

White Grass Heritage Project  
“Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEE: Brian Cleary (C)

INTERVIEWER: Matthew K. Heiss (H)

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

DATE: 5 September 2014

The latter half of this interview was transcribed by Julie Green, 2022. Unfortunately, it is unclear who transcribed the first half of the interview.

Note: This transcript has undergone minor edits, e.g., false stars and some text were removed to make it more “reader friendly”. Brian’s complete interview transcript is below.

H: Today is the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2014. My name is Matthew Heiss and I am working as a volunteer for the Grand Teton National Park. I’m participating in the White Grass Heritage Project. I am here at White Grass with Brian Cleary who has come out from Connecticut for the White Grass Reunion this weekend starting today and we’ll be talking about his and his family’s experiences here beginning in about 1959 up into the 1970s. Indexing this interview for me is my wife, Becky Heiss.

Brian, let me just begin by saying thank you for coming out this morning. What I’d like to do first is just have you give me a brief biographical sketch of yourself, an autobiographical sketch, where you were born and raised, your education, your career, your family. Just help me understand who you are.

C: Well, once again, it’s Brian Cleary. I was born in New Jersey. We lived in a town called Glen Ridge. I was one of three boys, the last of three boys. Went to school, in the public system there for most of the time. Did go to some of the prep schools in and around the area. Played a lot of sports.

H: What kind of sports did you play?

C: I played football, basketball and baseball.

H: Ok. The three biggies.

C: Yes. In those days, nobody played soccer and lacrosse was growing, but not what it is today. We would, when I was young, as I said, nine or ten years old, we started coming out to Wyoming, Jackson Hole, White Grass Ranch in the summers.

H: What did your dad do for a living?

C: My father was in radio and television and at the time of the Wyoming years, he was the producer and director and part owner of the GE College Bowl which ran for 10–12 years. Was a very prolific quiz show that won one Emmy Award and two Peabody Awards.

H: (2:26) Wow.

C: He retired from that in the early 70s and went on to become the Commissioner of Cable Television for the state of New Jersey. During this whole period of time, my mother was working as a prolific artist and had great passion towards her art. I went to the University of Massachusetts.

H: What year did you graduate from high school? Let's put some years on all of this.

C: Ok. Um . . . I'd say I graduated from high school 1967. Graduated from the University of Massachusetts in 1971.

H: What did you study there?

C: Business and finance, investment finance. I got married during those years and was raising a family, two children, two daughters. When I left college, I started working in the brokerage industry at a place called HornBlower Weeks hemphill Noyes, which is very old and no longer around, (laughs) was consumed in massive amounts of mergers etc. I've been in that business my entire life and am still doing it.

H: Something like an investment banker?

C: No. Financial advisor. And that's what I've been doing primarily for the entire time. I've done lots in the industry, did a lot for the various firms I was with but I was always basically a financial advisor. Was divorced in the early 80s. Remarried in the late 80s and continue to be married and have two additional children with my second wife. And I've been coming to these reunions I think since 1989 which may have been the first one.

H: It was the first one.

C: I don't know if I have missed one or not.

H: You know, let me ask you a question about this, this is kind of one of the concluding questions, but you have brought it, what keeps you coming back to these reunions?

C: It is an excuse to come back to a place I really love. I have some friends out here still, people that I worked with during those years. When I came out, I was a dude and a guest but a "barn rat" and I took to riding very, very quickly and hung around until finally Frank said that if I promised to stop bothering him, he would give me some work. So, I started working on a minor scale, when I was around thirteen years old. And never stopped. Got more involved and I'd say, by the time I was 15, I was full time. When I'd get out of

school, I would come here, probably very late June or early July and not leave until it was time to go back to school.

H: (5:36) So, you started as a dude when you were 9 or 10 years old. At 13, you are still a dude but Frank has given you some chores. Then you become an employee, a wrangler, or were you a chore boy . . .

C: A wrangler. A wrangler.

H: A wrangler. Awesome! Did you do that during your college years or did you stop? When did you stop?

C: My first year of college I did. My second year of college, wife stepped up to the plate. That ended that. (Laughter)

H: All right. Awesome.

C: (Laughter) I had to make some money.

H: I understand. I understand.

C: My first job at The Ranch, which I distinctly remember at the age of 13, after Frank said to go up to the head wrangler at the time, and I can't remember his name,

H: Was it George Clover?

C: No. I think George Clover was in earlier years. But I can't remember his name.

H: Curley Temple?

C: I remember Curley. It might have been. It would have had to have been the 1962-63 era. I went to the head wrangler and said, "Frank said to start me working." I was very proud of it and the head wrangler said your first job is as a pilot. I looked at him and said, "Pilot?" I was, after all, 13 years old and I certainly don't know how to fly a plane. So, I said, "What exactly do I do?" And he said, "See that shovel in the corner?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "See that horse shit over there?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Take that shovel and pile that shit in the wagon." So that was my job as "a pilot." (Laughter) Shovel shit and pile it in the wagon. (Laughter) That is a true story. (Laughter)

H: That is beautiful. That is great. That is great. Well, let me backup a minute and start a new section here. Talk about what it was that brought your family out here? And if it was your mother's influence, let's talk a little bit about her.

C: Well, it was most definitely my mother's influence. My mother was, she was a great artist and a true lover of life.

C: (8:01) And I would say a very advanced woman for her day. Was a very independent, fiercely independent woman for her day. An only child from a German family.

H: And let's get her name.

C: Dorothy. Dorothy Cleary. Her maiden name was Dorothy Lieb. She went to Pratt. Graduated from Pratt Art School and practiced her passion which was truly art all her life. When she was in her early 20s, she worked in Glacier National Park in Montana and fell in love with the West. She would hitchhike all around the West when she had days off at Glacier National Park and without fear. And, she had always wanted to go back there.

As the family was getting older and my father was doing well enough to be able to afford some interesting vacations, she did a massive amount of research. Also, I would say 15 years earlier or maybe 10 years earlier, before I was born, she did come out to Colorado and went to a ranch. She enjoyed the experience. So, when her boys were older, she wanted to do something like this again.

She loved the mountains, loved the mountains. So, she did a tremendous amount of research and was fascinated with Yellowstone and Jackson Hole which she had seen when she was in Montana. And she wanted to come back to the area. She researched all the ranches extensively that were out here. And there were a few in that time frame. But there was something about The White Grass that she liked. It seemed when she called and talked with people, there was a noticeable difference in the reaction she would get from the various owners or managers. What she enjoyed the most was that The White Grass was very laid back, very casual and its location also had a lot to do with it but being right at the base of the Tetons.

H: When you say casual, so less rigid like according to schedule, like on this day you are going to do this, we are going to plan out your trip as opposed to just come and do . . .

C: You do whatever you want.

H: Ok.

C: That is what she wanted. She didn't need to have somebody to dictate to her the environment. And she was right. I think the only strict procedure that they had at White Grass is that when the meals were served, you better be ready to eat. Otherwise, you didn't eat . . .

H: The bells . . .

C: (11:03) I can't remember if it was 1, 2, 3 or 3, 2, 1. I think was the warning system and whenever the final bell was, if you weren't ready to sit down, don't bother showing up because you weren't going to get fed. I was with Frank once in the North pasture doing some irrigation work when the last bell rang, and he was more afraid than I was. (Laughter) That will be a Frank Galey story.

