

White Grass Heritage Project “Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEES: William ‘Biv’ Balderston IV (B) (William Balderston’s grandson),
Ann Balderston (A) (Biv’s wife)

INTERVIEWER: Roger Butterbaugh (R), Coordinator, White Grass
Heritage Project

LOCATION: Sky Ranch, Moose, Wyoming

DATE: July 14, 2019

Transcribed by Julie Greene in 2021

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

R: (0:46) We are here on the porch of Sky Ranch and we are here to talk about several things, including how it was Mr. William Balderston and Frank Galey, owner of the White Grass Ranch came to know each other and arrange the sale of about 17 acres from White Grass to Mr. Balderston.

A: About 13 acres is more accurate.

R: And, the buildings that ensued and the generations that came to Sky Ranch. Biv, share a little history about your grandfather. You shared earlier that he had a lifelong passion to return to Jackson Hole, particularly after he retired.

B: My grandfather (known to his grandchildren as “Big Dad”) was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. In high school and early college years, he came from Boise to the Jackson to work on the Jackson Lake Enlargement Project. That was the dam project to enhance the irrigation capacity of Jackson Lake. It was during that time that he toured around the valley and fell in love with it, the people, and what the valley had to offer. He went on to college, married and started a family.

Note: At the end of this interview, William Balderston describes his time working on the Enlargement Project (1913-15), his return to Jackson Hole 30 years later and purchasing land from Frank Galey’s White Grass Ranch for Sky Ranch.

He later worked for the Philco Corporation and retired from there as Chairman and President of the Board. During his lifetime and his marriage to my grandmother (Susan, aka Muffy), he always said he wanted to return to the Valley. My grandmother always



William and Susan 'Muffy' Balderston.

referred to it as his “dream in the sky”. This is how the ranch ultimately got its name; it was his dream in the sky or Sky Ranch.

B: (2:48) In the late 1940's, the family (my grandparents and their children) came to the Valley to stay with Frank Galey at the White Grass Ranch as dudes. They were scouting around looking for property to purchase to create their family compound. I believe they spent several summers there and during that time my grandparents looked at various land to purchase and then narrowed it down to a couple of pieces that he was seriously considering.

He talked to Frank about the options and Frank said he would sell him some land on the northern part of his ranch. It was during one of the famous White Grass cocktail parties that they left and went to the corral. They saddled up a couple of horses and rode up here. They paced off about 13 acres, shook hands on horseback and that was how it started.

After that my grandfather hired architect John Bower, from Philadelphia, to construct and design the cabins. There was initially going to be the Grand, the main cabin; the Aunt Hill, which would be the cabin south of the Grand (which was constructed for my great aunts, his sisters) and then Ray and Anna's cabin, which included a tool shed on its north end. Those were the first of the 3 cabins that were constructed. Ray and Anna Braitinger worked for my grandparents in Philadelphia and would drive out West in the spring. They did all the cooking and many chores. They lived in that small cabin that we call Ray and Anna's cabin.



Sky Ranch, Grand Cabin.

Kranenberg Construction was selected to build the cabins. My grandfather hired Frank Galey to oversee the construction and to be his local eyes and ears when he was in Philadelphia. I have a couple of letters to and from Frank about the status of the cabins. The cabins were completed in 1952 and family members started coming out. That was the year I was born so I probably started coming out in 1953-54 and just about every year since then. My father had a brother and 2 sisters, who have since passed, and each had their own family members. The demands on the ranch got rather large if everyone wanted to come in for the summer. It really was a seasonal dwelling and at one point, it got so big, he built what we call "Sky Bunk", which is the prefab cabin north of the Grand (the main cabin). That provided the extra housing capacity.

A: It had three bedrooms, kitchen, living and dining room. We could sleep 22 people here (at the ranch) at one time.

R: Would you have that many sometimes.

A: It would often be pretty full.

B: My grandparents loved the Valley and would come out in late May and stay until early October. They would go back to Philadelphia or start a trip and travel from there.

R: So, he and his wife would come out and then family come and go throughout the summer.

B: (7:09) My grandparents and usually my grandfather's sisters would be here for most of each summer. My Aunts & Uncles and cousins could all visit each summer but as

more generations came, it got harder for the entire family to visit. So, they broke the summers up. One summer, my father and one of his sisters and all their children would be able to visit and the next summer my father's brother and other sister and their families would visit.

A: After your grandparents passed, that schedule continued. It might be interesting for you to talk about the horses.

B: My grandfather had 4 to 5 horses. He leased the property just to the south from White Grass to pasture his horses. As children, we would turn the horses out every night and bring them in every morning. They always were ready to come in for their oats and we'd get ready for a ride. We rode all over the place.

As teenagers, it was a spectacular experience. My grandfather was an avid photographer and as a result documented our family history in his photograph albums. My grandfather's extensive movie films were all converted to VHS tape and shared with the family members. He also maintained what was referred to as the Sky Ranch Diary. After breakfast, he would spend time in his office where he would dictate the events of the day before; the temperature, the weather; what family members were visiting; what they did; fishing trips, what parties they went to; and who was over for dinner. These dictation tapes were sent to his secretary in Philadelphia to be transcribed and distributed to the family. It was a great way of keeping up to date on family events and activities.

A: He arranged pack trips for the families.

Note: Samples of William Balderston's 'Sky Ranch Diaries' which includes descriptions of Sky Ranch pack trips is available at www.whitegrass.org under Collections/Documents/History.

B: Yes, I recall quite a few pack trips that we went on with Frank Galey guiding us. We also had a rubber raft and a flat bottom skiff we used to float the Snake and a power boat to go up on Jackson, Lewis and Yellowstone Lakes. All the things were here for family enjoyment. It was wonderful.

A: (10:07) I think it is important to also talk about Muffy (Susan Balderston), your grandmother, who seemed like a lovely lady – talk about her gardening,

B: She had wonderful gardens back East in Philadelphia but with Wyoming being much more rustic, she had a trail that was referred to as the "Flower Trail". It went up towards the Trail Ranch to the north. She would pick flowers and put them in a galvanized pail for the night. The next day she would arrange the wildflowers and towards the fall, she would collect seeds. She would sprinkle the seeds out in front of the Grand (the main cabin). My grandfather devised an underground piping system for irrigation which was all run off from this little pond. He was able to keep the flowers and the lawn well-watered thru out the entire summer season.

