

White Grass Heritage Project “Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEES: Ann Messler Cuddy (A), Amy Clarke Cuddy (Amy)

& Carol Boyer Curran (C)

INTERVIEWER: Matthew Heiss (H)

LOCATION: White Grass Ranch

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

- H: (0:00) My name is Matthew Heiss and I’m working as a volunteer for the Grand Teton National Park and working specifically for The White Grass Heritage Project. Today, I’m recording an interview with Ann Messler Cuddy and her daughter, Amy Clarke Cuddy and Ann’s sister, Carol Boyer Curran. For the record, Ann and Carol came out to the Ranch in 1946. Ann and Carol probably represent the earliest White Grassers who are here this weekend at this reunion (September, 2014). I think that this is a significant part of the history that we don’t have covered yet. So, let me just say thank you for making the effort to come in this morning. What I’d like to ask each of you to do is to give me a brief biological sketch of who you are and I’ll ask a few questions. Ann, let’s start with you. Tell me about where you were born and about the family that you were raised in.
- A: I was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Shortly thereafter, my sister had ear infections and the doctor told my parents that we should move. Pittsburg in those days was terribly, terribly smoky and it caused problems. We moved to Florida because my mother had two sisters and her father down there and my father knew that there was going to be a war and he wanted to be in it. He wanted us to be near some family.
- C: We moved to Florida in 1940.
- A: We lived in a little guest house or something.
- C: We lived on the beach for ten years.
- A: My parents bought some land near the ocean but it was far, far away by this little town called Ormond Beach. We hired a black man to push a hand plow and a mule and he carved out

this little space in amongst this scrubland and then the house was built for us. We moved in and lived there for 10 years, until about 1950.

H: (4:10) And so you were about 15. What happened then?

A: We were totally alone, except for our mother. There were no children, there was nothing, so we learned to entertain ourselves. We had unusual parents that never said, “No” and Never said, “Watch out” or anything like that. An example is we had to think of things to do and there wasn’t much to do. One day we wanted to climb up onto the garage roof and jump off. My mother’s reaction was, “Well, be careful of the roof.” (Laughing – H and C). And not of your legs?

C: It was a short roof. But that’s the way we were brought up. We were never taught to be afraid of anything. There was never any “No”, if you wanted to do something. And so, we lived a very free life.

H: What year did you graduate from high school?

A Oh dear. It was 1953.

H: What did you do after high school?

A: I went to college.

H: Where did you go to college?

A: I went to both Middlebury and Smith.

H: Middlebury up in Vermont?

A: Yes, and Smith in Northampton.

C: And we’re missing one little piece which is in 1950, they moved to Connecticut. So that was before high school and college.

H: What did you study in college?

A: Psychology. I wanted to work with young children. My first job was at an institute for children who had no place else to go, I guess.

H: Did you graduate from Smith?

A: Yes

H: Did you have a career as a therapist working with children?

A: Yes

H: Talk about after college.

A: I remember having a little kindergarten, kids would come to the house when we lived in Florida just to play. But you mean after I got out of college. I had this job and then I had a fairly serious horse accident with my dad. I was in the hospital and had some broken bones and things. And so, I couldn't go back to that job. I tried to get a job doing anything. I think I was working in a drug store for a short time and I guess I got a job working with a children's nursery and then, what was the next thing?

C: (8:25) You got married! (followed by laughter)

H: What year did you get married?

A: Well, let's see. I think it was '58.'58.

H: How many children did you have?

A: Three

H: Three. Ok. At that point, were you a stay-at-home mom? Raising the kids?

A: Yes and living in Connecticut. We stayed there because Amy (Ann's daughter) was going to be going into middle school. I didn't want her to go to the local middle school. I wanted her to go to a better school. That was part of the thing and then the other part was my husband didn't really like children and he was not easy to live with. And he wasn't ever home. He worked 6 days a week and didn't have much to do with us. So, I wanted to get the children away from his unpleasantness and then on the weekends, when he was away from his job, he would become part of the family. It sort of worked sometimes. So, we moved to Lakeville, Connecticut where my parents were.

About a year after we moved there, my mother died of cancer. My father remarried a woman and she left him and then she came back. Anyway, he decided he wanted to have us live in his house and he would live in a little cottage that was on the property. That way, he could have his swimming pool, his horses, and his family and that would be good. So that's what happened.

So, I didn't live with my husband very much but I did go in with him if he needed me for some legal things. That went on for quite a long time until he divorces me. It took 3 years to get the divorce. He kept changing his mind and I didn't have any say in the matter. My father was so upset that he had a stroke and died. So, I lost my father and then my husband about year after that. I have to stop for a break (in the interview).

H: Did you go to the University of Colorado?

C: Yes, but I ended up graduating from the University of Denver.

H: Ok. What did you study?

C: I started out in nursing school and then I got married and I wanted to hurry up and finish and since I had more credits in Psychology.

H: Wow. I'm surrounded by psychology majors.

C: Then, I was a stay-at-home mother. I had two children, a girl and a boy and then I got a divorce and went to library school. I got a masters of library science degree and eventually, I remarried. My husband and I very much like the outdoors and we spent much of our time backpacking and fishing. We just got back from a lovely backpacking, fishing trip in the Wind Rivers - for eight days, which was lovely. So that's how I've been spending my time recently, outdoors as much as possible.

H: (16:06) Amy, let's get a little bit of a sketch from you. We've got kind of the moving around bit. Why don't we do the same thing. Let's pick up with high school and what year did you graduate and pick it up from there.

Amy: I graduated from high school in 1979. I'm the oldest of the three daughters of Ann and I went to college and then I moved to the Midwest.

H: Where'd you go to college?

Amy: I went to Yale, moved to the Midwest and worked in a small non-profit theater company.

H: What did you study at Yale?

