is the refuge that was established that long ago, did that mean that the hunting pressure had been such that there was a risk to the elk.

Harold: No, no, the elk starved in the wintertime. They tried to keep them alive, the government. They had two places they fed them in the wintertime. One on each side of Jackson. I forget what the one was, Leeks Ranch was the one down the road, next to Uncle Franks' ranch, the Tanner Ranch. The elk refuge was close to the town of Jackson. The population of Jackson was about 350 at about that time.

Harold: Regarding hunting pressure, there wasn't enough people in that area at that time to cause any hunting pressure on the elk. There were so many more elk.

Ed: One story that is my favorite, being a hunter, but I've heard it many times about your Uncle Frank walking with a game warden and going to scare off an elk with a .22. (...discussion whether it was Uncle Frank or Uncle Carl...)

Harold: Ok, maybe it was Uncle Carl that told the story to us.

Phyllis: That must have been it.

Harold: Well anyway, he was riding horseback with the game warden and they were just slowly riding down the road. An elk came down and walked ahead of them on the road. My uncle had a .22 rifle and he said, "Watch me make that fellow jump." Some of the kids from school were also walking along. One of the kids was the game warden's son. I don't know if it was Uncle Carl or Uncle Frank but he had intended to scare the elk. He shot a little high but the noise startled the elk and he threw his head up. The bullet went right over his rump and directly into the back of his head, in the middle of the horns and killed him deader than a doornail. Everyone was so surprised. The kids were wondering about that because there was a limit in those days. I think two was the limit. I guess the game warden never said a word!

Ed: Was the Curtis Ranch where the snow got so deep that one winter your Uncle skied over the roof to your house?

Harold: No, that was the White Grass Ranch. It didn't get that deep at the Curtis Ranch. We were down in the valley there below Jackson. Between Kelly and Jackson, over on the other side. Away from the mountains.

Ed: So it was just the lift of the mountains that caused the snow to get so deep.

Ed: This Curtis Ranch then, was that the place that in years after that where there was a landslide?

Harold: No, that was up the Gros Ventre River. We homesteaded up the canyon. It wasn't too far away. The fishing was good up there in those days. Mom used to salt them down. They had a road crew coming through one day. Pop was out doing something else and this road crew came by on their way to town and so mom and Phyllis fed the crew the fish. They finished that bunch of fish in short order.

Phyllis: Well, our mother just loved to fish. She was just crazy about it. She would hurry up and get things done in the morning. She was down on that river every day. She was a good fisherwoman and knew where to find them.

Ed: What was Grandfather doing during those years, the years he was just watching the Ranch?

Harold: He raised a few head of cattle. Not too many, it was too hard to get them to market and everything. The ranch wasn't built to sustain too much in the way of livestock. And that was one reason why they turned it into a dude ranch.

Ed: I thought that there was a place that you had lived that was flooded.

Harold: My dad took up a place up the Gros Ventre River. We lived up there one summer and it was in that area that it was peppered with water after the slide.

Yea. It wiped out the entire town of Kelly when the dam broke. We had lived in Kelly for two winters before the dam broke. it was just a wall of water and came down a canyon.

Phyllis: When we were down at the Curtis Ranch, he was taking care of that place too. He and Uncle Carl. But that didn't go too well, so that's when we moved to Kelly. Dad worked for the forest service.

Harold: Yes, he did whatever kind of work he could find. He worked for the forest service part time and then he bought a little saw outfit and he used to go out and saw wood for people that used to drag in the wood for the winter and he would cut it for them. He made money that way and then in the summertime he worked for the forest service and he also cooked for the line camps.

Phyllis: Our dad was a dandy cook. He didn't want to cook as a regular job. He said that all the cooks doing that regularly, drank too much. That was something he said once, when we were really small. He cooked for a mining crew of 100 people. He was a good cook.

Phyllis: He was cook for a line camp that was putting in telephone poles up in the area. That's what he was doing when we lived that summer at Forest Hill.

Walt: We used to buy milk from the place across the river and down below us. Once in a while a couple of us would go down and get a bucket of milk. Come home and eat, just about dusk and tell each other scary stories and scared us just about to death. (laughing)

Harold: There was a bridge to cross over to our place. That made it scary in the dark.

Ed: In the past, you told stories about this **Countess**. Some of the things you recalled about her name and where she was, came from, who she was married to?

Phyllis: Her name was Gizycka. At that time she had a 13 year old daughter, Felicia.

Harold: Her nickname was Cissy. Remember, I gave you a book.

Phyllis: Yes, I still have the book. Cissy, the Extraordinary Life of Eleanor Medill Patterson. Walt read it.