A: It was also used for fire protection. He had a whole plan.

B: He had a big pump just to the west of the tool shed. That worked off about 2,500 gallons cistern, up the hill towards the mountains. The pond which is maybe a thousand gallons could also be used for fire protection as well.

A: The pond was called Bee Wee Pond. His sister couldn't pronounce Billy but instead said "Bee Wee" and the small creek that feeds the pond became known as Bee Wee Creek.

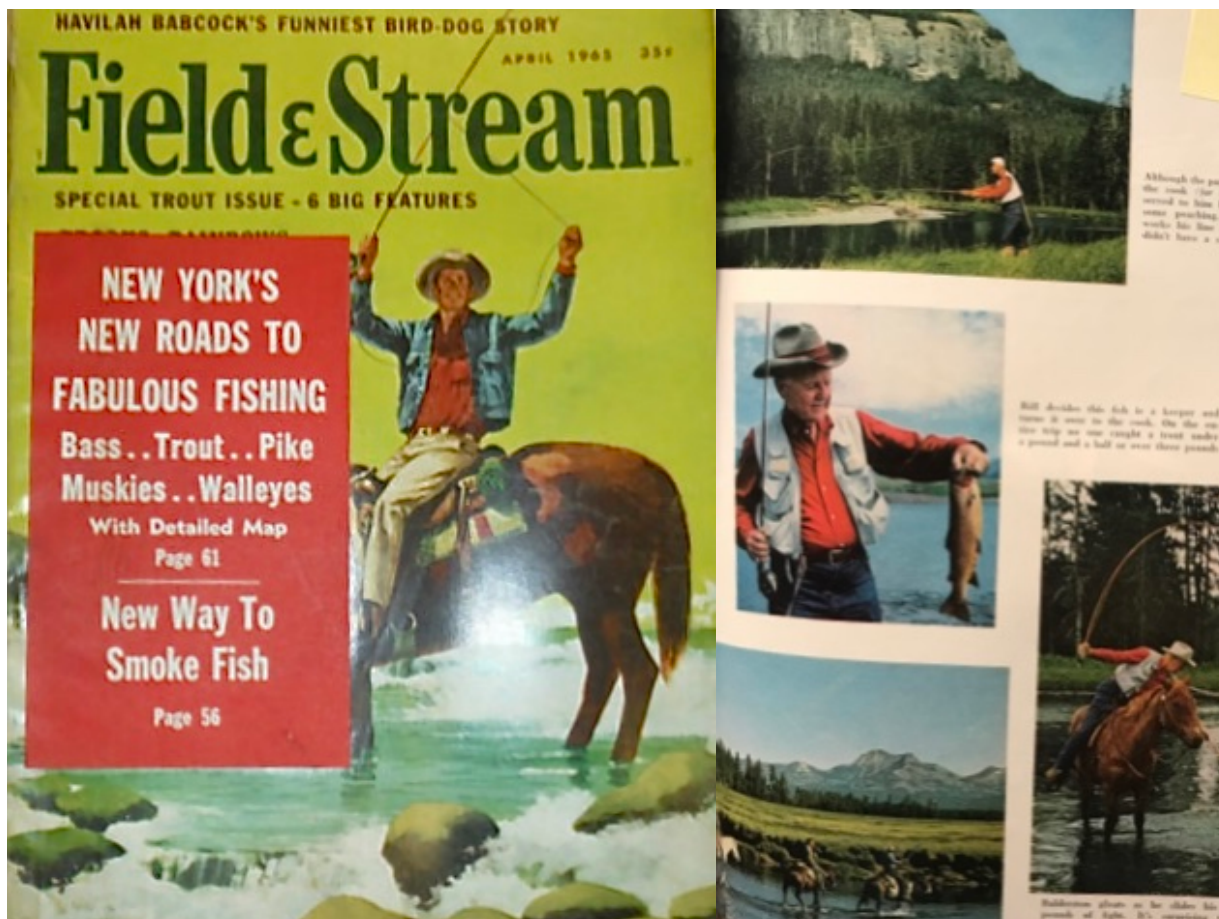
R: I understand that the pond was once a casting pond or used for practicing casting one's flyrod.

B: He was an avid fisherman, and he would use the pond to teach us how to cast or for practicing or testing out a new flyrod.

A: He was actually on the cover of *Field and Stream*. He was mounted on his horse, netting a cutthroat in the Yellowstone River. I found a copy from a magazine trader about 25 years ago to give to Biv for his birthday.

R: How did he come to be on the cover? Was he connected to *Field and Stream* or was it just happen chance.

B: Not really sure how that connection was made. The actual picture of him netting this cutthroat is in the magazine story and on the front cover is an artist rendition of the photograph. I think when you have a picture like that, one in a million, and you start talking about it, all of sudden *Field and Stream* is calling and saying we have some space and we would like to write an article about you. It was pretty special.



Field and Stream Magazine featuring William Balderston fly fishing.

R: (13:56) You mentioned that there are journals but also a study done about Sky Ranch done by folks at the University of Wyoming.

B: The University of Wyoming Study was done by Mary Humstone about a year before the Park took control of Sky Ranch. Mary came in to do a study to document the historical significance of Sky Ranch. It includes a lot of the history and is about 75 pages including pictures, background and maps etc.

R: As we assemble all those materials, we will have a package about Sky Ranch.

Note: Mary Humstone's report, e.g., Cultural Landscape Report (including historical significance of Sky Ranch) and other related documents can be seen at www.whitegrass.org under Collection/Documents/History.

A: (14:58) I think you have guest books. It is my understanding that your grandparents used to give a lot of cocktail parties for their friends in the Valley. You would see people like the Muries, Galeys, Dornans, Craigheads, Clovers, Buchenroths, the Betty's,

Hartgraves and a lot of the old-time names. Our daughter works in the Living Center as a nurse in Jackson and has run into many people who had come to some cocktail parties at Sky Ranch. These folks would recognize the necklace with the Sky Ranch Brand that our daughter wear. All our girls have one of the necklaces and Biv and our son John have money clips with the brand on them. (See photo of the Biv's money clip with the Sky Ranch Brand below.)