Amy: English. English major and from there I moved to Ashland, Oregon. That was in 1986. I moved there to work at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. I worked there for a couple of years and then went back to Yale and got a Master's degree and thought I'd be a movie producer so I moved to LA and worked at Warner Brothers and very quickly decided that was not at all the life for me. I didn't like the big city and all the driving so I went back to Ashland. That was in 1990, went back to Ashland and back to the Shakespeare Festival and...

H: What did you do at the Shakespeare Festival?

Amy: I started in the fundraising area and pretty quickly found I didn't want to do that and moved into marketing and communications and have been in Ashland ever since. I have two children, a daughter who's 20 and a son who's 17. I'm not married, I don't work at the Shakespeare Festival anymore. I work for a Foundation. The Oregon Community Foundation which is the largest foundation in the state of Oregon.

H: Doing what?

Amy: I work on a lot of different grant programs and scholarship programs and now my mom is in Ashland most of the time. My mother and sisters and nieces, we're all mostly in Ashland.

H: That's most helpful. Now let's go back to 1946 and talk about why this family, living in Florida one year after World War II ends, at least in Europe, would go to a dude ranch in Wyoming. How did that happen?

A: My dad was over in Okinawa and Iwo Jima when they were having the Kamikaze attacks.

H: Was he in the Navy, was he in the Marines?

A: He was in the Navy. He was just a naval person he wasn't any big deal. Just a sailor. He was trying to shoot down the Kamikaze planes that were coming in. He was trying to shoot them down before they could dive bomb into the ships and he decided that if he lived through this, he was going to take his family west.

H: Did he live through it?

C: Yes. I think also he had been out west with his mother years before so he knew the west. He'd gone through Yellowstone and also, I think my grandmother knew Mrs. Frew down at the 4 Lazy F. They were friends, or distant relatives or something. And so, Grandmother knew of Jackson Hole when nobody knew of Jackson Hole in those days. So that made a logical thing to come to that particular spot.

H: So then did your dad come home from the war?

A: He came home from the war and the next year, we moved out here.

H: (20:36) How did you come out? Did you fly out (lots of laughing).

A: We had the four of us, the family, and our grandmother and we were in a car, a station wagon had a little tag-along, a little trailer. It took us six days, from Florida to Wyoming to get here.

H: How did your family decide to come to White Grass?

A: As Carol said, my grandmother was a friend of Mrs. Frew and she suggested, I guess to go to White Grass.

H: And it would have been the first year after the war that White Grass was opened to Dudes, right?

C: I don't know that. I know that one time I was on a pack trip going up to Lake Solitude and Frank was leading it and we went across some snowbank. And, He said something like, "I bet this is the first time someone has ridden horses across this snowbank since before the war." So, it could have been the first year.

- H: What was White Grass like back then in 1946? Talk about the cabins, did you have electricity, did you have water (laughing in background)
- A: No, we didn't have electricity; we didn't have water. Well, we didn't have anything. We were in that little two-man cabin, the first one right here and it just had the two beds on either side for mom and dad and a door. Carol and I each had a bed. That was it.
- C: We had to have a little pot beneath the bed in case we had to pee and then we had to take that pot up to the bath house. It was a long way or at least it seemed like a long way, especially if the whole world was watching you take up the pot.
- H: So what was it like for a family moving out of a fairly civilized place like Florida to this place where you're having to carry your night business up to a bath house, no electricity, no phones, no running water. Was it a great adventure, was it a pain in the neck?
- A: It seemed normal to me. I mean we didn't live a high life. We'd lived alone doing our own thing all these years. As children we'd just go out in the scrub and play around, snakes and all and we'd play with them. Oh, and I got a horse. My grandfather gave me a horse when we were in Florida. She'd been raised and she was on a track and I absolutely adored her. But my father couldn't afford to buy her and then this old man who had been taking care of the horses, he bought her. And then, sometime later, my grandfather bought her for me. Why Carol didn't get one, I don't know (Carol laughing).
- C: Because our grandfather was a little remote, he lived up in Pittsburg still and he was so impressed with Ann daring to write a stranger asking for money to buy this horse, he said, "Sure". (Ann) I didn't know I did that. (Carol) Yes, you did. (Ann) I knew what I wanted.
- H: (25:07) So you learned to ride a horse before you came here to White Grass.
- A: Yes. When we were little, we used to go to these funny little places. There was some pony show and they had other little animals that they would take around in the winter for showing - to do tricks and things. They had a couple little ponies and then in the winter they needed money so they would rent out these horses and we could go riding. And we went riding there. Although I know when we were first there, my dad was kind of snobby I think, and he got me riding lessons with a fancy man (H English style?) Yes, English style. I did that. I loved horses.
- H: (31:00) Let's talk about the people who were here in 1946 and your memories of those people. Let's start with Frank's mother, Marion, would have still been alive at that time, right? Nobody has told me Marion stories yet so tell me what kind of a woman was she and what do you remember about her?
- A: She was an alcoholic.

H: Marion was?

A: Yes.

H: Oh my gosh.

A: A very serious alcoholic. Her grandson, Nicky Fox, was having to live with her because I guess he was supposed to be taking care of her or something, I don't know. But that was his burden. I know he tried to hide the bottles and stuff. He told me about it. It was hard for him, and he was alone too. He had nobody; his parents weren't here; he didn't have any siblings here. He and I had an unusual relationship all through our lives.

H: How can you describe it? Why was it unusual?

A: Because we really didn't love each other but we felt an obligation to take care of each other. Or I felt that way to take care of him. In fact, I drove up to Vermont when he was dying and was the only person to ever call on him when he was alone. So, it was a very strange, oh and one time we went off to Europe together. I'm trying to remember the first country we went to. (Carol) Well, you went to Spain didn't you? (Ann) No. First we went to Portugal and had a very interesting time and then rented a car and drove down to someplace in Spain that he wanted to go to. He was smoking cigarettes all the time and I didn't like it. All he wanted was to drink coffee and stop and I wanted to do things. We got more and more unhappy with each other and finally I said, "I'm leaving" and I went back and flew home.