C: So, my mother signed up for this place and we came out here for two weeks. I'd say that was 1958. We took a train. We stopped in Chicago to visit a friend then continued our trip a day later to Rock Springs. But in 1958, if you wanted to get off at Rock Springs, you had to tell the conductor that you wanted to get off in Rock Springs. That your ticket said Rock Springs meant nothing. So, the train went barreling through Rock Springs and we informed the conductor that we had missed our stop. He said that there was nothing he could do. But we could get off at the next stop, which was Green River, which was literally a one-horse town. There was no paved road. There was a hotel, a general store and we got off the train. Literally hopped off the train late at night, our baggage dumped on the ground. And the train went on, we just stood there; I was 9 years old. I'm alone with my mother, who by the way stepped on a piece of glass in Chicago and can barely walk. We went to the hotel.

H: And your brothers are with you?

C: No. No. It was just my mother and I.

H: Just you two.

C: Yes, yes. And it was a fabulous train ride out. And since that point in time, I've always loved trains, train rides. Anyway, we finally got someone to answer the bell on the front desk. And we wanted to know if there was anyplace to eat. We got one word answers all across the board. Nope. Do you have a room? Yep. Can we have a room? Yep, and he gave us a key. We signed in. I don't know what it cost. In the room there was a double or a queen size bed with a light bulb hanging from a wire in the ceiling.

H: Oh god.

C: And that was it. A little sink, a wet sink and a pail of water.

H: Wow.

C: And a bathroom down the hallway. About 3:00 that morning, I awakened to the rumblings. I thought it was an earthquake with lights strobing through the windows. It was a freight train coming through. The hotel was literally no more than 50 feet from the tracks. And it seemed like a thousand cars long and they were only doing like 10 miles an hour just rumbling through, rumbling, rumbling through.

C: (14:15) We caught a bus the next day which brought us up to Jackson. A wrangler picked us up in Jackson late at night, drove us here which I felt was going to be the last car ride I was ever going to be in.

H: Because of the bumpy road.

C: Well, no, it was pitch black. The road was paved, up until we got to the ranch. But you know the Moose Wilson Road. It is a very windy, dark, very dark road and I believe it was raining a little bit. Of course, the wrangler knew the road and was going very fast. At that point in time, I did not realize that it was actually safer to drive at night than during the day because you could see the headlights of the cars coming. But I thought that was going to be it, the last car ride of my life. And I can still picture that I was going to die. I was frozen. I was scared stiff. We finally got there late at night.

They said no cabins were available but we do have a platform tent. So, they took us up to the platform tent and we got into it. Listened to the stream that ran by it all night long. I'm not sure if that stream is still there. If it has been moved or just allowed to dissipate. Because it was part of an irrigation system and the ranch water supply. So, we stayed there for a week. Then, we moved into one of the single cabins. I think I have a drawing of it that my mother made. We stayed a week. Well, that was it. I was sold and my mother, she was sold.



*Example of a platform tent. Photo courtesy of Judith Allyn Schmitt.*

H: So, I understand your mom's interest in the West, in the mountains, especially the Tetons. What about you? Were you a fan of cowboys? Were you a fanatic horse lover? What was it that sold you?

C: Well, I loved the beauty. I inherited some of my mother's artistic talents, but I don't exercise them. I have a wonderful love for the outdoors, I guess because I got here. I took one look around and that was it. I was sold. I was very athletic. I was a big kid, and I was tall very early. I took to riding immediately.

H: Had you ever ridden before you got to White Grass?

C: No, never.

H: So, you learned to ride here.

C: I learned how to ride here. It was just one of those things I had a natural feel for. I loved it and could not wait to get back which we did. But the next year, we came back for a month.

H: Wow. Who was 'the we'?

C: (17:07) My mother and I.

H: Ok. Where are the other two brothers?

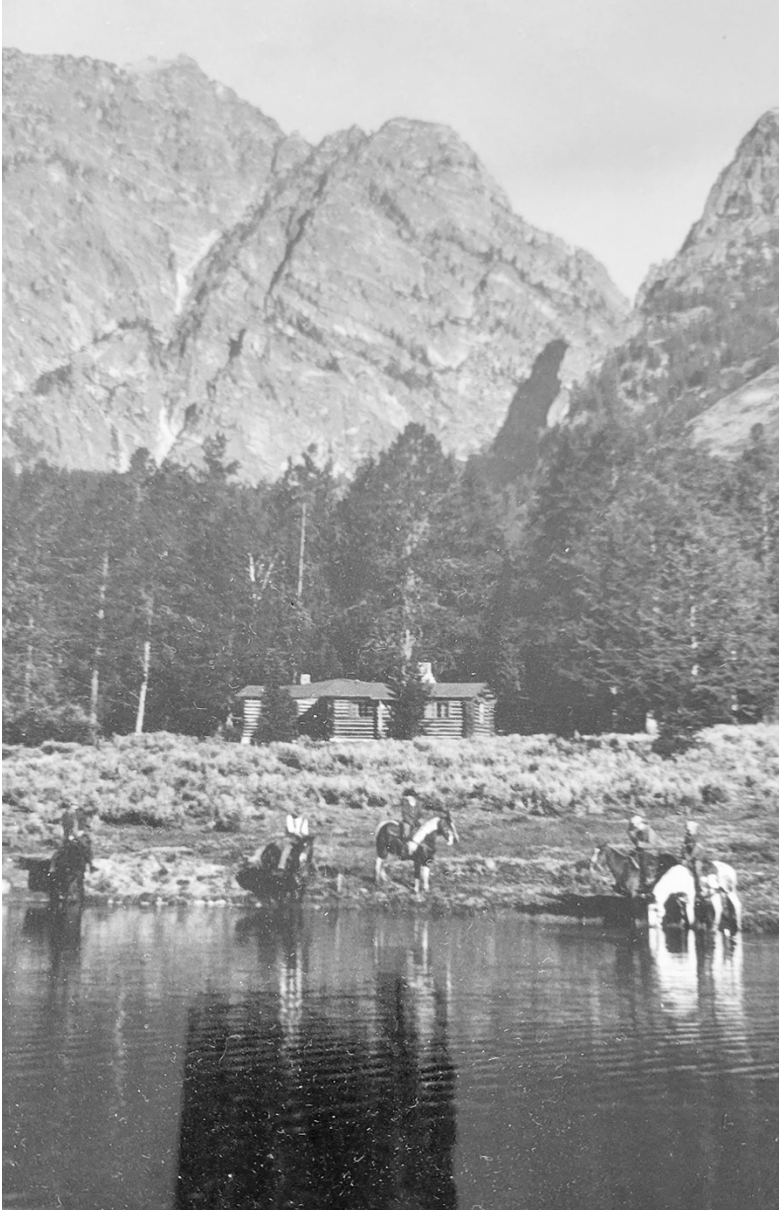
C: My other brother, the oldest, was 8 years older than I am. He was busy with other things. And, I think, he had just gotten married and was working and you know. And the middle brother, Mike, was involved. He did come out whether it was the next year or a couple of years later, not sure. Mike was a guest for one year then started working and worked for one or two years out here. Mike moved on and had other things, he couldn't do it in the summers. I was at the perfect age because I was in my teenage years.

H: Yeah, yeah. What about your dad? Did he ever come out?