Ed: That was her maiden name?

Phyllis: He owned some of the big Chicago newspapers and she was his sister, Eleanor Medill Patterson.

Ed: How did she first come into contact with Grandpa Hammond, then?

Phyllis: She came out and stayed at the White Grass. She liked to hunt. Our dad headed hunting parties from the Ranch in the fall. He was a guide and cook for these. So she joined the hunting parties.

Walt: We were talking about taking the dudes out on hunting trips, Pop told about taking one group out on a hunting trip and he said that he had told them you know that when you see an elk, you get down off your horse, down on one knee, take aim, that way you get a steady shot and also get a chance at a second shot if you miss the first one. Whereas on the horse, you shoot once, the horse will jump and you won't get a second shot. So he said, here came a whole string of elk along the side of the hill, this gentleman got off his horse, got down on one knee and levered every cartridge out of his rifle. (laughing) Buck fever! Never even pulled the trigger. (laughing)

Harold: A couple years later, our dad took that trip down the Salmon River with the Countess and a couple of her friends. It was called the River of No Return. The captain they used would build a boat and after the high water was over, he'd float the middle fork of the Salmon River on down to Riggs, Idaho and then he'd sell the boat or give it away. Then he'd go back up and build another boat and do the same thing all over.

Even back then, Jackson Hole was looked at as a recreation place for the wealthy from back east.

Harold: Well another incident that happened while we were at the White Grass Ranch. Felicia Gizycki's 13th birthday party. They had just started the dude ranch; it had only been operating a few years. The Bar B C Ranch was near the White Grass. The boys from the wealthy people back east came out to the Bar B C Ranch for the summer. Struthers Burt and Dr. Horace Corncross ran the Bar B C. He and his wife were both authors. The boys stayed at the Bar B C and the girls stayed up at the White Grass Ranch. They had this big birthday party for the Countess's daughter, Felicia. They invited a lot of the boys from the Bar B C Ranch and the girls from the White Grass. Felicia invited Phyllis, Walt and I. I was 7 or 8 years old at that time. We relaxed around and saw what kind of fun they had. I remember that most of the time we stood around watching them all play and pushing each other around. I was wondering why these

guys were pushing these girls. We found out when we got older. (laughing). And then I remember that we had ice cream and cake. That was what we had been waiting for. It was a real treat.

Ed: How did you get ice cream in those days?

Phyllis: They used the ice that was packed in the sawdust from the winter and then they would crush the ice and use the hand turner.

Ed: Did you know the boys and girls at the ranches?

Harold: Oh no. They were all older than we were. They were all high school age kids there for the summer. That's the way these monied people do it. They would just farm their kids out for the summer to these Dude Ranches and let somebody else take care of them for two or three months so they could play their own games back there. Reading the book *Cissy, The Extraordinary Life of Eleanor Medill Patterson*, I didn't realize that cocaine and morphine and that stuff was used as much as it was in those days by the higher ups in society. I was startled to find that out.

Ed: And then you all visited there, what about 10 years ago was it?

Phyllis: Yes, 1975 that we were down there for the Hammond Reunion. That's 20 years ago. Wow! That's unbelievable. Yes, we met in Jackson, several of us and then got together in Jackson. Jackson was already quite a tourist place by then. But then we drove to Kelly and up the canyon where our old place had been.

Harold: The lake was there, or had been there. There wasn't, much left of the lake was there? Then we went up to the upper lake and it was practically empty too. Even after the flood there was still some of that lower lake left.

Ed: Were there any Hammonds living in the Jackson area then?

Phyllis: Our cousin, Bill Tanner was the only one living there. He lived in Jackson at that time.

Harold: He worked on ranches outside of Jackson.

Ed: Did Grandpa have sisters in the Valley?

Phyllis: Yes. His sister's name was Juliane (Aunt Lulu) Hammond Tanner. She was about 13 years older than Harold and was married to a local rancher, Frank Tanner. Bill Tanner, one of Aunt Lulu's boys. Uncle Harold moved out to live with his sister in Jackson Hole as a young man.

Harold: It's changed quite a bit over there now. The last time we went over to the old barn, the barn was the same way it was when we went there before, in 1975. The next summer, the breadth of the barn had caved in and then they reworked it and made a dance floor out of it. It had changed quite a bit. Uncle Harold's saddle was hanging on a pedestal at the house.

Walt: They had a big picture of Uncle Carl or Uncle Harold on horseback.

Phyllis: I never did get it clear when we went up in '75, was it still operating as a dude ranch?

Walt: Yes it was.