Sky Ranch Brand.

R: What was the interaction between Sky Ranch and White Grass when you, your family and grandparents were here?

B: We were separate but there was frequent overlap. Frank dug a lake for his wife, Lake Ingeborg – maybe a two-acre lake, and we would go over there to swim and sunbathe. There was also a large contingency of Philadelphians that would come to the Valley to vacation. Frank was from Philadelphia so a lot of my grandparents' friends would be here at dude ranches and there would be an opportunity to get together. We would get together for cocktail parties, cookouts, or the Galey's would come here for dinner.

A: How often did that happen?

B: It is hard to say how often these took place because I would be here for a 2-3 week vacation with my parents. But over the course of the summer, it would be numerous times with my grandparents. Frank did look after Sky Ranch when my grandparents weren't here. There was a close friendship there through the years.

R: Going back into the history of White Grass there was that Philadelphia connection – your grandfather connected to Harold Hammond, who homesteaded half of White Grass and ran the horses on the Jackson Lake Enlargement Project that your

grandfather worked on. Harold was a cowboy from Idaho. When he left the Enlargement Project, he went to Bar B C ...

B: Maggie Corse was another Philadelphian who operated the Bar B C.

R: The other half of that homesteading group was Tucker Bispham from Philadelphia. His father was a prominent person there and Tucker was a Rhodes Scholar and Harold met Tucker at the Bar B C. That is how their connection started and they came out to White Grass together.

B: Ted Hartgrave was at White Grass and he did a lot of work at Sky Ranch. He built the pond, barn, the corral and he shoveled the roof in the winter. We have Ted's diagram of the plumbing here at Sky Ranch and it is very interesting to see how things changed over the years as additions were made.

A: We met someone who helped shovel the roof. Moosey, who lives in the Senior Living Center now, said she use to go to Sky Ranch and help shovel the roof in the winter. She recognized our daughter's Sky Brand necklace and remembered Sky Ranch. She is a tough, sweet lady. Her name is Moosey because she used to live in Moose.

R: In 1984, you and Ann got married. Had you been West before?

A: I had been to Idaho to Sun Valley and Haley, Idaho. Soon after I got pregnant, Biv said we were going out to Wyoming. Biv explained he had been coming out here for years and he wanted to share it with me. We came out in August 1985. We have continued coming out ever since. Our time out here was different because we didn't have Ray & Anna to help. We decided we wanted to have some time to ourselves so we would open the Ranch up in the early summer before family members would visit. It would be just for the 5 of us and we would be out here for 3 weeks. Then the 2 of us would come back in the fall. Our time here was nature oriented. We had family, horses and watched the elk in the meadow. A place like this gives people a firm appreciation of nature and respect for it. We had no tv or radio. No phones were allowed.

B: (25:12) It is a special place for our kids. Our daughter, Sarah, is working at St John's Living Center in Jackson and Maggie has been a wrangler at R Lazy S for years. Our son, John, who lives in New York City, is out every summer.

A: It allowed us to bring other people here and expose them to the West and a way of family life that they had never experienced before. Being on horseback and riding through an elk nursery is an experience that most people never will have.

B: There are a couple of families that we invited out here, including our niece who have fallen in love with the Valley and now live here. Our niece, her husband and son live in Alpine, WY.

A: Maggie's life is teaching kids the value of nature it is a life-long lesson.

R: (27:10) What was it that you wanted your family to experience here in this environment?

B: When I come out here from upstate New York, it is so open, you can breathe the air; it is so majestic. It is magnificent for the kids in our family to experience that. There are enough distractions in life – cell phones and electronic games and emails and text messages. Here you get off the radar screen. There wasn't cell phone coverage here (for many years).

A: It was built into your family, and it was a patriarchal focus. Your grandparents wanted to provide this for your family. Your grandparents wanted it to be a gathering place for the family. For our family, we wanted it to be our own place to gather and we wanted shared traditions, for them to come back to. One of our traditions was we saddled the horses, packed up some peanut butter sandwiches and went over to a creek at White Grass with aluminum pie plates that we had put holes in so the kids could "pan for gold".

B: And, every once in a while someone would find some "fools gold."

A: The kids learned responsibility and independence. They weren't going to the mall. I will never forget Maggie being on a horse down in the meadow where there was a herd of elk that she and her horse were in the middle of. All the elk were just grazing and then started to move on. We got a video of the elk and Maggie galloping with her thru the White Grass meadow. Another time, we were riding thru the Trail Ranch meadow, walking our horses thru an elk nursery and a newborn baby elk started to follow Maggie's horse. The elk mother was not pleased and eventually the baby turned back and returned to her mother.

B: Later, we are back in Rochester and wanted to do something as a family. We drove to the Syracuse Zoo, which has a North American theme. There is an elevated walkway, and you would look down at the elk, wolves, coyotes and moose. We recalled seeing a father telling his son that some people never see the elk in their entire life. It made our kids realize how lucky they are.

R: How has the Ranch impacted their lives as adults.

B: I see that in how they are living their lives. Sarah and Maggie have chosen to live here because they love it – the hiking, skiing, the outdoor life and the community. They like the history that they are connected to. It makes them proud to know they grew up coming here.

A: So many people that live in the Valley now are recent transplants, but our kids can say that they grew up here. “Do you know where White Grass is, our ranch was next to it”. For our daughter, Sarah, she loves being a geriatric nurse. She was encouraged to be an OB nurse in nursing school. It is such a happy place to be and an honor to see people come into this world. But her response then and now is that “for me it is an honor to be with people when they are leaving this world”. And she says, “I love their stories”. She is meeting all these wonderful people – her head is like a history book full of facts. So being here has been a huge impact on her career and sharing her love of this Valley at the end of their lives. They are so pleased to be respected.

Maggie with kids that come to the R Lazy S Ranch – I used to love watching her with the kids because she was teaching them about respect and about quiet and about boundaries. You are on this horse and this is how you behave. You are respectful of the horse – this is what you say and don’t say. She instilled a lot more than just love of nature. Good solid values.

For John (Biv and Ann’s son), this is the most special place on the earth for him.

R: Your grandfather’s original vision continues.