C: Yes, yes. He would. The second year, I think he came out for a week and then we ended up getting in the larger cabins for 2-3 weeks. Then, I can't remember exactly when Frank and my father worked out a deal. There was a situation that Frank had a little financial glitch. I don't know whether it was the IRS or whatever it was. There was a financial issue that was problematic for Frank and my father negotiated a deal that we would have the Homestead Cabin which was on five acres, horses and tackle. That would be part of the deal until Frank settled up with my dad. If he were to sell the property, if he ever wanted to sell the property, my father wanted to have first right of refusal. So, he had the right to buy that separate piece of property.

H: Now, did that mean that you were in essence owners of that cabin?

C: In a way, yes. It was technically ours. I think that is why it became known as The Cleary Cabin. We would bring our stuff and leave everything in the cabin in big trunks. In one of the cabins, I believe it was three cabins put together to form one large cabin, there was a bunk bed but underneath it was a storage area and we would leave all our stuff, clothes and boots, etc. right there.



*Homestead/Cleary Cabin at White Grass with Lake Ingeborg in the foreground. Photo courtesy of Brian Cleary.*

H: When you weren't occupying the cabin, you would come in for a couple of weeks or a month, but then could Frank rent it out to other guests or was that your personal family's?

C: We came for the summer.

H: Ok you stayed the whole season.

C: Yes, my mother and I would stay the whole season. My father would come out for maybe a month. I would drive out here quite often with my mother. My mother, myself and our dog. I was not able to drive for many years so she would do the whole trip.



(20:19) With a car full of things, she would drive the whole way; she would drive 10 hours a day. We'd get a hotel, motel, whatever and then off we went.

H: So, let's finish with the Cleary Cabin and then come back. I want to talk about what it was like to be a kid here. What eventually happened to the cabin? This land was eventually deeded over to the National Park. So, what happened to your family's interest?

C: Well, first of all, one of the main things that happened was it burned down. There were squatters there in the wintertime.

H: What year did it burn?

C: I think it was the late 70s. Everything we had there was lost. There are still bits and pieces of the main cabin, I mean of the Homestead Cabin down there. I found some old porcelain pieces last time I was here. But some of the finite details of that, I'm not sure of. I do remember I asked Pop about it one time many, many years later and he said ya know Frank screwed me but what else was new. He had a long history and relationship, business relationship, with Frank Galey and Inga Galey.

H: I'll ask about that in a minute.

C: I don't really know the deep down, but I do know it was known as The Cleary Cabin and basically Pop had the first right of refusal on it. And, I think it was 5 acres and I think it was separate from the rest of White Grass. It was the homestead land. After the place burned down, that just sort of killed the whole thing. Then I think Frank made other arrangements in which like my father said, "Frank screwed me." But it was like Pop knew he was going to get screwed from the start. Dad got what he wanted out of it you know and probably wouldn't have bought it anyway. I later found a letter that my mother had written my father that she found some land in Wilson with cabins on it that she begged him to buy but he just didn't see the future in it with three boys living their lives in the east and working. They weren't going to be able to come out here.

H: Interesting

C: It was a piece of property. It was like 12-13 acres with two cabins on a stream, Fish Creek, that goes through Wilson. A great fishing stream and I think it was \$25,000.

H: (23:15) Oh my gosh.

C: So, you can add about 6 zeros to that right now. (Laughter)

H: That is right, that is exactly right.

C: So, we would, my mother would come out for the full summer and bring the dog. And I would come out with her most of the times.

H: When you were working as a wrangler, were you also living in your own cabin so you weren't with the wrangler boys?

C: Yes, I stayed there sometimes when it was convenient for me. (Laughter) Otherwise I stayed in BQ. There was actually a separate room on the side of the Cleary cabin. It had its own separate entrance where I could just come, go and sleep, and get some rest when I needed it because there were times when you just needed to get rest.



*Bachelor Quarters. Photo courtesy of Leonard Smith, circa 1978.*

H: Right, let me backup. I want to have a chronological flow. As a kid, dude here, describe some of the things you would do. Was there a typical day or a typical week? Why don't you give us an account of the things you would do as a child here.

C: Well, I was up early you know when we were in the cabin or the platform tents. The nights would get very, very cold. I learned relatively early that when you get undressed at night, you get undressed in your bed. You would leave your socks, pants and shirt in the bed because, otherwise you were putting on very cold clothing in the morning. It even got to the point where I'd keep the boots in bed because the nights would get very, very cold. We had the little potbelly stoves that we'd use the peat, which was a mixture of sawdust and kerosene. Throw in some logs, throw in some peat and a match, 5 minutes later, it was 80 degrees; 2 hours later, it was back to 30 degrees. You would try to stoke the stove for the night, gauge the airflow. Then get up in the morning and have a hearty breakfast. I remember I had a huge appetite and Leonard from Nevis was the chef. (Golden Rock, a resort owned by Frank and Inge Galey in Nevis, British West Indies.)

H: And who was Leonard?

C: Leonard was a native of Nevis, West Indies and he would come here and be the chef for the White Grass in the summers. He was the chef for the Golden Rock Estate/Hotel in the winter and for the rest of the time when Frank and Inga weren't there he would be there. Leonard and then Ralston started coming later as well, another one from Nevis who ended up working forever at White Grass, I mean at Golden Rock.

C: (26:06) So, you'd get up and go down for a hearty, hearty breakfast. Huge pancakes, scrambled eggs and everything.

H: Food was good.

C: Food was excellent. Excellent. I don't ever recall complaining about it. You know as a young teenage kid, I was just, just I ate it all. But your appetite, between the fresh air and all the exercise you were getting during the day, you didn't care. You just ate and you never wanted for more. It was plentiful. I would have a plate of pancakes, 2 or 3 the full size of the plate and an additional plate full of scrambled eggs. And, as I said, the dining room was a huge T shaped dining facility and you just sat down and everybody sat together.

H: Family style?

C: Very family style; it just worked. Then after breakfast, you would sign up for what you wanted to do. You know, day rides, lunch rides, and there was an opportunity to do either/or both. You could do a ride in the morning then come back, have lunch here then go for a ride in the afternoon or maybe do a lunch ride, go to Taggart, maybe go to Jenny or go to Phelps. We used to go down, down to Phelps and have lunch right at the lakeside.

H: (27:21) Were you scared going down that hill?

C: It was very steep and it was a switchback. I do recall it was very steep and the horses always picked the softest soil which is the outside of the trail. So that always made it a little more interesting. But fortunately, I didn't discover until what was my last year, out of nowhere, it just presented itself that I had a real acrophobia problem which must have just started. I remember the exact moment it happened, and I froze solid. Yes, it was an interesting ride down there. It was always one of the beginner trips. Phelps Lake was the first trip everybody took. It was a walk up and back and everybody would come back sore because it is rocky. You would be chafing the whole way.

Either my first or second year here, I learned the secret (to preventing chafing). Everybody would laugh at me when I'd tell them. For the first 3 or 4 days of the summer, I would ride all day long. I'd get out here, ride in the morning, ride in the afternoon and/or all day on a lunch trip. And that was 6 -7 days a week. Anyway, so you would ride all day long. One of the tricks I did learn - I'd bring out long underwear. I would wear long underwear for the first 3 or 4 days and then it didn't bother me. If I didn't wear long underwear, I would literally bleed from the chafing, from the rubbing.