H: Nicky, his last name was Fox. He was Frank's cousin?

All: No, his nephew.

C: Certainly in the early years, all of us were all we had. Me, my sister and Nicky.

H: How old was Nicky? Were you the same age?

A: He was a year younger than I but he was a huge, big teenager. He grew up fast. He was kind of a bully with the little dude kids. One time, I decided that this has got to stop. So, the dudes, you'd have your drinks while the kids went in and ate. And then the kids were left to go outside and the dudes had their dinner and I arranged for the kids to all come together. I had planned this ahead of time. We were going to jump on him and beat him up a little bit and tell him we didn't want him being such a bully.

H: Did you do it?

C: We did. And it worked somewhat. We had all the kids, remember? (A) no. (C) well, we did.

- H: Let's come back to Marion Hammond. Would she interact with the dudes or was she just holed up in the cabin taking care of her drinking? (No interaction). Was Frank here in 1946? Talk about your impressions of Frank.
- C: (chuckling) Well, he was sort of, not the God, but the father figure, whatever. The omnipresent person, bon homme, (H) and he would understand that because he spoke French.
(A) He certainly enjoyed interacting with the dudes beautifully and with the children too.
(A) If he was feeling like it, otherwise he'd just ignore everybody. (all laughing)
- A: He was absolutely useless at fixing things. He didn't keep things up very well. He was pretty lazy, I would say (laughing) but he had absolute charm that you couldn't resist. And I know one time, he and I were playing cards and I beat him. He was just absolutely horrified. He was a big card fan – it was poker. He loved poker. I never played poker with him. I knew enough not to do that.
- H: What about Inge? Do you remember anything about Inge?
- C: Of course. Well, she was sort of on the other end of the table. The female.
- H: Strong, weak, bossy?
- A: A witch. (laughing)
- C: As a younger child, I never really saw her that way. She was not warm and fuzzy but I just saw her as remote person that ran things.
- H: So Ann, tell me why you would give her that name.
- A: Well, she was totally unfriendly with any of the guests. She was nasty to Frank's daughter, Cindy. She was really rather mean to her. She never did anything for anybody that I ever saw. She was gorgeous, very attractive and knew it and expected everybody to kowtow to her. That was my feeling.
- H: Did it appear that she and Frank got along? Could you see romance between them or not so much? And again, this is a kid's perspective. Kid's memory.
- A: I think it was better early on than later on. (laughing)
- H: Who was the head wrangler when you came out?
- C: Jim Jenson, I think.
- H: Did you know the Frietags, Inge's mom and dad. Talk about that.
- C: (35:50) They were brought over later on and they were sure isolated from the dudes. And the main thing I remember, of course they were German. They took care of Cynthia, I think. I

remember after dinner you'd hear Mrs. Freitag calling, "Cynthia, Cynthia" in a German sing, song accent. A very German accent. That's the main thing I remember.

- H: When you came out in '46, do I remember correctly, did you stay for two or three months? What would you do? What were your days like at that time? The activities?
- A: We had our horses. In those days they were doing a lot of work on the farm. I mean on the ranch. It was almost like a farm. They had cows they had to milk, they had pigs, they had chickens, they grew their own hay and that had to be done. I remember when the guys were out working the hay fields, the kids would get little bottles of water and they'd ride the horses and jump the irrigation ditches and take them down to the guys to give them some water. I don't know. We just hung around.
- H: Were you also participating in some of the ranch chores? I mean was it like a working vacation? Or were you just really on vacation, doing what you wanted to do?
- A: We were on vacation doing what we wanted to do but I certainly, by the second or third year, was doing a lot of the chores. I learned how to milk, I did almost everything.
- H: When you said milk, it wasn't really some mechanized thing (laughter).
- A: Nothing was mechanized. No, you had to do the milk separator by hand.
- H: Yes. I remember reading a story that you knew how to take it apart and put it back together. That's pretty amazing.
- A: Yes. I just loved doing these things.
- C: They had chore boys. Obviously, they didn't ride the horses, they fed the animals. They had a buckboard and they'd take the slop down from the kitchen and to the hogs. We'd probably ride with the chore boy and watch him do that. Ann probably drove the team at that point because she was always impressive.
- H: What were your parents doing while you were out? (laughing, both Ann and Carol) Fishing.
- A: They left us alone a lot. Really. Sometimes overnight. One time..
- C: One night Frank Galey came up to our house, I remember it was dark, I don't know what time it was. He was very concerned about my parents because they had gone off with another couple. He was probably concerned with the other couple because they were dudes. But at any rate, they were not back and they'd been floating the Snake River fishing. It was after dark and Frank was very concerned. Ann and I didn't seem to think much was wrong. (Laughing) Eventually they came home. They had stopped in Jackson and had dinner and probably a couple of drinks.

We went to bed when we were ready to go to bed. I remember one time sneaking, I like to read in bed and I knew my parents were late. And you could see the cars coming up the road. And so, I was not supposed to be up that late and was reading with one of the kerosene lamps and when I saw the car coming, I turned the lamp off and, of course, my parents came in and were trying to turn the kerosene lamp on and it was hot. It wasn't very sneaky. (Laughing) So, we were very independent kids.

H: What was the food like? Talk about mealtime.

C: Oh. We were children, it was always good. We ate everything. We were brought up that way. (A) You ate what was put out before you. (C) Being outdoors all day, we were starved. It was always good. I don't remember what it was, but it was always good.