A: Various members of the family have taken it to different levels. Some left but our family took it to heart when Sky Ranch was taken over by the Park, it was heart breaking. We were the last family members to inhabit the cabins at Sky Ranch. We surprised our kids and we brought them out for one last visit before removing all the furniture and closing the Ranch up for the last time. It was heart breaking.

B: When we locked the door and drove down the road, it wasn't just hard, it was gut wrenching. We had tried to extend our lease with the Park but we were unsuccessful in our many attempts.

A: Our family has stayed connected and our girls now live here. The loss of Sky Ranch has affected different family members in different ways. We continue to vacation each summer here and eventually hope to own our own Sky Ranch someday.

R: (38:21) Talk about the transfer of the ranch to the Park.

A: End of October 2005.

B: Before my grandfather died, he realized his family was growing too large for Sky Ranch and the Park was acquiring "inholding properties". They were putting a lot of pressure on my grandfather and there were conversations and correspondence, in essence, threatening eminent domain. Be that as it may, it was my grandfather's awareness that he had a family that was continuing to grow and outpacing the capacity of this property and for estate planning purposes, he decided it would be best to sell to the Park. As part of the deal he made with the Park, my grandfather included a 25 year lease after his death. Overall, I believe that we had a good history and overall relationship with the Park. When my grandfather died, my father took over the managerial part of Sky Ranch – scheduling family, maintenance of the property. This included putting on a new roof, replacing the buck rail fencing around the property, etc. We also needed a new car, which was purchased in 1985. Ann & I purchased the 1985 Chevy Suburban called the "Sky Bus" in 2005 after the Park acquired Sky Ranch. We are still using it today.

A: The transition was difficult because we thought we would be able to extend it and had an outline of a workable deal underway when there was a change in superintendents. The new superintendent was not interested in furthering any discussions to extend our occupancy. We met and spoke to Senator Craig Thomas and were told that it was the superintendent's park and that superintendents have lots of control over their Parks, which was unfortunate. A former ranger told us that the new superintendent did not like our family and wanted us out of there. After we departed, we heard that the superintendent said in a meeting that we're going to burn that place down. I think they did not like that that we wouldn't accept "no" and tried appealing to another arm of the government.

B: I have a cousin who was a Congressman and he had made inquiries in Washington in an attempt to get some traction for continuing discussions.

A: I don't know if you ever met Addie Donon. She was very much involved in the Park Foundation. I happened to meet her as I was waiting to meet the late Senator Thomas at the opening of the new Visitor's Center, now dedicated in his name. Addie introduced herself and we got to talking. Addie was familiar with the Balderstons and Sky Ranch. I told her we were talking to him and trying to extend our lease and stay longer. She said I'm on the Park Foundation and I will help. She started going great guns and then the next thing I knew she called and said she talked to the superintendent and she said it breaks her heart that the Balderstons are going to have to leave but she can't do anything about it. I told Addie thank you very much for your help and that was the end of that. After we left Sky Ranch, there were some very nice Park employees, who wanted to find out more about the maintenance and shoveling the roof at Sky Ranch. We had shared with them what we had been told by Addie and others. They were upset and told us the superintendent would not want us to extend the lease under any circumstances. These Park employees took a lot of pride in Sky Ranch were very respectful. They understood what it meant to our family and made the transition much easier.

(45:05) One Park employee called me the crier (one who cries) because I cried whenever we talked about Sky Ranch.

R: I think he said, "I saw her once and she didn't cry." (Laughter) He said that lovingly, you know he did.

A: Ultimately, I did get better when we got talking (about Sky Ranch) and I see him and say, "See, I'm not crying." He was wonderful. These individuals with the Park have been looking out for the buildings and have the same appreciation for the property as we do. When the kitchen chimney fell down the first year after we left, he said he was so sorry and embarrassed. More kindness. That has made the transition much easier. Even though, we no longer own it, we can still come up and feel like we just pulled in the parking spot, then sit on the porch and enjoy the view.

B: Like coming up today, we pulled in like we always had over the years. It was like we were coming home and the memories will always be there.

A: The Park was nice this year and they called and said they were not planning to tear down the Ranch – there had been conversation about that. David (Vela, former Park

superintendent) said it was not in the budget (to tear it down) so we are going to moth ball it. So, a woman called and said it looks like Sky Ranch is going to be okay for a while. And I said, so okay until the next administration comes in and she said you just never know what is going to happen. And so, as we said all along to the kids, if it is here, it is wonderful and we can come and sit on the porch, read a book and enjoy the sunshine. If it is not here, the land is still here, and we can still enjoy the views and our memories. After the rather contentious lead up to our leaving, because of the Park maintenance staff and because of you, we felt as if there was some respect for the loss we had experienced. It has made a big difference.

R: Experiencing grief and loss is a multifaceted process and it would seem to me that what you are saying is that you have been through lots of those steps and almost reached a point that if it goes away, I've still got it.

A: That is the important thing.

B: If the buildings were gone and all the foundations were just eradicated and the sage brush back, we could still come here and look at the mountains and the memories are still there.

R: (48:17) So what would grandfather be saying if he were here today knowing all that has gone on, I'm trying to ask, what would be his message.

B: He went to great lengths not to disrupt the landscape with this building here. It is not like so many of the newly build properties in the Valley, it is a comfortable cabin with a spectacular view. He would probably want to see it go back to nature.

A: I never want to see Muffy (Biv's grandmother) left out because she was very much involved in setting the tone here. It is funny because everyone settles in on Big Dad (grandfather) but I know that she was a lovely woman who completely supported her husband's desire to be here. It was Biv's grandfather's "dream in the sky" (hence Sky Ranch) to be here but she loved it. I think you are right, he would be proud of what he provided to the family and she would be pleased her family was enjoying this place. I got the sense that she just wanted people to be comfortable.

B: They started a legacy.

R: Other things you need to say?

B: Looking over here it says it all (the vista). Mary Humstone's work will provide the factual parts of Sky Ranch history and the diaries that we will share with you will provide the fiber of the family involvement, the togetherness, the friends we have made in the Valley and the friends we have brought to the Valley and the experiences they had had. It has been a wonderful treat.

A: I think it also shows the generational differences just from a cultural standpoint. To think about your grandparents coming here with a butler and cook. Children were not expected to be around for cocktail hour. There was a certain way you behaved.