Because the dungarees you wore were like cardboard, we used to put them in streams and beat them with rocks just to soften them up. Literally. I am serious. We just give them a rock bath, a scrubbing to try to soften the denim. We would typically ride a full day; I loved the riding. And, we would have gymkhanas on the weekend which is when the various ranches would get together to compete. And as a kid, I would always participate. And with each passing year, you know, I became a better, more confident rider.

On Sundays, you could ride in the morning, but you couldn't ride in the afternoon. The wranglers had a half day off. They didn't have to get up at 4:00 in the morning either. They'd get up at 7 and only had to work until noon; then it was playtime. We'd play polo in the afternoons. That started later. We would have a lot of fun with that.



*Polo at White Grass. (L to R), Frank Galey, Brian Cleary (back), Gene Rowh & Monty Bassett. Photo courtesy of Brian Cleary.*

Note: More historical photos of the gymkhanas and polo in the meadow can be seen at [www.whitegrass.org](http://www.whitegrass.org). See Collections/Events/Polo and Gymkhanas.

H: (29:16) Wow

H: And would you compete?

C: Oh yeah. Sure. Sure, as a dude, I competed in all the events (at the gymkhanas). You know, the sack races, and the barrel races, the pole bending.



*Playing Musical Chairs on a Horse During a Gymkhana. Photo Courtesy of Judith Allyn Schmitt.*

You know, all the different things they would have for all the kids to enjoy and have a lot of fun. And we did. We had a blast. Of course, you meet new friends every year. A lot of people were repeat so there were lifelong relationships that were starting to build. And then you would be meeting people from all over the country. As kids, it didn't take long before you all started being friendly. You did not have a lot of choice in the matter. We played horseshoes in front of the Main Cabin and had touch football games in front of the Main Cabin. I remember Jim Kinker was a huge fan of touch football and one of the best fishermen and outdoorsmen I ever met in my entire life.

H: He married Frank's daughter, Cindy.

C: Yes, he did. He did.

H: I met his kids, his 2 kids here a couple of days ago. And Cindy.

C: I can still picture Jim as vividly now as if it was then. Tremendous guy, tremendous guy. My father was a horrible fisherman. Couldn't catch a fish, literally if you put it in a barrel for him. But he loved to fish, loved fishing. The only time he would catch fish was when Jim would take him down the Snake and tell him exactly where to throw, you know, cast his line. Then, he would catch a fish.

C: (31:24) And we'd be the only raft on the river by the way.

H: Right, I think Jim and Frank or Frank and a man named Cookie might have pioneered the whole rafting the Snake.

C: Yeah, it was, it was, I remember the name Cookie. I remember, we would go down and Jim Kinker could smell wildlife. He had a sense of nature, that was just a sixth sense. He would point out more things to you that you would never, never ever have seen if it had not been for him. As I said, he would just tell you when and where to cast your line and you would catch a fish. We would do that trip all the time, maybe a couple of times during the year. As I was out here more, it would be more often.

When I started working full time, that was just part of the work that I would do. If it wasn't the riding equation or the maintenance side of the equation, it was like ok, Brian you go with Jim and take some dudes down the Snake. We'd catch fish, would pull the raft to the shoreline, start a fire, cook 'em, eat 'em, get back into the raft and continue on down the river. It was just second nature to Jim. He was like a kid in a candy store when it came to that stuff.

H: (32:45) Let me back up. Did you have a kid wrangler when you were young? Would all the kids or when you would do these rides, was it everybody, anybody who wanted to go? Talk, was there a separation between the ages?

C: Yep. There was a kid wrangler. The adults would go on their own rides. And, the kids would go on their own. Carol Wright was the kid wrangler for most of the period of time I was here. Carol and I got to be very, very close friends, along with Freddie (Herbel). As you know, they married. She unfortunately passed, cancer. They had 2 kids. But we were like brothers and sisters.

When I started working, Carol took care of the kids and she was perfect with them. She was like a school mom you know, but it was just on horseback. It was also much more relaxed back then. The better rider you were, the more relaxed they were about letting you go off on your own and especially if it were your third or fourth year here. You knew where you were going, you knew what you were doing. And if everybody was comfortable you know, if you want to go out, you go out. If you fell off your horse, if you lost your horse, yeah, you are in trouble. Don't come running to us. It's your problem, not ours. Yes, there was a kiddy wrangler. The kids would all go out and gather together. There were separate things they would do with the kids that made it fun and interesting for them.



*(L to R) Brian Cleary & his horse, Candy, Carol Wright Herbel and her kiddy wranglers. Photo courtesy of Brian Cleary.*

H: (34:17) Did you go on pack trips, overnights? Talk about those.

C: When I started working, I don't think I ever went on a pack trip as a dude. But when I started working, I did quite a few pack trips. We did some overnights over the Tetons down into Idaho - one or two day trips there. I did Gros Ventre, a 10-day trip in the Gros

Ventre and one-week trips into the Yellowstone Mountains. I did those a couple of times and did it with Frank a couple times.



*Preparing for a Pack Trip. Photo courtesy of Wood Family.*

H: What was that like? What was he like on a pack trip?

C: (34:54) He (Frank) was great. He had a bottle you know at night for the adults. And of course, you could not bring anything as I was a kid, I was a beer drinker. Of course, nobody was supposed to know that. You could have a warm six pack of beer and put it in one of the streams, literally have a one-minute conversation with somebody and come back and it was ice cold. Frank was great: he was relaxed. Sometimes it was a one-day trip to our destination. Sometimes it was a two-day trip to our destination. If it was a two-day trip, we would literally go in to set up a camp, set up teepee tents. We would just cut down small trees for the teepees while the wranglers would sleep under a lean-to. Our cushions would be our saddle blankets. We'd just stack them up and throw a sleeping bag on top of them. And a little tarp between some trees to keep water off us if it rained.

Continuation of interview with Brian Cleary. Transcribed by Julie Greene, January 2022.

C: (36:03) Frank was very knowledgeable. I remember on one pack trip, his dogs, Amber and Dootie; I can't remember if it was both dogs or one of them, but I had 3 pack horses and we were switch backing. Frank stopped and said where are the dogs? Frank was always armed, and I said, "Right down there". He looked at me and said that we were being followed, "Up there". About 30 or 40 yards up was a wolf. We only saw the one and he was definitely downwind from us. He had been following us for a while. Frank had spotted him. Frank was a great guy to be with, very informative and relaxed.

My take on him was a live and let live mentality. On one trip, we were up in the Yellowstone Mountains on a lake, maybe 9,000 feet. It was just one of those storybook settings. He woke me up and the sun was rising. We were up high. So, it was very early and there was a very low hanging cloud over this lake that we were on. It was beautiful

and there were meadows all around... storybook stuff and a Walt Disney type setting. He goes, "Listen," and I heard this sound off in the distance. He says do you hear that and watch and keep your eyes out over the lake. There was this cloud covering and under the cloud and just above the lake came two whooping cranes. This is in the mid 60s and Frank was dead silent; he told me what they were after they went by, God, they were magnificent and made the strangest sound, with wing spans beyond belief. I was watching and there was a moment of silence and Frank looked at me and said, "You're never going to see that again" because they were basically almost extinct in the 60s, he knew his stuff.

H: Let's talk a little bit about some of the personalities that were here. You have talked about Frank. Do you recall your first impressions of Frank and did those first impressions change over time as you grew up and as you became a wrangler here?