H: Would you eat family style and was it in the main cabin?

C: For breakfast, my parents had already left. They had breakfast at a certain time. They'd ring the bell, you knew it was time for breakfast so you went to breakfast. If there were other family members there you ate with them, if not, you didn't. Lunch was pretty much the same thing and like Ann said, the parents ate after the children. The children ate around 5:30 or something like that. The parents had cocktails, the kids ran loose and the parents came in and ate later. It was family style. I remember that lunch was often family style.

A: I don't remember any lunch ever, but anyway (laughing). I ate with the help.

H: (40:35) I was going to ask you about that. You were here from 1946 to 1954. Part of that time you were a kid dude but part of it you came back as staff, right? Were you hired? Because you were the first female wrangler. Talk about how that happened.

C: Well, they had a lot of different people working here and none of them were very responsible. None of them were very good and they'd quit, you know. And so, there was nobody to...

H: Are you talking about wranglers, chore boys, cabin girls, all of them?

A: No. The cabin girls were good. And they had a head wrangler that stayed. But the other people didn't do very much. I don't know how I first started wrangling but

C: You were kidding about becoming a wrangler. Didn't they let you take the children out, maybe before you were hired. I'm not sure. I know I started wrangling pretty early. I mean wrangling at 5 o'clock. I was up at 5 and we wrangled until the horses were all in.

H: So, what you'd do, everyone would go up into the forest here?

A: There were three wranglers. Everybody had a section. Some were down by the JYs, some were over by Sky Ranch, no not Sky Ranch. It was right next door.

H: Further on up by the park?

A: Yes and down towards the church. I mean they went far. There were sometimes when we just didn't find them all and we'd take a long time. People got angry cuz your horse wasn't in, all that kind of stuff. So, we'd try different things. We'd try pushing them all in one direction, different things. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't.

H: So after you wrangled the horses, came back and had breakfast and then what would you do?

A: Saddle the horses up and then take people out for rides.

H: Were you ever a kiddie wrangler or were you always a regular wrangler taking all the dudes, any dudes out?

A: I think I took any kind of dude but I know at one point I took out a lot of kids. I'm still amazed that they sent me off one time with 6 or 8 kids, their lunches and their bathing suits. We went up as far as Taggart I guess. We had lunch, went swimming and everything. Then, we got them all back on their horses and got home. We didn't have any problems but that was a lot of people and to be the only person (H) To be responsible for all those kids. (A) Yes, I didn't think about it then, but later on, I wondered about the mentality of the owners (laughing).

H: What did that do to you, to have that kind of responsibility and to succeed at that.

A: It made me want to do more and I did. A lot more.

Amy: Mom, why don't you tell about meeting Big George and that relationship.

H: And, who is Big George?

A: Big George was a cowboy. He was born in Nevada and he was in the Second World War going in before the troops went into Japan to make it easier for the other troops to get there. (C) A Ranger, I think he was called. I think they called them Rangers. George Clover was a pretty tough guy.

He came back and I think he started out going to school and then he ended up on a big cattle ranch in Utah. It was a huge ranch and somehow, he left there and wandered into Jackson and Frank needed a new head wrangler and so he asked George to come. We were still in the little cabin here. I was about 13 years old. Here was this knock at the door, I opened the door and Frank was there and he had this man with him. He said, "Annie, I have a new head wrangler and I'd like you to take him out tomorrow and show him the ropes and show him where to go and get him started." Well, I looked up (laughing), he was about 6'5" and that's not counting the boots or the Stetson. I looked up and he looked down, saw this little kid with pigtails, he said, "Hello" and that was it. I said, "Well, I'll see you in the morning at 5 o'clock at the corral."

At 5 o'clock we met, we got started. I showed him where we were going and he never talked down to me and I never talked down to him (laughing). We had a mutual respect that lasted all our lives. We were dear, dear friends until he died. I was still calling him on the telephone and talking to him when he was in the hospital and I couldn't be here. He gave me respect for myself and I gave him something too. Caring. It wasn't ever sexual but it was very, very deep. Over the years, he took my whole family when the kids were older on one of his big treks when some of the organizations wanted to be driven into Yellowstone. And, we went off for a couple of weeks,

H: (49:11) The 12 day pack trips.

A: Yep and I did that with my three kids and my husband. Then another time, nobody ever would have done this except George. He let me rent 5 of his horses, 3 horses and 2 pack horses to my sister, my husband and I. We took off on our own into the Thoroughfare country. George let us do that. That shows a lot of faith (laughing). We were having a wonderful time and then one day, he couldn't restrain himself and he comes and finds us. Remember? We shot a bunch of birds and we had them for dinner. It was just wonderful.

C: One of the nicest things that happened on that trip, we came to one of these dips that the horses jog down two steps and up two steps. Well Ann's cinch broke and, so of course, Ann fell off the horse. George was right behind her or in front of her, whatever, and he was right by her side faster than a human being could move. I mean you could tell the love between them. You could just tell, it was beautiful to see.

H: Do you remember what year that was? This Thoroughfare? Is this beyond White Grass?

C: Yes, I guess it was.

H: You were working with George directly.

C: I was divorced so this was long after I was married.

A: I could look it up for you.

C: We were definitely grown.

H: Do I remember a story about you wrangling a bear or a bear cub?

A: Oh no. That was Nicky. Nicky, he was sort of a showoff. He just did crazy things. I was riding with him. We came to this bear, this cub and he put a rope out and caught the thing. He had a rope around its neck and then he didn't know what to do with it. He dragged it back to the ranch. This was Nick Fox. His Uncle Frank came out and he was absolutely livid. I don't know what sort of punishment he got but he had to get rid of the bear right away. Now, fortunately, the mother bear was very calm and passive and stayed quite a ways back. I would have thought she would have stayed right with her cub but she didn't.