Upon arriving, kids were outfitted with cowboy hats and boots. There was a separate adults and children's table for dinner. Which is a pretty cultural thing. With your parents, it was less that way because your father wanted to be spitting watermelon seeds with the kids. And now, our generation was even more casual and informal. Just great memories. We have quite a few pieces of the original furniture from Sky Ranch that we moved back to our home in Rochester New York, including the portrait of Biv's grandfather that hung over the fireplace here at Sky Ranch. The portrait hangs in our home in Rochester.

I will say this quickly, when we last drove the kids out of here, it was the worst days of our lives. It was hard for us but watching the kids, it was horrible for them. I've never seen them cry like that.

R: How old were the children?

A: John was 13. He was sobbing and the girls were crying but he was just sobbing.

R: Anything else you wish to say.

A: Can't think of anything.

B: I've sure there are more memories to share.

R: An interview like this is just a snapshot and you have done a wonderful job of sharing facts and we could talk hours and hours more about that but you also shared the heart of this place in your lives. I am so pleased your children have had this experience. And, I think you deserve credit for providing them the grounding that they obviously carry with them. Can you call it Sky Ranch Grounding? Laughter. Thank you so very much.

A: You are very easy to chat with, you are a very kind soul.

R: Thank you. That is very kind of you to say that.



William Balderston



Susan 'Muffy' Balderson

Note: For more about Sky Ranch see, <https://jacksonholehistory.org/sky-ranch/> for photos and article by Samatha Ford, Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.

Attachment 1 Below: William Balderston describes his time working on the Jackson Lake Enlargement Project (1913-15), his return to Jackson Hole 33 years later and purchasing land from Frank Galey's White Grass Ranch for Sky Ranch.

NARRATIVE DESCRIBING WILLIAM BALDERSTON'S EXPERIENCES

IN JACKSON'S HOLE, WYOMING 1913-14-15

I was born in Boise, Idaho, December 13, 1896 and lived there with my three sisters until my father's death in May of 1914.

My father was born and raised on his father's farm near Colora, Maryland, and after graduating from Westtown he followed the advice of Horace Greely "Go West Young Man" and settled in Aspen, Colorado, where he became editor of the Aspen Times. He met my mother, Stella Sain, in Aspen where she was teaching school, and they were married and moved to Boise, Idaho, where father was appointed editor of the Idaho Daily Statesman.

I have many fond recollections of my childhood days in Boise. I believe Boise had a population of about 20,000 in those days - the gold rush days were over and Boise was emerging as the capital city and was developing into an agricultural center.

We all received our primary education in the Boise schools and attended the Boise High School. I was a member of the class of 1913 that had the famous football team that beat the Wendell-Phillips High School team from Chicago.

During my high school years I spent most of my summers working with surveying crews in the southern part of the state. I recall I spent one summer on an irrigation project just out of Nelsor, Idaho under the direction of Leigh Savidge, who was chief engineer. Leigh was later to become a leading business man in Seattle and the largest Dodge dealer in the northwest. I still keep in touch with Leigh and have seen him numerous times in recent years.

Another summer, between my junior and senior years, I got a job as "Stake Artist" with the Oregon Short Line Railroad. We started the summer of 1912 locating the railroad between Ashton and Victor, Idaho. This job was finished in mid-summer and then we packed up in dead X wagons and headed over Teton Pass for my first trip into Jackson's Hole!

The Oregon Short Line Railroad had a right of way from Green River, Wyoming to the south entrance of Yellowstone Park by way of the Hoback River Canyon. In order to hold this right of way it had to be resurveyed every five years and we got the job of making this resurvey starting at the confluence of the Hoback and Snake Rivers and working our way up the Hoback River to the "rim".

The party consisted largely of men from Salt Lake - some of the names I remember were:

Mr. Wingate, chief of party
Jack Kimball
Al Peabody
Hal Sharp
Ed Flood, teamster
Packard, transitman

There was a very precarious wagon road up the canyon which we used from time to time as we moved camp. I believe the remains of this old road are still visible in parts of the canyon.

Among the local people I remember most vividly was a man called Pap Carter who had an elk ranch along the river between Hoback and Wilson. I remember during the summer he married a young woman whom he had corresponded with in Chicago. They called her Pap Carter's Mail Order Bride and this caused a great deal of comment in camp! He used to come into camp and furnish the cook with some very good elk meat otherwise, our fare was pretty poor and there was a great deal of grumbling around camp about Fritz, the German cook. We supplemented our diet of pork and beans by catching some cutthroat trout in the Hoback. I remember going out one Sunday and catching enough trout to feed twenty hungry men in about an hour and a half!

The following year I received the appointment to West Point from Senator William E. Borah. However, shortly after I took the examinations and was preparing to leave for West Point as a "plebe" my father died and I had to change my plans.

Our family had a close friend, who lived near us in Boise, by the name of A. J. Wiley, who was a well known consulting civil engineer. He had done a great deal of work for the U. S. Reclamation Service and it was through his good offices that I secured a job as rodman on a surveying crew at the Jackson Lake Enlargement Project.

In May 1914 a party, which included Frank Banks, chief engineer of the project, left Boise by train for Victor, Idaho where we took dead X wagons over Teton Pass and up the Wilson Road to the Dam. The trip over Teton Pass was pretty strenuous and it was necessary to change to runners to get over the top as the snow was several feet deep. We spent the whole day getting over the Pass and I believe we stayed at one of the ranches in Wilson before starting on the final leg of our journey the next morning.

I will never forget the first time we got a full view of the magnificent Teton Range as we worked our way up the valley. It made such an impression on me that when I got back to the University of Wisconsin two years later, I wrote a theme in my English Class describing the trip and my professor was so impressed with my description of the Teton Mountains that he put me in the advanced English Class!

The Reclamation Camp was located on the Snake River just below the Dam adjoining the property of Ben Sheffield, who ran a big game hunting camp and acted as Moran Postmaster. The Engineering Office and bunkhouse was located in a long wooden building between the store and hospital along with the Drafting Room, Paymaster and General Offices. My roommate was Marion Gorman, who was stenographer-clerk and was one of the fastest persons on the typewriter I had ever seen. I remember it was still pretty cold when we first got up there and we used to sleep with heavy woolen socks on and we had a bearskin we used to pull over the bed to keep warm!