C: No, I don't think so. My first impressions and most lasting impressions is a guy who had a big tooth smile, very red face and walked tall in his cowboy boots and always seemed ready to laugh. As I look back, it is probably because he was drunk half the time. Inga, she was so typical German. You want to talk about standing tall, very buxom; nobody was afraid of Frank and everybody was afraid of Inga. Although Frank did not have much of a bark, I had a feeling that there was a hell of a bite. Whereas nobody was willing to cross Inga. As time went on, I ended up enjoying Inga more. She was just one tough German broad. If it wasn't for Inga, the place would have probably gone south, who knows.



*Frank and Inge Galey at White Grass. Photo Courtesy of the Galey Family.*

The head wrangler always seemed competent my years there and the wranglers were a very diverse group; some hardcore, such as myself, all got along for the most part.



There was an occasional drunken brawl and a few mishaps here and there but nothing of any...

H: (41:38) How about Rachel?

C: Rachel, just a character.

H: Describe her, from your kid perspective and then later on as a wrangler.

C: I don't remember her that much as a kid. She was an expeditor and made sure things were flowing. I guess I didn't recognize her because she was doing a hell of a job and I never had any reason to know as she was behind the scenes. She was part of the adult crowd and it was perfect for her.



*Frank and Inge Galey with Rachel Trahern (seated) preparing a supply list for a pack trip. Photo courtesy of the Galey Family.*

H: Even with her British accent?

C: Oh, it added character to the whole thing. It is almost as if she embellished it. The dudes that would come out were very eclectic and an interesting group, not many wallflowers. This ranch had a reputation in Jackson Hole as the place to be. And it was funny, the wranglers had a reputation as a very rough and tumble group.

H: Was that true?

C: I don't think any of them would have ever backed down from anything. I remember one time in town, one of the guests here, maybe in late teens around my age, when I was working full time. I was in town, dressed in normal garb that might have had something with White Grass on it; maybe my hat or jacket, but he was effeminate, long hair and very hippie looking. In the 60s and in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, you were in the wrong place because in the 60s, Jackson Hole was not this quaint little town. Half the roads weren't paved and as quoted, 'that last stronghold of cowboys in the West'. The dude walked out of the drugstore and 3 cowboys started giving him a ration of grief and I saw this

happening and I knew him because he was from White Grass. The hippie was a kid of one of the parents that were here. Obviously, they spotted a weakness, and they were just going after him. I just walked right up in the middle of it and said, "Hey, whatever his name was, how are things going; are you ready to go back to the ranch?" I remember one of the 3 saying, "He is a White Grasser, leave him alone". I didn't bother turning around asking about it. I never forgot that; it was interesting. When the wranglers would get into town, they had fun and a lot of mischief.

H: (45:27) Describe fun, what was typical fun for a wrangler?

C: Drinking too much and getting close to getting into a fight, partying at night with the dudes. That was normal operating procedures those days. It was second nature. I know the Pink Garter Saloon had a big statue of a dancer with a pink garter and a short little skirt on top of it ...they stole it off the top and brought it back. I think my brother was involved in that.

H: Back here to the ranch?

C: Oh yea, and by the way, it is still around. I know exactly where it is and I am not going to tell you. I found it during one of the reunions and it was still in BQ (Bachelors Quarters). I said, "Holy Cow", look at this!" I have a picture of my brother, who passed away 2 years later of leukemia, holding her outside the car. We found it many, many years later. She is still alive and well.

My brother fell off the horse once; he had gotten very drunk the night before, and he had taken this little old lady for a ride. It was up in the pockets behind the ranch area and he had fallen asleep in the saddle and a twig had gotten caught in his stirrup and poked the horse in his side. That spooked the horse a little bit and Mike went flopping into a pile of rocks.

He came back with his horse and we took him to the hospital and he had a fracture in his back. They put him in a body cast from his hip up to his arm pits. After the second day he was there, a bunch of guys would drive down there. The hospital was one level and off to the side was nothing but farmland behind it. They found out what room he was in. They go up and open the window, climb in and have some beers. Then they would climb out. After 2 or 3 times of that, Mike got tired of it so he joined them and they would go into town. They would use his cast as a drum. After a week of this, the doctor asked what had happened to his cast because it had been pulverized with the drumsticks. I guess it made a neat sound.

H: (48:22) You straddle a very interesting time period in the history of White Grass. In 1965, Frank and Inga divorced; Frank and Nona are a couple after that point. Talk about Nona.

C: I never had much interaction with Nona. I do know there was very a diverse - people either liked her or hated her. They felt that she was using Frank for his money but she would be in for a rude awakening. Who knows what goes on in people's personal lives. I

never felt it necessary to make judgment on other people's behaviors. It is like walk a mile in their shoes and after you have walked a mile in their shoes, you can say something about them because you now have a mile head start and they have to catch you barefoot. I never had an issue with Nona. I knew who she was - a divorce situation, the other woman situation. I don't know if it was Frank's fault, Nona's fault, Inga's fault, or all 3 of them. I really don't care because that was their problem or issue. They aren't the first people that have ever had that happen in their lives. As I said, Nona wasn't an issue for me. I got along with her and that is that.

I remember Inga far more strongly and, of course, I remember Frank as if it were yesterday.

H: (50:24) Was there a difference in the feeling at the ranch during the Inga era opposed to the Nona era? Was there a radical change or not?

C: I think there might have been. I think Nona tried to take a little more control of things and tried to change Frank, which is always a big mistake, especially with a guy like Frank Galey, don't bother. You may get a little bit for a little while but all you gonna get is for him to go back to his ways but twice as hard.



*Frank and Nona celebrating White Grass 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 1973. Photo courtesy of Perry Benson, Jr.*

I do feel that perhaps the environment did change a little bit... a little coarser but you have to remember that it was probably more so for the adults than my group (the wranglers), because we reported to Frank and the head wrangler. We all knew what we had to do. We were up at 4:30 am, you are in the saddle by 5 am, and you bring in the horses. If you don't bring them in, you have to go out and find them. You have your breakfast, saddle them up and some guys take people out for a ride and some guys ride fence, chop wood. Or, you work with some horses, shoeing, lots of maintenance, shoveling, the piloting.

There were a multitude of things we were busy with like taking dudes out for a ride or sneaking off grabbing a nap. At lunchtime, they (dudes) would come back and we would have to get their horses, loosen the cinches, put them in the little side corral if they were going out in the afternoon. If not, we would take the saddles off and put the everything away.

After lunch, we would get the horses ready again and some of us would take some people out for rides. I would take a lot of the teenagers out when I was in my late teens. I preferred to take the young girls out. That was always fun. The girls would immediately fall in love with the wranglers and we would have fun rides.

(52:52) And if they were decent riders, we could go for fun rides and there were a lot of great trails on all sides of the ranch, especially over on the other side, the east side, out on that ridge area before Moose. There are great trails there. You never ran into a hiker, you never ran into anybody. You could ride hard and a lot of the trails had some good downed trees for jumps. You could have some great rides, exhilarating.

H: How much did you get paid as a wrangler?

C: I think it was something like \$180/month and room and board. I got food. I ate up here all the time and never ate at the (Cleary) cabin.