H: Or even attacked.

A: Yes. You'd think so. I was ready to take off (laughing). I was going to let Nicky fend for himself. Nothing happened but Frank got really, really angry. He should have. That was a really stupid thing to do. But Nick wasn't too bright along those lines. (laughing)

H: Carol, did you come up all the years that Ann was here?

C: I think so.

H: So this became a family tradition, to come up to White Grass for the summer.

C: But, I was so young I didn't do any of the wrangler things. I was in this funny position because I wasn't quite a dude but I was there for so long. (H) You weren't quite staff...(C) I was in this funny limbo position. I think both Cindy Galey and I were in some sort of a limbo position that we weren't either fish nor fowl.

A: And it was lonely for them. It was lonely for my sister. She was alone a lot.

H: Becky and I had the incredible opportunity to interview Cindy at length and we got some real insights into her and I think she also had a lonely childhood. (background chatter). Oh, terribly, terribly. So, in the off season in the winter when no one is around, talk about Cindy and your relationship to her.

C: When I first came out, I was what, seven or eight, so she would have been like four. Well, an eight year old is not going to play with a four year old. And I think after a couple of years, the age difference isn't that great. I played with her some but (A)..you really didn't have much in common. Carol was a great reader. (C)..but that doesn't have anything to do with it. If you only have one person to play with, you play with them. I don't know. We should have been closer but she kept to herself and I guess I kept to myself and we just didn't have that much of a relationship. Which is too bad, really. But four years, when you're really young, is a big difference. So, I'm afraid that I probably didn't do as much with Cindy as I should have or could have but, I was a child.

H: Do you know what year, Ann, when you were actually hired to be a wrangler at the Ranch?

A: (55:00) I worked one year and wasn't paid or anything. The next year I got a beautiful saddle blanket. As a thank you or as pay. And then, after that, of course I had to be sixteen to get the job. So, when I was 16, 17, 18, 19, yes.

H: Let me ask you this. It may be a strange question but here you are, you're young girls and you're around these rough cowboys, swearing, gambling, drinking, fighting, that kind of thing. Was that a shock to you did you enjoy it?

A: That is the way people lived.

C: I don't think it impressed us one way or the other.

A: No it didn't. I do remember one guy who had been drinking and I took him down to the bachelor's quarters and told him to go to bed.

H: Did the drinking ever bother you?

A: No, because I didn't drink. It was just the way things are.

Amy: How about that time you rode downtown and they thought you were drunk but you weren't.

A That didn't bother me. (laughing)

H: Well, what's the story?

A: I was taking the horses down to the fairgrounds because the next day was going to be a rodeo. It was very, very hot and it was a long drive. I think there was just me and one other person. Anyway, it was very, very hot and we finally got them to the place and I was just exhausted. I went into the Wort Hotel and laid down on one of the couches because I was tired. Laughing.

H: Did you tie your horse up outside or

A: The horses were all over at the showplaces and I had to walk over. I was hot and tired, so I just laid down. I mean when you're hot and tired, you lay down. They thought I was drunk, so they gave me a room (laughing). They didn't want to have a drunk kid in the lobby, so they gave me a room, which was very nice.

H: Talk about the rodeos and talk about some of the competition, either here at the ranch or at the other ranches.

A: Well it wasn't quite fair because the Triangle X had really good horses. They cared about the rodeo more than White Grass. Frank, you know, *comme ci, comme ca*. He didn't know anything about which horses were very good or anything. We usually didn't do very well.

Amy: They were your main competitor, right?

C: Well, the kids ranch, what was it? They had so many horses.

A: They had to be in a different age group. They couldn't win. I guess they won sometimes. There was one year, and I must say, my family really did a lot for it. My mother really loved to decorate things and dress people up and my father would do anything. He would pack horses and do all kinds of things and that year, White Grass won.

- C: (1:00:12) They had floats and my mother worked very hard on that. I think it was a bar scene, shooting or whatever. I remember her looking all over Jackson Hole for a spittoon. That was a very big thing. We were looking for spittoons for days.
- A: She really was very, very artistic.
- C: She did not particularly like to ride, but she did love this one horse called Custer. He was a very light, yellow palomino. The reason she liked him so much, (1) he was gentle and, (2) he looked very beautiful with lupin in his mouth. This one year at the rodeo, she was talked into doing a couple's race. What you do is hold hands and go all around the track.
- H: Holding hands while riding the horses?
- C: Places like the Triangle X had all these hot shot and spirited horses. They had several contestants in this race and my mother and father each had a black horse. I can't remember which one it was but they had gentler horses. But speedy too. So, they managed to keep holding hands and get all around the racetrack and never broke their handhold and they won.
- A: Because the others broke their hands because their horses were too excited.
- C: It was very satisfying for my mother because she was not a horse woman really.
- Amy: Now Mom, I know in 1951, when you won that scrapbook at the rodeo. That was your prize. Do you remember how you won it or what you did to win it?
- A: Oh. I was always getting lots of prizes from the rodeo (laughing). I won the Dude-deen (female dude) race three years in a row.
- H: Was it speed?
- A: It was speed.
- C: Barrel racing too, right?
- A: No. I didn't do any barrel racing. I don't remember any barrel racing. I did barrel racing at the camp. That was funny. Just a few years ago, I took my grandchildren to a dude ranch. It was very boring for me but I wanted them to have the experience. At the end, they had some sort of a gymkhana, a contest. They had barrel racing and there were these young boys and a young woman, so I said, "Well, I'll do that too. I beat 'em all." (laughing). It was so satisfying and so interesting because when I came back, the girl who took my horse, she took it with a different sort of manner than she had given me the horse.
- H: I've heard that one of the cabins is usually called the Messler Cabin. Is that because your family came and that was your cabin for all those years because you came as a family.