I cannot recall the exact number of men who were employed on the Dam at that time. However, with the logging crew at Moran Bay, the saw mill operators, the carpenters, mechanics, skimmers, the steel men, laborers, etc., I would judge there were pretty close to 350 men in camp.

There was a great deal of activity going on when we arrived. A coffer dam was being constructed above the original concrete dam to hold the water back so that the foundations of the new parts of the dam could be adequately anchored to the bedrock. Several tremendous boilers, which had been hauled in by horse teams, had been installed to furnish steam for the pumps that were pumping the water out of the area in back of the coffer dam.

It is very difficult for me to relate the incidents that occurred at the Jackson Lake Enlargement Project chronologically because after fifty years or more, my impressions all run together! These memories, however, are still very vivid in

my mind and I look back upon those years of my life with very fond memories. In fact, after I left the Dam in the fall of 1915 and took a sheep train back to Madison, Wisconsin to attend the University of Wisconsin Civil Engineering College, I met my future wife, Susan B. Ramsay, whose Mother has always said that I wooed and won her by my tales of Jackson's Hole!

The Jackson Lake Enlargement Dam was the third dam of a series that had been built at the outlet of the lake to dam the water for irrigation purposes in southern Idaho. When we arrived in May of 1914 work on the third dam - the Enlargement Project - was well under way. A large coffer dam had been constructed on the upstream side of the dam to keep the rising waters of Jackson Lake away from the base of the dam so that the new dam and its foundations could be securely anchored to the bed-rock. During the construction of the enlarged dam it was necessary to "shoot out" the west wing wall of the old dam. In order to do this a whole crew of "powder Monkeys" had to drill the entire face of the wing wall at intervals of 18" with hand drills and load each hole with dynamite. When it came time to set off the charge a group of us, including Frank Banks, got under the sluice tunnel under the old dam. The chief powder man came into the tunnel, pushed the handle and set off a terrific charge, which nearly deafened everyone in the tunnel. After the "shot" nothing was left of the wing wall but the reinforcing steel.

When one considers the great advances that have been made in construction machinery, earth moving equipment, and power tools of all kind, it is amazing to realize that the Jackson Lake Dams were constructed by manpower and horsepower. I do not believe that the average person looking at the Dam to-day realizes what a feat of logistics and engineering it was to build a dam in this remote area 70 miles from the nearest railroad before the days of trucks and automatic equipment, and that everything used in the dam except the lumber had to be hauled from Ashton, Idaho over a dirt road by horse teams!

The new dam called for a water level some 14' higher than the old dam, which, of course, necessitated raising the height of the concrete dam as well as the dike which stretched off about a mile across the willow flat. Quite a bit of the earth for the enlarged dike was placed by horse teams and slips and a great deal of it was pumped from the bottom of the lake by a dredge which floated out in the water and pumped gravel from the bottom of the lake into the dikes.

When the dredge first started to operate it ran into trouble because of the fact that the roots of the swamp willows prevented the intake pipe from getting down into the gravel. There was great consternation among the local engineers when this happened and the doubting Thomases had their day; however, Frank Weymouth, Chief Engineer of the Reclamation Service and Consulting Engineer A. J. Wiley were called in. They made a special trip to the dam to look over the problem and as a result they recommended the installation of a large rotating cutting bar down at the snout of the intake to cut the willow roots away and allow the intake to sink into the gravel. This took sometime to design and the equipment had to be hauled in by freight wagon from Ashton. But when it was installed it worked perfectly and the dike again began to rise very rapidly.

Another very interesting phase of the construction work was the logging camp and the saw mill operation. Most of the timber was cut up around Moran Bay where it was assembled into large log booms and hauled down the lake to the saw mill by the famous "Titanic" which was operated by Captain Hugh MacDermott. During the course of our engineering work we made numerous trips up the lake on the Titanic and it was always a great pleasure to hear Captain "Mac" talk about his early days in the valley.

The Reclamation Service maintained a hospital which was located just opposite the main office. When we first arrived the hospital was in charge of a Doctor Wise. Doctor Wise had been in the Government Service for some time and was generally looked upon as a "character", and it was the fervent wish of everybody who knew him that they would not become ill while he was in charge. He was certainly not a very sociable person and, although, he was supposed to eat with the engineers, he usually ate his meals alone in the hospital. Finally one day Charlie Fessler, who was camp cook, at the time, reported to the superintendent that the doctor had not eaten anything for several days and was extremely irritable; so, Frank Crowe went over to investigate and found the doctor pacing up and down the hospital in a terrible state of mind. He kept making constant calls over the Government telephone to Ashton, Idaho where the Government Warehouse was run by Mr. Swanson, to find out if an express package had arrived for him. Finally in the middle of the night he received a phone call from Ashton. He went to the stables, got out his saddle horse and headed out for the railroad, a distance of 70 miles. Mr. Swanson reported that he got there the next night, his horse nearly dead, picked up his express package and then took the train and stage back to the Dam, via Victor, Idaho, where arrived several days later in good spirits. This performance, apparently, made Frank Crowe pretty suspicious of the doctor and while he was gone, he had the hospital books examined and found that the doctor had requisitioned enough drugs during the previous year to kill an army. Further investigation disclosed that the Reclamation Service Headquarters was questioning the amount of narcotics that were being requisitioned and had held up this last shipment. An examination of the hospital later disclosed dozens of little envelopes with cocaine in them hidden all over the hospital. The doctor had apparently forgotten where he had stored his reserve supply!

Dr. Young was appointed to replace Dr. Wise and he proved to be a very fine and popular member of the "crew". He was a great companion and went on many weekend expeditions with us and we were all happy to have him in charge of the hospital. Dr. Young has long since retired and is living in Washington, D. C. He has made a number of trips back to see Jackson Lake Dam in recent years and I have corresponded with him on several occasions.