*White Grass Barn and horses readied for the guests/dudes. Photo courtesy of Brain Cleary.*

There was no light at night while walking to the cabins and one time I walked right into the hindside of a horse. I never saw him until I literally stuck my face in his butt. Of course, when it is that dark, and there were bears here all the time, you would be concerned. Sometimes after work, we would go to the garbage dump and shoot bottles with my BB gun. A friend came to visit and stayed in a cabin with my parents. We would take the BB gun and a 6 pack and go down and shoot the bottle tops.

We wandered around and I had reloaded the BB gun and this big bear came lumbering between us and the car toward the dump. He came from the ranch side. I was handing the BB gun to Mike, and I looked over my shoulder and saw the bear. I said, "Holy shit, don't move!" He sees the bear, looked at me and handed me the BB gun and said for me not to move and he ran to the car. I went to the car and took a very large rock and hit the bear in the back of the head. He shook his head, looked to his left and looked to his right and then went right back to eating. I thought I was going to kill him. It was the best throw I ever made in my life! It never phased him.

(57:00) I remember Frank shot a bear right out of a tree. I remember a little girl from France named Coco. Frank shot the bear because it was the third time he had come back (to the ranch). Frank trapped him twice and took him 50 miles into Yellowstone and it seemed like the bear was back before the truck got back here. Obviously, it was closer to a week later and the bear was back. He was up in a tree in the corral area between Frank's house and the little corral area in front of the barn. Frank shot him out of the tree and dressed him right then and there. He gutted him and we had bear for dinner a few days later. Coco said that the bear had been eating snakes but it was his intestines. Everybody laughed. Today, Frank would probably have been arrested and thrown in jail.

H: (58:35) When you were working as a wrangler, did you have any interaction with the Park people?

C: Never.

H: What about the Rockefellers, whose ranch was just on the other side.

C: I personally had one interaction with them because one of their kids was having his 15th birthday and I was 15 or 16 and not old enough to drive at the time. They put out a cattle call for 15 and 16 year olds in the area so their son, who was having his birthday party, could have some company.

I fit the bill and somebody came and picked me up. I walked in ready to have a beer and they had soda pop. I was so out of place. I didn't grasp the true depth of what was going on but I do remember it was a beautiful cabin and some interesting kids and people. I remember some of the kids looked at me a little funny. My parents thought it was the funniest goddamn thing in the world. My mother and father would have been able to interact beautifully. My father had been dealing with radio and television personalities all his life. My mother was an extraordinary intellect and a woman who could converse with anybody. She was very engaging and both of my parents were very good looking. My mother was a "Lady's Home Journal" cover girl and my father was an actor and model in their younger years.

That was my interaction with the Rockefellers. Never had a problem with the Rockefellers and I know sometimes we would wrangle right up to their ranch.

Once I came upon a herd of elk and saw the Rockefeller fence about 100 yards away. Have you ever seen elk jump a fence? It is like watching something very beautiful go into slow motion. It is an incredible scene. I had about 20 deer in front of me so I wrangled them right in front of the fence so I could watch them jump. When they get to it, they stop and then go into slow motion. They defy gravity and literally go into slow motion. Then they come down and off they go. It is like watching a slow-motion movie and it suddenly goes into high speed. It was incredible.

I also tried to wrangle a moose through the ranch. I did a lot of smart things as a kid (sarcastic). I was on the east side riding around and spotted a huge bull moose. I knew the gate was open down at the bottom and I thought wouldn't this be neat to wrangle a big old bull moose. So, the moose picks up pace. He had a big rack on him and I couldn't figure out how he got through the trees. I kept trying to cut the angle on him and get ahead of him but he was too agile and fast. I could see his eyes and now he is 25 feet away and realized that it was not the smartest idea so I pulled off and went back to the ranch.

H: (1:05:01) Was the polo out here in the meadow?

C: No, it was down below. There was a man-made pond and below that pond was a fenced in arena, an arena and that is where we would play.

H: There is a picture in the main cabin of a bunch of guys dressed in white shirts with bandanas on their necks and they are holding the polo sticks. Monte Bassett and Frank Galey are 2 of the polo players.

C: I would like to see it because I played with them every year I was out there. My mother did the helmets. They were construction helmets, and she did the 2 cross mallets on the hoods and the White Grass emblem.



*Polo at White Grass. Photo Courtesy of Rachel Trahern, circa 1960.*

H: Would you play against the White Grass team or would you go..?

We would have our own little fun matches about twice a month. Polly Von(?) ranch, south of Jackson (Budweiser money related I think), had 2 polo fields and teams would come from Idaho and Montana. He had his own team and all would come for the weekend. There would be kegs of beer and tons of food. Then, we would come, the White Grassers, us with our western saddles, our horse's tails tied up with twine and our construction helmets. We held up pretty well and won as many as we lost. We had 130 head of horses at the ranch, and a lot of them were very capable as well as rough and tumble and weren't

afraid of contact. We weren't the prettiest team, but we were effective, and we could all ride.

After one match, one of the people from another team came up and said Brian, "Where are you in school?" I told him I was still in high school and had not decided where I was going to college. He wanted me to go to Cornell so I could be on their polo team, but I knew that was not my comfort zone and probably just a lot of talk and I wouldn't have my horse. We played competitively, and then we played for fun on our around here.

In the gymkhanas, it would be the dudes and wranglers (from other ranches) competing against each other. There would be parts where the wranglers would compete and then parts where the dudes would compete. Mostly it would be the dudes, but the local ranches all got along well. The cowboys and dudes got along well. The further you got away from the ranch though, the more competitive it seemed to get.

H: What about the notion of romance at the ranch? What about long-term romance and relationships that lasted and that were forged here?

C: (1:09:44): One in particular would be Freddie and Carol (Herbel). They had a beautiful relationship. Other than that, it was a summer fling. It could be a rotational basis too. It wasn't a sexfest or lovefest but mother nature takes over in that age group. It is the environment; you are in the most beautiful place in the world. You lay out in the grass and in an hour, and you don't understand what shooting stars are because in an hour, you will see a100. You are a mile above sea level and there is no ambient light. If you didn't have a moon out, it was ridiculous. On pack trips at 10,000 feet... you would have romance, flirtation too.

It was the 60s with different attitudes, adults as well as teenagers and the environment and the nature of it all. It was storybook stuff and everybody is in love with the old west. It is a romantic novel and you couldn't have found a better environment. Just look what you have here.

H: In a lot of the stories that you have told, the issue of alcohol has arisen. What role did it play and why the prevalence? Is it just part of the old west?

C: (1:12:55) The adults would party at night; poker games at night at the Galeys or parties here at the main cabin and the adults would have their adult drinks. The older teenagers would be drinking beer or gin and tonic; nothing different than what is done today. They were kids having fun on vacation. We are not talking about 12 or 13 years old but maybe 15 years old. The cowboys didn't drink during the day; we were too busy. But at 5 o'clock we would be up here, shower and clean up after work and then it was our time. We would party with the dude teenagers because they wanted to hang out with the cowboys.



*Campfire at White Grass. Photo courtesy of Brian Cleary.*

There wasn't much else to do. We had a record player, piano and a ping pong table.

These people are on vacation; the parents were doing their thing and the kids were doing their things. It was all vacation mentality. For us, it was a 2 and a half month long vacation after work because we had a revolving door of people coming in which was all new to them. That is why I would sometimes go to the cabin to sleep at night.

Most of the mornings I had to be up at 4:30 am except one morning you would have to be up at 4 am because you would have to go out and get the horses from the pasture and bring them to the corral for the wranglers to get. You finished at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and then maybe a beer and then dinner. After we showered and got cleaned up and finished with the barn - how the rest of the evening would unfold depended on what the adults and kids were doing, it would be a combination of things.