- C: It had been the caretaker's cabin. It was the furthest one but it is no longer here. It was the furthest one away and people didn't like to have to walk that far. It was more comfortable than most. Still had the outhouse. The irrigation ditch ran nearby and so you put your food in to keep it cool. I remember one time my father went out either to get something out of the cooler or go to the outhouse and there was a bear there. Well that probably happened several times.
- A: Well, the one thing about that cabin was it had been the caretaker's cabin and the caretaker was Ollie Van Winkle. He and his wife lived here in the winter. They lived here with two teams of horses. That was the only way they could even get down to the road. I can't imagine what that was like. Anyway, they had the two teams in the barn and the barn was filled with hay. How he even managed to get to the barn from that distance - he was just a tough man. When we first came, he did all the irrigating, and the irrigating was done in a way that no one knows about today.
- H: How did he do it?
- A: He had these big sheets. Big flat, kind of like rubber and he would put them in to block the water from going where he wanted it to and so it would go down a little further. So, it was fine but after a while he'd have to move them to get them to the next place. So, he was out in that field all day long. He had a horse with him and he had these big pieces of, what were they? (C) probably canvas. (A) Yes. Canvas things and he'd move them from place to place. That's how the field got irrigated. And after he left, it never got irrigated again. It was really an old-fashioned work of art. He was really good at it. I marveled at watching him.
- H: Do both of you remember some of the other families who would come up year after year?
- C: Mainly the Matthews, Freddy and Jay.
- H: And was there a Suki Matthews?
- C: That was the mother. Her husband was a Philadelphia lawyer. He was very private. He just didn't fit in too well. But they came for many years. They didn't stay as long.
- H: You and your family continued to stay throughout the summer?
- A: Yes.
- H: What did your dad do that allowed him to take that kind of time off during the summer?
- A: I always wondered about that. (Laughing)
- C: He'd gotten out of the Navy and didn't he have an orange juice stand on the beach or was that before the Navy.

A: That was before the Navy.

C: After the Navy, he drove that little orange juice stand around delivering fresh orange juice.

A: This was not a way you could afford to bring your family to a ranch for the summer. So, I think what happened was in 1950, my grandfather died and my father inherited money from him.

C: But that doesn't explain from 1946 to 1950. Maybe grandma had some money. I don't know.

A: Well, I think we may have gotten a break because we stayed so long.

C: In those days, they were glad to have people. In the first couple of years, there were very few people.

H: And after the war?

A: We were living in the worst cabin. It really was.

C: It was probably very cheap because there was no bathroom, no nothing.

A: No electricity, no running water.

H: Did your cabin ever get or were you here when it got electricity? Or maybe even indoor plumbing?

A: No, it never got it. I think maybe we had water. (discussion about whether they had water or not). I think Frank hooked up something from the stream.

H: And then to bathe, you'd go to the bath house?

A: Yes

H: Did you have to sign up and say this is the Messler day at the bath house?

C: No. You just went whenever you felt dirty.

H: Did you have private stalls and hot water or was it just one big male or female?

A: There were about 3 shower stalls and maybe a few toilet stalls. The chore boy would come about 4 o'clock and start the fire going. When there wasn't a chore boy, there was me. (laughing) Because there was no chore boy, and because I wanted to get the fire going, the furnace going, I went in and there was no peat (sawdust and kerosene) around. And so I took this other thing (laughing), which happened to be gasoline and I threw it in..(H) Oh my gosh! Into the fire? (A) Into the fire and I ended up being pushed outside. The explosion pushed me right out the door I went in. So, I learned something there. (laughing).

- C: The peat is what Ann or the chore boy took around to each cabin to start the little fires. It was kerosene in sawdust.
- A: And we made the sawdust with this godawful thing that they had. It was a big, big long thing, had no safety on it at all. You would pull this thing down and it was raggedy, (stuttering), it was really dangerous.
- C: Even I could tell that.
- A: We sawed up all kinds of stuff. Made wood for the cabins. They'd have a supply of wood for the night and peat.
- H: You know, you talked about the Philadelphia attorney coming in and I'm getting a sense that some of the dudes had eastern wealth, eastern money. Here you are, you know, dad's a delivery man. Did it make a difference once you got to the ranch, what status you were or was there an equalizing effect of being here?
- C: Your ability to ride was probably more differentiating. If you could ride well, you're part of us.
- H: Part of the elite. It didn't matter if you were rich or poor
- A: I didn't think that there was much feeling about status. Unless somebody tried to lord it above somebody. (C) And then people just ignored them. (A) If they were snobs. You know there are some people who are very friendly and then there are others who are a little more snobby. Nobody cared. Ok, you don't have to talk to me.
- H: Did you have anything to do with The Rockefellers over at the J Y?
- A: I had to go wrangling over there one time but they didn't seem to mind, they didn't know I was there.
- H: Did they stay to themselves? There wasn't any kind of interaction? Did you know they were over there? (All) Oh yes.
- A: I remember passing old man Rockefeller coming down Death Valley one day. We were going up and he was coming down.
- C: The word got out that if you got on their property, they'd probably shoot you. I don't know if anybody believed it, but that was what was said.
- H: Why was it that you stopped coming to White Grass?
- C: We were in college and had other things going on in life. I don't remember specifically but...you probably came practically until you were married, didn't you?

A: Well, I had an unfortunate love attachment, broke up and I just didn't

H: With somebody here at White Grass?

A: Yes.

H: And, so it was too painful to come back?

A: I was ready to do some other things.

C: We were growing up.

A: I'd done it.

Amy: Why did your parents not come back?

C: They came back. After we quit, I think.

A: And then, we did take one trip to Europe that time (during one summer).

C: And so they didn't come that year, but I think they came later. But it was sort of not the same. They didn't have their cabin...