The Reclamation Service was anxious to have progress pictures taken of the Dam for record purposes and shipped an 8 x 10 Century View Camera with a supply of glass plates asking to have regular pictures taken and forwarded to Washington. The question arose as to who would take the pictures and develop them. Frank Banks had seen me around camp with a 3X folding Eastman Camera and inquired whether or not I could run the view camera and develop and print the pictures. Fortunately, I had done some of this work at home and told him that I would try and he forthwith appointed me official "progress photographer for the Jackson Lake Enlargement Project". I think I designed and with the help of a carpenter, built the first dark room in Jackson's Hole and started taking progress pictures for the Government.

One of the most enjoyable weekend trips we made was the weekend of July 4th and 5th, 1915, when we climbed up to Frying Pan Glacier on Mount Moran. A group composed of Eddie Markham, store clerk - Fred Bagley, engineer - W. B., engineering crew - Marion Gorman, W.B.'s roommate, clerk and stenographer - Snow Engineering Crew - Dr. Young - headed up the lake on the "Titanic" for Moran Bay. That night we put up in a trapper's hut and started up for the glacier early in the morning. We got to the glacier about 11:00 o'clock when we had lunch, and then explored the ice cavern. Some of the boys wanted to climb to the top but Doc Young vetoed this idea, and very wisely, because none of us were experienced mountain climbers.

Weekends we were allowed to take the saddle horses from the Government stables and go off on fishing and exploration trips around the valley. There were very few established trails in those days, so we had to bushwack through the timber to get to

the best fishing areas which included Jenney String and Leigh Lake. Probably the best fishing we had was in Jackson Lake when we trolled about 100' offshore in late September for mackinaw up in Mackinaw Bay (this is now Colter Bay, I believe).

Ben Sheffield, whose ranch adjoined the Government property just below the dam at the old location of Moran, acted as postmaster and also ran a very popular big game hunting camp, which was very successful. A great many Easterners came up to hunt and fish and I remember the first fall we were in Colonel A. E. Randall came out from Washington, D. C. He loved to fish and did pretty well in his elk hunting but, so the story goes, when they took him out on a bear hunt he insisted on the bear being caught in a steel trap before he would take a shot at it!

Early in July each summer the Moore's Dudes came through on their way to Yellowstone Park. These boys on this dude string were about my age and we would always get up a baseball game between the Moore's Dudes and my camp buddies, and if I remember correctly, they always beat us! Two of the men in the dude string I met later when I attended the University of Wisconsin.

Frank Banks and Frank Crowe were both graduates of the College of Civil Engineering at the University of Maine and were great canoeists. Occasionally they would let us take their canoes and go up the lake on different expeditions. One evening my roommate and I were canoeing along the west shore of Jackson Lake looking for game when we heard someone chopping back in the woods. In those days it was pretty unusual to find anyone in those woods and we stopped, beached the canoe and walked in to see what was going on. Here was a man whom we recognized as one of the workmen from the Dam making a dugout canoe from the log of a big lodge pole pine that he had felled. He wasn't very happy to see us so we went on our way and didn't think much about the incident at that time. About a week later Frank Crowe got a call from the Soldier's Station at the south entrance to the Park that a holdup had been committed and that a desperado had taken money and jewels from the tourists on several stage coaches in the Park. He also advised that he had allowed some of the tourists to take his picture and that they would send a copy down as soon as possible for identification. Lo and behold, when the printer arrived, here was the man that we had seen making the dugout canoe along the west side of the lake! A canoe was later found drifting around the head end of Jackson Lake and the theory was that he had used the canoe, slipped by the soldiers at the south entrance by paddling down the Snake River. I believe his name was Trafton (?) and he was later apprehended over in Idaho.

In the fall of 1914 I returned to Boise for a short visit to see my Mother and sisters and to lay in a stock of photographic supplies for my newly operating darkroom. My lifelong friend and bosom companion, Warren Bruce, decided to come back to the Dam with me. He had had two years of mechanical engineering at the University of Wisconsin and decided to work for a year before going back to finish his college education.

We took the train to Ashton, Idaho where we spent the night sleeping on the floor of the Government Warehouse building and started off the next morning afoot on the Government freight road headed for Jackson Lake Dam. Had a big piece of cheese and some crackers in our knapsack to last us the whole trip! As we left Ashton it was an Indian summer day in September with a haze hanging over the valley, the dust on the freight road was ankle deep and the first night we spent in a deserted log cabin that the freighters used. When we awoke in the morning there was four inches of snow on the ground and it was still snowing! By noontime we were in snow up to our knees and the going was pretty rugged. By nighttime we found a camp with some freighters, got some warm food and a wagon box for a bed. The next day we had to ford the Snake River. It was about waist deep and our clothes were literally frozen stiff after we got out

of the water. We got into camp late in the afternoon of the third day - I think we walked about sixty miles in all - and it was mighty good to bite into some of Charlie Fessler's good food and to have a warm bed!

As I look back over the years here's some of the people I remember most vividly:

Frank T. Crowe, Superintendent - Frank Crowe was a very able leader, a hard driver and very popular with the men. He had an outstanding career and became famous as one of the leading dam builders in the country.

Frank Banks, Chief Engineer - Believe Frank Banks spent the rest of his professional life with the U. S. Reclamation Service and retired to live in Washington after a brilliant career. Both Frank Banks and Frank Crowe were graduates of the University of Maine and they both married girls from Boise, Idaho, who were friends of our family. Both of these young ladies, Dede Polk and Lenney Korts, were very kind to me when I first arrived in camp just out of high school!

Joe Markham, Time Keeper - Joe Markham was a handsome Irishman - probably the most popular man in the camp. Joe married Johanna Waldin, the first registered nurse in Jackson's Hole, and while I was at the Dam he was homesteading the Markham Ranch, which is now the game refuge below the Dam.

Eddie Markham, Joe's younger brother from New Britain, Connecticut. Eddie was a lot of fun and went with us on a great many of our weekend expeditions. He was small in stature but he was very fast on his feet and a good boxer. One evening I recall, I boxed him in the bunk house and came to fifteen minutes later on my bed!

Bob Sass, Assistant Superintendent
S. R. Wilson (nickname John Bunny) Bookkeeper

Nick Carter, Transitman

Dick Ward, Transitman

Roy Knielands, Assistant Timekeeper

Mr. and Mrs. Weiss

Dr. Young - After the drug episode with Dr. Wise, Dr. Young was brought out from Washington to replace him. In strong contrast to Dr. Wise, Dr. Young was extremely personable, a fine doctor and very popular with the men in camp. He joined in lots of our expeditions and made a real contribution to life in the construction camp.