The older kids would hang out with cowboys and the younger ones would hang out here at the main cabin. We weren't corrupting these kids but you have to understand the mentality of the guests. They were on vacation and these are teenage kids that can now get away with murder so they are doing it. They have a week or 2 weeks where their parents are off having their fun and the parents seem to relax. We would have party time at the BQ (Bachelor Quarters) or here. Sometimes we would have parties down at the Cleary cabin. It was never out of control but like a Saturday night, more times than not it might be. Keep in mind it was vacation time and the 60s. We didn't do drugs but drinking more than normal. On a Saturday night, you drink more than you do on a normal Wednesday night. But here every night was a Saturday night because it was vacation time. I was in my late teens and did not have an issue with that but, at times, I would need to get some sleep.

H: (1:17:26) Were you an East Coast cowboy? You go home to the East to live and then you come back here for a couple of months; were you a cowboy?



C: I guess in the purest sense of the word, actually not. But where my heart and brain were, they were always here. These were the most formative years of my life; it developed my personality, my character and my basic underlying personality.

H: And White Grass was the central part of the formative years? Can you describe some of that influence? What characteristics?

C: When I was in the East, I was very competitive in sports. I don't know if it was from an insecurity standpoint where I had to prove myself. When I was here, there was no competitiveness. I wasn't competing with anyone or anything. I learned to ride and I became a very good rider. And responsibility, as I started working, I had responsibility put on me. No one was standing over me. Someone would hand me some fence, nails wire and a hammer and say take that horse because he needs some breaking in and go ride the fence along that pasture. You learned on your own. You were scared shitless because you thought you were going to get jumped by a bear any minute, especially when you are 15 years old. Every sound is a bear coming to get you. You get over that after a while but not totally. You learn a sense of independence and confidence. I can do this and I can do it well.

Pack trips are a huge responsibility. You are in the middle of nowhere. You have 10 people who you are responsible for. They also had this confidence that we actually knew what we are doing. Frank still didn't know what he was doing sometimes but he never cared. The guy was a bluffer all his life. He worked his way and paid for college playing gin.

From the time I was 11 to 20 years old, I was here for the summer months. The rest of the time, I was at school with friends and competing. But my heart and soul were here. I have a sensitivity towards beauty and nature. I would be on the side of the mountain and watch the sunrise. I would stop everything I was doing, wrap one leg over the saddle horn, light up a cigarette and watch the sunrise and the wildlife. You would be on one side of the canyon and on the other side you would see a big ole grizzly with a couple of cubs rambling down. You would see the elk, deer and moose in the forest. You would be riding along in the marshes and 10 feet away was a moose. We didn't even know until she raised her head and looked at you.

The horse I trained (Candy)... Frank told me if I broke him, I would own him. Nobody would ride him because he was uncontrollable. The next day I owned him. One day I took him out and I couldn't stop him. his bridle broke when I was trying to stop him.

When we got back to the ranch, Willie, who worked here at the time and who was an Indian, a Native American, gave me a Spanish spoon. It was a bit that the Indians would use and was rather brutal but effective. It had what looked like the end of a spoon extended from the nub/spindle in the middle of the bit; it also had very long shanks. I took Candy down to the arena with this bit in his mouth and worked him for a couple of hours, just walking him and getting him used to following commands. The new bit had certainly gotten his attention

I would run him right at a fence and pull up on him to stop. He had to stop one way or another. I wouldn't let him turn and the power of the bit was so severe and pressure on his jaws, he would comply. If he didn't stop, we both were going to run into the fence, and he didn't want to run into the fence any more than I did. After that day I never used that bridle again and made him his own hackamore that had no bit. He was a very smart horse and was fiercely competitive. He would never let another horse get alongside him or get in front of him without him picking up the pace. That was unfortunate because sometimes you would like to ride side by side with people at times.

(1:25:13) So, I would turn around in the saddle and sit and talk to people as we rode. The people let me know if I was going to get whacked with a branch. The horse and I had a tremendous relationship; it was almost like the Roy Rogers and Trigger thing. I would walk into the corral and the horse would lift his head. He knew my scent on something, I don't know what it was. I rode him everyday and people used to beg me to let them ride him. Occasionally, I would and they would come back disappointed and say he doesn't do anything. I guess it was just an amazing connection between us. I truly cared for that horse. It was my first major love affair.

When Candy and I would wrangle, we would have more fun doing things and I loved challenging him. The more he was challenged, the more fun he was having. When we played polo, it was like heaven for him. One time, I was in a race to get to a ball. We caught him (the other horse and rider) but Candy forgot everything we were supposed to be doing and kept going - he jumped the railing fence and we didn't stop for 50 yards. For him, it was a horse race and that was all he knew; he wasn't going to lose or stop.

He was very important to me and was waiting for me every summer when I came back out. We spent the summer together when I was a teenager. I had tremendous respect for the horse and it appeared that the horse had the same for me. I never abused him and kept him as healthy as could be; never over rode him but he was ready to go at a moment's notice. I had a lot of my mother's sensitivities and coming out here with her didn't hurt. I developed a lot of my personality here. (I am a very independent soul and am not a group person.)

H: Did you get a sense of family here at White Grass, as a dude, wrangler, owner due to the cabin situation (Cleary Cabin)? Was it a feeling of family or something different than that?

C: No, it was a feeling of family with certain people.

H: With the Galeys?

C: That was family friendship. We had a relationship with them down in Nevis as well.

H: (1:29:59) You went down to Goldenrock?

C: Yea, we ended up owning Goldenrock with 2 other people. There were 5 people, with my father leading the pack and Inga got it after the divorce. It dwindled down to 3 and we are no longer involved.



Brochure from Goldenrock courtesy of Rachel Trahern, circa 1970's.

I always loved Frank and came back here in the very early 80s with my soon to be ex-wife. We were in one of the cabins down the road and one morning Frank came by. He asked what we were doing. I said nothing much. He asked me to join him and I got in the truck. When I looked down, there was a bottle and glass with ice and it was full of gin. I went back and grabbed a 6 pack out of the stream and went back and got in the truck and we missed the 3<sup>rd</sup> bell (for lunch) but Frank wouldn't go in. He didn't want to take the heat because my wife was not happy with me and we had missed the last bell, which I could understand. Frank and I had a wonderful time for about 3 or 4 hours out in the meadows checking the irrigation ditches and flow gates, telling me stories and just looking up at the mountains. Frank was a great storyteller and he had a thousand of them and I bet they were all true.

H: About his own adventures?

C: Things that happened on the ranch, his own adventures and things that would happen to people at the ranch. People would go back to the cabins at night, the adults with half a load on, and walk up to their porch and literally start petting what they thought was a dog but it was a bear.

One of the dudes complained that the toilet seat was always cold in the morning so we got her a hide and cut a hole in it and wrapped it around so she could sit down. It was always cold in the morning, and I learned the value of keeping everything in your sleeping bag, especially if it rained.