Harold: The next the year when we went up was the big celebration of all the dude ranches in the valley.

Phyllis: Yes a big 4th of July. We just missed seeing the Countess's daughter. I got to talking quite a bit to a woman who she had known Uncle Harold and his life. It was of course, Galey's mother. So she told me a number of things. I don't remember too much, but I had the impression that Felicia was there.

Reunion 1975. White Grass was still standing then. Uncle Harold's stepson was still running it. Each 4th of July he had a big BBQ for everyone in the area. We happened to be there for one of them one year and happened to go over to the White Grass and there

Uncle Harold's stepson inherited the White Grass.

Harold: The Park Service owns The Curtis Ranch where we lived for a few years now. That's called Teton National Park just below Yellowstone and is an adjunct park now.

Ed: Did the park service destroy the buildings?

Harold: They are all gone. There were several ranches around there. You can see some evidences of some of the irrigation ditches etc. but tearing down the buildings was one of the first things that they did.

Phil: Several years after the '75 reunion, Mom, Dad and I went down to the White Grass and happened to buy a local paper. There was an article in there about your local cousin, Frank Galey and they were having an estate sale. Isn't he the one who was having the estate sale? He had hosted the reunion that you attended, right?

Phyllis: That's right.

Phil: He had evidently died the previous year and they had an auction/estate sale. We drove up there later, the next day or so. The land was blocked off. The park service had taken control of it.

Walt: We were there in the motor home. Planning on driving up by the White Grass but there was a gate across there with a no trespassing sign beyond this point.

Ed: So probably, the White Grass Ranch had been destroyed too then.

Walt: Very likely. It's become part of the park.

Ethel: Why would they destroy those buildings?

Phil: Probably it would be a liability issue.

Ed: Today is June 25, 1995. We're here at Harold Hammond's house and we're going to talk about Norma Hammond, the youngest of the Hammond children. Along with her daughter Ethel, Phil and Ed Strommen and Walt and Carolyn Hammond.

Phyllis: Let's start by talking about the White Grass Ranch. Norma was being expected so we moved to Jackson and our father had a sister who lived in Jackson. They lived a few miles out in the country. So our Aunt Lulu (Juliane) had to bring the children into town to go to school in the wintertime. So, our mother stayed with the children in town so our aunt could stay down on the ranch in that winter. Norma was born in Jackson in March of that year. Aunt Lulu had a baby about a year old so she wanted to stay at the ranch. In those days there wasn't much transportation so they didn't go back and forth much.

Harold: In the wintertime it was horses and sleds. Not much in the way of automotive transportation in the Jackson Hole country.

Ethel: How many miles was it between the ranch and the town?

Harold: Four or five miles. It was a series of small valleys and their ranch was down in the lower edges of the plains there and the town of Jackson was a little higher, about a mile above sea level. That's where she was born, March 20, 1920. I was 10 years old at the time.

Harold: I can remember when Norma was just a little tot, we'd moved up to Kelly. Mom had sent me out to look for Norma, she was about 3 years old. I looked all over for her and finally went down on a bridge that crosses the Gros Ventre River. That was a river really close to town, and I looked down from the bridge. This was during high water season and right along the edge, there was a little trail along the edge of the river that we used to go back and forth on when we were fishing. And there was a place where the water went back a little further and there was a plank across the little ditch. And here was Norma, 3 or 4 years old, out on that plank using a bucket and some jars and was shoveling mud from one side to the other, walking across that plank. It just curled my hair. I didn't want to yell because she might slip and fall into that high, rushing water. I didn't know whether we could save her out of that. So I snuck down there and got ahold of her before she even knew I was there. The river was making so much noise she wouldn't have been able to hear me anyway. That's my big memory of Norma.

Phyllis: I remember that she ran away quite a lot. So, mom put her on a rope and tied it to a clothesline. She would run to the end of the line and sit down and howl! She was about 3 then. But I have to go back and say that I thought that was the most wonderful thing that little baby girl in a family of two boys.

Phil: Was Norma born at the White Grass or was there a hospital?

Phyllis: She was born at the little hospital in Kelly.

Ethel: You said that your dad's sister was living in Jackson. Is that right? Lulu?

Walt: Juliane was her name but everyone called her Aunt Lulu.

Harold: Wayne was her youngest and was about a year old when Norma was born.

Phyllis: Our Uncle Harold owned the White Grass with another partner. When he was called into the service, he asked our dad to come and take care of the ranch while he was gone. We left Anaconda and went to live at the White Grass. His partner was an Easterner and was always gone during the winters.

Ethel: So that was where the name Harold came from?

Harold: Yes, I was named after my Uncle Harold.