Charlie Fessler - Charlie was the chief cook and a very important man for all of us. There was a special mess for the engineers and the office people and we always had excellent food. We were served lots of game which was very plentiful.

Fred Powell, Draftsman

Dutch John, Stable Boss

Red McCabe, Foreman

F. E. Mennaugh, Draftsman

Hugh MacDermott, Captain of the "Titanic"

Ben Sheffield, Postmaster and Ranch Owner

Herb Whiteman, Foreman of Ben Sheffield's Ranch

Harold Hammond, Stable Boss and later owner of White Grass Ranch

Beaver Tooth Neal, Trapper and Beaver Poacher

In addition to these members of camp there were quite a number of visitors that used to drop in. Usually they would be invited to join us in the engineering mess. It was a great experience for a youngster of my age 17 years to hear these men tell about their experiences in the wilderness. I particularly remember Rosen cranz, who was a forest ranger and who is still living in Jackson, and also Mr. Felix Buckenroth used to drop in. He later founded the Jackson State Bank.

Beaver Tooth Neal was a frequent visitor in the camp and was of great interest to everyone because he was such a character and had a reputation as a beaver poacher. The game wardens used to catch up with him quite often and he had to resort to special tactics to get his illegal skins out of the valley. The storey was told that at one point two officials of the Dam were headed out to Ashton over the Reclamation Road. Beaver Tooth asked them if they would take out his bedroll as he was going out on horse back and did not have room for it. They willingly took the bedroll out and left it at the Government Warehouse in Ashton, whereupon Beaver Tooth came in a few days later and picked up the "bedroll", which was pretty well filled with beaver skins!

There was another "tall tale" that went around the camp when I was there. When they were pouring the big concrete piers at each end of the Dam it was necessary to send two men down into the forms each morning to puddle the concrete as it came down through the chute from the cement mill. One morning, so the story goes, two Hungarian workmen went down into the east pier in the morning and only one came out when the noon whistle blew. Apparently the other one had been trapped in the concrete and is still buried in the pier.

Eddie Markham was in charge of the store and I remember we all used to go over and help him inspect potatoes when the Idaho potato farmers would bring in a dead X wagon full of potatoes to put in the cellar. The weather was quite cold and the potato farmers would make the trip all the way through from Ashton without stopping over night so that the potatoes would not freeze. Somehow they figured that if they kept the potatoes in motion they would come through o.k. but we had to inspect them all and we did find some frozen potatoes at times!

During the period I was on the Dam from May 1914 to September 1915, Joe Markman was homesteading his ranch where the present game refuge is located. Every one liked Joe and he was popular with the whole crew. He was particularly kind to me on a number of occasions. I recall one interesting experience I had with him. During the summer of 1915 a family by the name of Cox from Terre Haute, Indiana, spent a number of weeks at the Sheffield Camp. There were two very good looking Cox daughters and at one point my roommate, Marion Gorman and I organized a dance at the schoolhouse below the Dam because the young ladies wanted to go to a western dance. I was trying

to raise enough money among the office personnel to buy materials for a punch to serve at the dance. Joe told me if I would kick the top of the door jamb separating the office from the drafting room he would furnish the lemonade for the dance. The whole office gathered around to watch me attempt the feat and after nearly breaking my back I finally kicked the door jamb and Joe came through with the lemonade!

When September 1915 rolled around I had saved up about \$900.00 to start me on my college education. I said good bye to all my "pals" in the bunk house and I started off on foot for Victor, Idaho, where I caught the train. My roommate, Marion Gorman, walked out with me about four miles where we shook hands and promised to keep in touch with each other.

As I walked down the valley towards Wilson that morning in the crisp autumn air, I promised myself that someday I would return to this beautiful valley. Little did I realize that it would be many years before I saw those majestic mountains again!

It was not until 1948, thirty three years later, that I was able to return to Jackson's Hole with my wife and our two sons. There had been a great many changes but, thanks to the foresight and generosity of the Rockefeller family, the natural beauty of the valley had been preserved for all Americans to enjoy.

On this particular trip we came down from the south entrance of the Park and as we drove along the shores of Jackson Lake and gazed at the magnificent range across the water my family all agreed that I had not exaggerated the beauty and splendor of this valley!

When we got to the Dam we found Charlie Fessler in the store sitting behind the counter. I asked him if he was Charles Fessler. He replied:

"All that's left of me."

The last time I had seen him in 1915 he was thin as a rail! I told him that he probably would not remember me but I had worked on the Dam on the surveying crew in 1914 and 1915. He looked at me quizzically for a moment and then said:

"Oh, yes, I remember you.. You are the boy that came over from Boise."

We had a fine time talking about the old days and I inquired about Joe Markham and he advised me that Joe had died a few years before but that his two sons were in the bar at that moment. Thereupon Charlie took me in to the bar and introduced me to John and Eddie Markham. We had a drink at the bar together and I greatly enjoyed talking with the two Markham boys about early experiences on the Dam. I recall asking about Hugh MacDermott who was "Captain" of the Titanic the side wheeler which was used to drag log booms from Moran Bay down to the saw mill. The boys advised me that Captain Hugh had died some years before and was buried somewhere over in Idaho.

We again came back to Jackson's Hole in 1952 when we stayed at the White Grass Ranch as guests of Inga and Frank Galey. I had secured options on several pieces of property and discussed these locations with Frank. After some discussion Frank said:

"Bill, Inga and I would like to have you and Susan as dudes at the White Grass Ranch but if you are really serious about buying property who don't you buy some from me?"

It never dawned on me that Frank would be willing to sell property from his beautiful ranch and I was delighted at the prospect, so, we jumped on our horses and

rode up to the north end of the ranch. There was a beautiful grove of douglas firs, a mountain spring and a breath taking view! This was something I had been yearning for ever since I walked out over Teton Pass in 1915!

After a short discussion Frank and I shook hands on a deal and Sky Ranch was born!

The Krannenburg Construction Company started work on our main cabin that fall (1952) and we occupied it the following July. Sky Ranch has become a rallying place for our entire family and we have spent our summers there for the past eighteen years!