We would sometimes misplace (laugh) horses on pack trips. To try to prevent that, we would stake a horse or shackle one horse and bell the others. This way we knew we would have one and could go get the others. On the Yellowstone trip, a bad storm came through and I got up and Frank knew where they (the horses) had to have gone. I rode for 3 or 4 hours in pouring rain, trying to find them with the fear that I had no idea where I was. I could have gotten lost in a flash. It was a sense that you are alone and in the wilderness but you have a job to do - to find the horses. I found them and got back and stood over the fire for an hour to dry out. It was all part of the experience. This place was more of a home for me than the east coast because during those years, I always seemed to be going to a different school.

H: (1:36:09) How did you feel when you learned that Frank died and how did you hear about it?

C: The story that was originally put out was that there was a fight at the ranch and Frank was involved in breaking it up and passed away a couple of days later. He lived 10-15 years longer than he was supposed to. They told him that if he didn't stop drinking and smoking, he would die in 6 months. He stopped smoking and drinking for 3 or 4 months and said that it was not worth it. So, he went back to drinking and smoking.

I don't know exactly what took him. I just remember people saying it was associated with a wrangler brawl on the ranch on the Fourth of July. It ended an era and he was a larger than life character. He was on borrowed time. I don't have an issue with that.

H: What about the demise of the ranch? Frank dies in 1985 and the Park people come in and tell the dudes and staff to leave because it was now a National Park property and then the cabins begin to sink into the earth. Did you ever come back in that time?

C: No, I thought it was a travesty and a horrible misjudgment but typical of people who don't understand what they are dealing with, because it wasn't an architectural building in the middle of a city that needed to be preserved. It was a segment of this country's history that was fundamentally important to its evolution and personality. This place started in 1913 by adventurers, artists and writers from Philadelphia. They would get in pissing matches about something they didn't like and then they would go and start their own ranch. That is how they all got started.

The West is probably our only identifiable historical mark that is so American. Nothing else is as American as the West and that is part of the romance of it. To let what happened happen (to the ranch) was a travesty and unfortunate but very typical of Frank. It wasn't handled by Frank, and it wasn't handled properly by the Parks Department. The restoration is great and neat but I think it is totally misguided.

H: How so?

C: What is the purpose of this? Are people going to come and vacation here? No. It is a museum that nobody will be allowed to go to and see how it functioned or worked. Where

is the pot belly stove? I can't see through any of the logs on the walls. Where is the bucket of peat, stack of wood and sawdust? We had cabin saws and axes and cut down trees. We split the firewood and cut down the closest dead tree. I still have my spurs from here. If you want to restore something to the 50s and 60s, when it was a dude ranch, restore it and make a historical dude ranch to what it was, not some modern version. It ought to be functioning, give me a break, so guys will come here to learn to build log cabins with paneling and baseboard heating for millionaires. That's all well and good but where is the history and the reminders of where it all came from. Hell, I still have my spurs from here with H Quarter Circle B branded on them.

H: For the National Park Service.

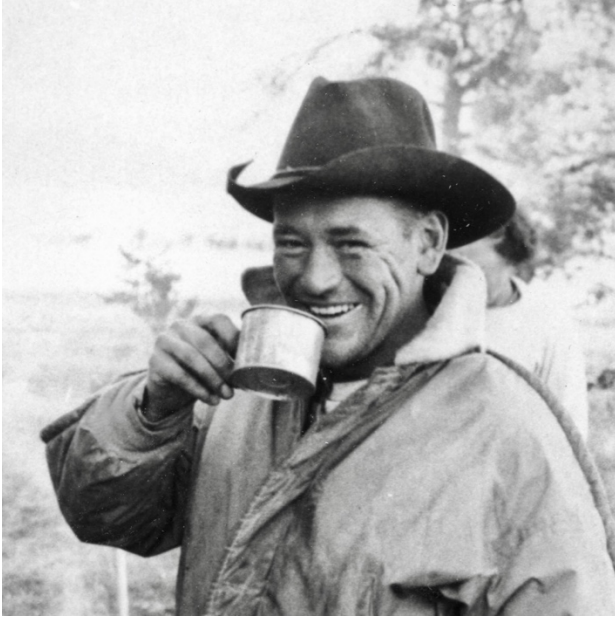
C: Yea, then they leave the NPS and who knows what they do. This is not a restoration but an exercise that has nothing to do with White Grass Ranch or dude ranches. It was probably the most famous dude ranch in Jackson. It had the best name, the most notorious name, infamous name. Frank was a larger than life individual. The wranglers that were here over decades were the hardcore. The early ones were the true cowboys. Then you had your eastern cowboys, your Brian Clearys, the Dave (?), who go to school in the east. I bet most would say this was one of the most formative parts of their lives.

H: We have heard that and it is a constant theme. Somebody in an earlier interview said that White Grass was a reflection of Frank Galey. How would you respond to that statement?

C: (1:44:31) I would say absolutely. Frank was footloose and fancy free. The dudes would come here and if they wanted to go out, they go out. I remember a bus load of people came in and wanted to ride. We saddled up 30 horses in 20 minutes and you knew it was going to be a disaster. We didn't ask them if they knew how to ride, we just let them go out into the corral. We made sure the stirrups were right, tightened the cinches, put the saddles on correctly.

But anybody who has been around a horse knows the horse blows up when you tighten up the cinch. So, he learns that when he expands and then relaxes, it is nice and loose. We lost 15 riders in 5 minutes, saddles coming back under horses. Nobody got hurt but a couple of bruises. It was relaxed and not so structured. People in the 60s took more responsibility for their own behavior.

Was Frank a partier - yes; was he an alcoholic - yes. Did he know what he was doing - most times, he did it and did it with flair. He stood tall and had square shoulders and walked with stature. He was a presence. Sometimes he was a drunken presence, but he handled it well. He never fell down, never slurred; he was a functioning drunk. Yes, he drank too much. Whatever happened at the ranch was 100% a reflection of Frank Galey and the people who worked here all reflected him. The dudes were also a part of that.



*Frank Gale, photo courtesy of Gale family.*

H: He had the Philadelphia connection, schooled in Europe, flew planes in the military.

C: You have to have supreme confidence to try things. Other than the early trappers, the Frenchmen, it was the people from Philadelphia that started Jackson Hole.

H: I thought this was a profound moment when I was filling out this form and you are from Connecticut and my wife said that you were a long way from home. You said No, Connecticut is a long way from home. Can you comment on that?

C: Well, as I said, they were the most formative years of my life with all the happenings, experiences. It was my most meaningful 12 years. That is all. It was home, body and soul. My kids know the stories and love them. We would have a sit-down dinner and we couldn't finish without them hearing a White Grass story. One of my daughters ended up living out here for 5 years. Tracy traveled after college and went through Jackson on her way to the coast and fell in love with it. She is an outdoorsy type of person and actually climbed the Grand. She came back and lived out here for 5 years and met her husband out here. He is also from the same hometown as my wife in Massachusetts.

This was a fabulous time of my life and it sort of molded me. When I was back east to go to school, I bounced around somewhat, from public to private schools and developed few lasting relationships. White Grass was reliable, always the same and I developed some strong and lasting friendships. When I worked in NYC, I would say the skyscrapers were my Tetons but this was home to me. I am like a little kid when I get out here. It was probably the most relaxing time of my life. I cherished the quiet time I would have when wrangling or just riding or doing simple chores. There was no pressure or pain, no anxiety, no worries, no issues. You don't get many periods of life like that, really, think about it. It was remarkable. I sincerely believe my Mother felt the same way. You could see it in her artwork.

H: Listen Brian, thank you so much for coming in.