Amy: Because the cabin had burned?

C: I don't know when it had burned. But maybe they were getting older and they had other interests. I don't know. It was time to quit.

H: (1:15:45) I get a sense that you have kept up some kind of relationship with this place. You rode the pack trip with George Clover and you're here at the reunion. Talk about that. Maintaining that kind of relationship.

A: Oh, well, Carol and I drove out one year when we weren't working here and we just came out and slept in the bath cabin or something. Just because we loved it. I mean it was home. (C) Yes, it was as much a home as Connecticut. (A) I think that's the way I still feel. I feel it's home.

C: And you've kept in touch with a lot of people for all these years.

A: Oh yes. There were all these people, other people I had lifelong friendships with, people who worked here. Mostly people who worked here because you got to see them longer. People that came were only here for a couple of weeks. I mean you get to know them a little bit but it's not like day after day after day, doing things together, fixing things together and all that. Being a part of something. I felt very much a part of this place. And I was willing to do anything for it. That makes a difference.

H: I want to ask Amy a specific question. As you were growing up, did your mom tell you a lot of White Grass stories? Did you grow up with stories of riding and Frank and storms and bears? Talk about the influence of White Grass on you.

Amy Well yes. We heard all kinds of stories about this place and the people for as long as I can remember through our childhood. We knew that this was really, really important to mom. She wanted us to come here and we did a couple of times.

H: As dudes?

Amy: Yes.

H: What was that like and what years?

Amy: Our family came in 1974 as dudes for about a week, was that right mom?

A: I think so. We didn't have as much money.

Amy: We also came quite briefly when Aunt Carol brought her family so that both families could be here together with the cousins. It was only just a couple of days. We're not sure what year that was. '71? I don't remember. And then, mom wanted us to meet the Clovers and so we went on this pack trip with George. Did Tommy go too? One of George's sons? (A) Oh yes, I think so.

A: And then we helped to drive the horses over to DuBois, (WY).

C: Over to WY. For the winter.

Amy: And then my sister, Laurie, really had a similar kind of experience and feeling that mom did. She was desperate to be in the west and she spent many months somehow or another managing to get here, including getting hired by George Clover's family to work in their outfitting business. So, she was out on pack trips and hunting camps.

A: Didn't she work for that witch one year? Nona? No.

C: She's the one of Ann's three daughters who had that similar feeling about Wyoming, about the west, about being out and being on horseback.

Amy: She's also, like her mom, a great rider. So that, in a way, not exactly, but in a way sort of carried on with my sister Laurie. She's the one who should be here for this interview.

H: Before we move toward conclusion, is there some experience or story that you would like to have recorded that we haven't talked about or that I just didn't know to ask about?

C: I was trying to remember. Two stories. One is one time, in the early '50s people didn't know anything about the west. People thought it was sort of a funny place to live. There

were no subways or anything. Some dudes were coming into the airport, which was somewhat unusual. Most people got picked up from the train in Rock Springs. But these people, I don't know if they were special, I don't remember exactly but they were being picked up from the airport. Somebody had the evil idea that we were going to really fool them so the driver that was picking them up said, "We've had some trouble recently with some of the Indians. Some of the young bucks have been drunk and causing trouble." So, he talked that up as they were driving toward White Grass. Well, we kept some horses in. There was about half a dozen of us, some of them had feathers and such. Everybody was on their horses bareback and we all, when we saw the car coming in, went racing out whooping and hollering. (laughing)

H: (1:22:23) Scaring the poor dudes. Welcome to White Grass!

C: Exactly. That's the kind of thing that went on. And then another time Frank decided he was going to have a kids pack trip. And we went up the usual way, Granite Canyon to the loop around to Death Canyon. He was going to do a shortcut because he remembered it from when he was younger. Well, he didn't remember it. (laughing). We ended up, I was sort of in that limbo phase, I wasn't quite a dude but I was there to maybe help with the other kids. We ended up, I remember, late in the afternoon, going down this steep cliff practically, leading the horses because it was so steep and all these little kids going down into Death Canyon. I remember there was a can of peaches, I think, and it was passed up and down. Everyone was allowed to have ½ of a slice of peach and a little bit of juice. It was dark when we finally got to the trail and, when we got to White Grass, there were some pretty upset parents. I don't remember if my parents were even there. (laughing). I'm sure they weren't upset, but there were some pretty upset parents on this kid's pack trip. It was so dark. You could hardly see anything. Sometimes, the horse ahead of you, his shoe would hit a rock and you'd see a spark.

A: I had a time like that once. Nicky Fox and I were going off to climb a falls. We wanted to get back some place way back in the woods. We were on our horses. We tied our horses up and went off. We weren't quite to the place that we wanted to go and we knew it was getting dark. But we thought, oh well, we'll just go ahead. So, we went ahead and did it. Well, then we started down and by this time it was getting really dark. We couldn't find the horses. We didn't know where we were. There was no trail. We were wandering and it was getting later and later. I sat down and I heard this sound (kind of stomping), the sound of a horse putting his hoof down. We found the horses. We got on and fortunately got to the trail and who should be coming along the trail but Frank Galey. Ooooh. Frank was on my own horse that nobody else rode but me. But because he had to come to save me, I guess our parents were away. He came and met me, we turned around and he didn't say anything and I didn't say anything about it.

C: I wonder if he rode your horse because you kept it in at night.