Phyllis: And there was another brother and sister, our dad's brother Carl was next in line and then sister Georgia. Uncle Carl was in the service but he came back afterward and lived in Jackson Hole. Georgia was living in the Salt Lake area so we didn't see them very much.

Phyllis: Aunt Lulu married Frank Tanner. Uncle Carl brought a bride back and she was an Easterner. They had one child. When he was about 1 year old, she went back to visit her folks and Uncle Carl went to bring her back. He had a stroke or heart attack or something, epilepsy on his way back and he died in his sleep.

Some background information about Harold Rezin Hammond's family.

Phil: They were originally from Baltimore. Their dad's name was George. He left his family down in Idaho, shortly after they moved out there. Then he appeared somewhere up in Canada. I had read about this somewhere. Philip had read about it.

Phil: I was in Missoula, and I got into the geneology and went over to the library and found a book there was a history of the Hammond family from back in the 1700s, right before the Civil War. George Hammond was a wolf hunter and was up around some port in Canada and got involved in a gun shooting incident with some Indians.

Harold: He was a railroad telegrapher when they moved out to Blackfoot, Idaho. He took off from there. He switched his occupation from that to wolf hunting. I don't know whether that was an upgrade or not. (laughing)

Ed: Do you have an idea of why he left the family?

Harold: Aunt Lulu was saying that their mother was an awful nagger and he had just had enough. There were 5 children. Three boys and two girls. Aunt Lu, Arthur, Carl, Georgia and Harold. Harold: My dad was 12 when his dad left and he ended up having to go to work. He must have worked on the ranches and ended up for a time rounding up wild horses in Nevada.

Phyllis: When Harold was a teenager, he lived with Aunt Lu for a while. Harold's mother was an immigrant from Norway and married George Hammond. Our mom was from Sweden.

Some Hammond Family History & connection to White Grass Ranch

Harold Rezin Hammond, Founder of the White Grass Ranch, was the son of George Hammond & Anne Olson.

Harold was born, 05/01/1891 in Blackfoot, ID & Died, 07/18/1939 in Jackson, WY.
Buried at Aspen Hill Cemetery, Jackson, WY

The following is information about Harold's brother, **Arthur C. Hammond**, who with his wife, Ellen Olsson Nord, and 4 children, lived and worked at the White Grass Ranch from 1917 to 1924

Arthur C. Hammond

Born, 02/16/1882, Omaha, NB
Married, Ellen Olson Nord,
11/16/1906
Died, 06/25/1951, Asotin, WA
Vineland Cemetery, Clarksville,
WA



Ellen Nord Hammond

Born: 02/21/1876
Uppmana
Kristianst,
Sweden
Died: 02/02/1954
in Poulsbo, WA

Below are the graduation pictures of Harold's niece and nephews who lived on the White Grass as children.



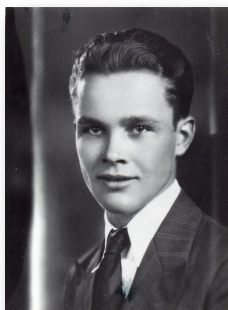
Phyllis Georgia Hammond

Born: 1/20/1910
Blackfoot, ID;
Died: 02/02/1999,
Anaconda, MT
Sunset Memorial Gardens



Harold Nord Hammond

Born: 02/02/1911
Blackfoot, ID
Died: 10/16/1996, Anaconda,
MT
Sunset Memorial Gardens



Walter Elbert Hammond

Born: 05/17/1913, Blackfoot,
ID
Died: 04/02/1999
Sun City West, AZ



Norma Bernice Hammond

Born: 03/13/1920,
Jackson Teton, WY
Died: 05/05/1984
Bremerton, WA



Written on back of picture:
Taken at White Grass Ranch, 1921
"Rags" our Airedale
"Shep" Uncle Harold's herd dog
"Pop" Arthur C. Hammond
"Me" Harold N. Hammond



Harold & Walt on return visit
to the White Grass as young
adults. Probably in the late
1920s, early 1930s.



The three people above are the ones who spent their childhood at the White Grass Ranch and who reflected on their experiences living in Wyoming.

I to r. Walt, Phyllis, Harold N.



Renovated Hammond Cabin, 2016.

Hammond Family cousins (in front of the Hammond cabin) attending the White Grass Ranch dedication as the NPS Western Center for Historical Preservation, September, 2016.

front: I to r. Ed Strommen, Mary Ellen Byrd, Dorothy Pelletier, Karen Dwyer, Nancy Bureson
back: Buddy Byrd, Barbara Harwood, Ethel Otto