- A: He did. He'd been wanting to ride that horse the whole time and I never offered it but this time he had his chance.
- H: (1:26:49) Let me ask each of you one final question and it's kind of the same question but it's sort of about the personal legacy of the White Grass experience. What the experience here has meant to you, how it has influenced your life, what it means to you today. Let's start with the youngest, Amy.
- Amy: Well, I guess I know that it's really, really important to my mom and on any given day, I jokingly say it's a tossup, "What comes first, her children or White Grass." Somedays we're on top and some days we're not. But that gives you a sense of how deep and meaningful the connection is. Cuz it's important to her and I love her and so it's important to me.
- H: Why do you think it's so deep? I mean, I'll ask each of you who had the bigger experience why it was so deep but why do you think it was? It's profound or it's a vacation or it's more than that.
- Amy: Clearly it was not a vacation. You think about those formative years figuring out who you are and what kind of person you're going to be and what your life is going to be like. You have an experience with so much freedom, so much opportunity, something so different than the vast majority of your peers, it's bound to shape your view of the world, who you're going to be and what you're going to carry forward. Certainly, the strong sense of independence, can do attitude. The qualities that you hear in these stories that you hear from my mom and her sister are hallmarks of who they are and who they've been ever since.
- H: Carol, we'll give Ann the last word. The personal significance and the legacy in your life.
- C: It was not really like a two-week vacation. It seemed like almost as much time here as during the school year. Obviously, it wasn't but it seemed like half our life was here and so that's obviously a significant part of your life. And so, it was like home. It was the independence, we certainly learned to be independent.
- Since my parents were off fishing, Ann was off wrangling and I was in this kind of limbo, I learned to fend for myself, or be lonely. It was a different thing. There were good parts and there were bad parts as far as I was concerned, so I don't have quite the emotional attachment that Ann does. For one thing, she was helping to build it, helping to keep it going and I was in this kind of limbo, not quite dude and not staff so I have a little different attitude toward it. I loved it when I was here but I don't have the same attachment (A), but you were lonely. (C) I have a deep attachment but it's not the same as Ann's.
- H: So Ann, the significance of the White Grass experience in your life.
- A: I think it's made me incredibly independent. The friendships that I made with some of the people who worked here were lifelong. That's been important. And that's important because

my sister and I never really had any people in our lives growing up. We were really alone. I felt that. For years. It was sort of family. I just loved the life and I loved being able to do things. I like to be able to be competent and it gave me a lot of that.

H: (1:32:14) At the beginning of this interview, you mentioned that you had just undergone some kind of serious illness and yet, in spite of that, you've come out all the way from Oregon to be here this reunion weekend. Talk about that.

A: I've been looking forward to it very, very much. I knew that this would probably be the last time that I was ever going to be here. I mean, I don't know that for sure but I'm getting older. There's no way you can come here and be part of it. It's gone. It's not gone but unless you have people doing things, it's not alive.

H: Is it alive now? I mean, it's no longer a dude ranch but the cabins are being rebuilt and refurbished. Carol is shaking her head no.

C: No. It's a beautiful memorial skeleton, but it's not alive.

H: What do you think? Do you pretty much agree?

A: That's pretty much it, yes. You have to have, yes. Thing, things aren't important. It's the vitality and the things that come from inside that are important, to me.

H: Let me ask one final question and I don't mean to be negative or anything but, what if this is your last opportunity to come here, what message would you leave to not only your posterity but to people who will wander through here? If there's that opportunity to leave that kind of message based on the White Grass experience, what would you say to the future?

A: Well I would think that it would be hard for people to understand without some explanation of what the living ranch was about. I think it needs to have some real stories to go with it because otherwise it's just wooden cabins. I guess that's the main thing. I guess different people must have been given different reasons for caring so much. They may not be the same reasons that I have. It would be interesting to know what other people's reason for their passion for this place. Part of it is who people are inside. People are different. Carol and I being so totally alone in our lives have a different take on it than somebody that's used to a big gang of friends and all that stuff. It helps to mold you, this place, it really did. I mean, I went off and did all kinds of things that I never would have done if I hadn't had the feeling that I could do it. At one point, I decided that my little town in Connecticut needed a different leader. The three selectmen that run the town and I decided that I would be one of those. And the guys that said, "No, we don't want you". I said, "Well, that's too bad and I went ahead and became a selectman."

H: (1:37:31) You ran for office and won?

A: I ran for office and won. Well, it took several different things but I did. I did that for 8 years. But, I wanted to come out too much and you have to be there to do your job but after 8 years it was enough. I don't know that I would have ever done that if I hadn't had the growing up here. I did everything that any of the men ever did. I drove a team. In fact, the people down the way lent the White Grass their team and they said, "We'll lend to you, but we want Annie to be the one to drive them." That just gives you a little more self-assurance.

When I was quite little, I was driving a mower and the horses were let out. I wanted to finish the little patch that we had to finish before we could go in. The horses were very anxious to get home. We finished the patch and we started in and they were trotting along and I was trying to hold them in. But, we hit the irrigation ditches and I was thrown up, bounced up, did a double somersault backwards and fortunately landed just behind the cutter bar. But I never let go of the reins. I finally, I have a big fat tummy, I dragged along, finally stopped and climbed back up on the mower and nobody ever knew. It just makes you feel confident. I think that's what White Grass has given me.

Amy: I have a question. You said that George always treated you like he would anybody else, that there was never a gender issue. Were any of the dudes surprised to come out and find this woman wrangler out here with the men?

A: I don't know. I never asked them.

H: But they never treated you different, with kid gloves...

A: Oh no. I was treated exactly the same.

H: In an era where that would have been absolutely unique. You know that? '40s, '50s

A: I don't think that there were any other woman wranglers at any of the other ranches except the woman at the Triangle X. Another thing, the men would swear up and down all the time, but I felt that I was not to say those words and I never did. I know that George would not have wanted me to start saying, "You goddamn son of a bitch" (laughing) even though I heard it several times a day, it just wasn't something I was supposed to do. Those were the only differences found. It was self-imposed.

H: Well, thank you, all three for a wonderful morning of memories.

A: Well thank you for asking us.

(1:42:29) End of interview.