

White Grass Heritage Project “Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEES: Reno (RH) and Kelly (K) Headley

INTERVIEWER: Roger Butterbaugh (R)

White Grass Ranch, Moose, Wyoming

DATE: July 18, 2019

Transcribed by Julie Greene in 2020

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

R: (0:30) My name is Roger Butterbaugh. I am the coordinator of the White Grass Heritage Project. This recording is being done on July 18, 2019. We are sitting in the Hammond Cabin at the White Grass Ranch and I have the pleasure of sitting with Reno and Kelly Headley from over near Lander, Wyoming. These 2 people were at the ranch in 1985 and on the ranch the very day that Frank Galey died. Reno came to the ranch in 1982 and stayed until 1985 and Kelly came in 1985. Obviously, the two of you met and something must have happened because you’re married and have been married for a number of years. Welcome to the both of you.

The purpose of this interview is to explore the experiences of these 2 people while at the ranch. But first, I want to do a brief section of 5 or 6, 7 minutes of the background for each of you and find out what it was or what had been happening in your life before you ended up at White Grass. So, Reno, because you were here longer, if we can start with you. What state of the country were you born in?

RH: I was born here in Wyoming, in Riverton.

R: In Riverton, and were you born and lived in a city, were you on a ranch?

RH: Wind River Indian Reservation. That’s mainly where I am from.

R: How many years did you live on the reservation?

RH: As far as I can recollect, maybe 2 or 3 years and then I was foster cared.

R: Okay, in that area of the state?

RH: Yes, then basically foster cared until I was about 18 and then, I was an adult, supposedly, from there.

R: Yea, well, we are all mature at 18, right? Don’t we all know! So, at 18, what happened then? Were you out on your own?

RH: Well, up to a point, kinda on my own, I started working over at Lost Creek Ranch when I came to Jackson. My foster family is from this area, from Jackson, family by the last name of Neil. So, that is kinda where my adult working started.

R: Meaning ranching, horses...?

K: Rodeo.

RH: Rodeos and that. But, we grew up, (that's) what my family was doing. I was on a horse probably from the time I was 3 ½, when I went to live with the Neil family. They were a ranching family, so they ran cattle, had horses so that's where I started riding. So, most of my stuff was just that...ranching, horses, and rodeo and that sort of thing.

R: (4:40) So, I would assume with your lifelong involvement with horses, ranching, that sort of thing, that you took to it, that it was a good experience that you liked.

RH: Yea, I love horses, just don't get to do them as often as I'd like.

R: What were you doing in the rodeo? What was that about?

RH: Well, my foster family, my dad, which I call my dad, he was a calf roper. It was just important for him that we learned to rope. I was never big enough for calf roping, size wise, so I took mainly to team roping. So, that is what I mainly did. The last time I roped a calf was in Jackson Hole, I ended up with a mouth full of dirt, choking and spitting and in the middle of the arena with a whole audience watching. That was the last time I ever roped a cow.

R: And, how old were you when you did that?

RH: I was 18.

R: Okay, 18

K: He is being modest. He was an amazing team roper.

R: I might have been 17 at the time, I can't remember. It was very humiliating. So, you are saying team, like t-e-a-m?

RH: Yes.

R: Explain that, because it is not something I am familiar with.

RH: It is where you have 2 people on horses and your first person is your header and he ropes the horns and of the steer or cow so then he dallys to his horn and pulls the steer up and turns him in a manner that allows the heeler to come in behind the steer and rope the steer's hind feet. He dallys and stretches the steer out.

R: And, so which role did you play?

RH: (6:56:) I was a header.

R: Good, huh?

K: Yes, very good, I've heard stories.

R: And, they were all true.

K: They weren't always from him.

RH: I was competent enough that I did not fall off.

R: So, how old were you when you actually left living with your adoptive parents/foster parents?

RH: I was about 18.

R: And, then where did your travels go after that?

RH: Well, went to Lost Creek Ranch. I started actually working there when I was 17 at the time, almost 18. I was 18 at the end of the summer, and I worked there 2 years; I worked there in 1980 and 1981 and then came here to White Grass.

R: (8:04) And, your time (at White Grass) was 1982, 83, 84, 85, and the ranch closed in 1985, of course. Okay, Kelly. You are not from Wyoming. Where did you come from?

K: I grew up in southern Illinois.

R: Cornfields?

K: Further south and I was more in the Mississippi River basin area. I grew up in the bluffs. I helped a friend of mine run, what we called, a lady's farm. She was a lady farmer. She had a hand full of cows, horses, and I latched to her as a babysitter and never got off a horse again, if I could help it. I helped her run the stables. We ran a whole stable with children and teens and stuff.

R: So, your involvement starts about what year with horses?

K: I was probably about 12. My mother was a horse lover and I just loved horses. So, every time I could finagle something, I did. So, I was given instruction riding for a while but we were just turned loose in the back hills of southern Illinois riding a lot. Then, I went away to college one year and did showing. I did a lot of showing in college with an equestrian team and always wanted to live out west but had no idea what that was.

R: What attracted you to that? You said, you wanted to do it but say you didn't know (what the west was).

K: I had never even heard of a dude ranch and a friend of mine got a job working for Teton Village, for Bill Scott's concessions. He was a year younger than I was. So, I came home from college and he finagled me into riding out with him and his parents out here to the concessions. I came over Togwotee Pass and it was over! We were hooked, I was done! I was so jealous, it was unbelievable.

We dropped him off and we were here for a week. I talked his parents into driving me from ranch to ranch. And, I mean I had never done anything like this and knocked on doors. It was all their pre-seasons and they hadn't all hired and I wanted a wrangler job. I didn't care what I had to do. I wanted a wrangler job. I didn't care what I had to do. I would have done anything. I would have dug holes, just as long as I could live out here somewhere. Anywhere from Heart Six, Triangle X, R Lazy S. I was striking out. They all needed boat drivers. I did not know how to do that or horseshoers and I couldn't do that either.

I called Rick Sealing at the White Grass. I looked him up in the phone book as I was standing at the KOA. He said we were going to lose a girl wrangler in July and I said I would be back. I had no idea but I went back.

At the time (back home), I was training 3 colts that I had to at least get started. So, I started those 3 colts over those weeks and then told the lady I was working for that I was going to spend the summer in Jackson. She knew I would never be back. She had been out here and she said I would never finish school. Never came back, never came back.

F: What was the school?

K: (11:05) Southern Illinois. I was down doing pre-vet work.

R: Oh, interesting.

K: That is what I wanted. Anything to do with animals but I got out here, came out in a little bitty Carmen Gia (VW). I hooked up with another buddy, who just didn't have anything to do that summer. I loaded a duffle bag and told my parents where I was going and they waved me on. We drove across country, and I came on to the White Grass on the fifth of July; spent the Fourth of July at Bill Scott's. It was insane. I rolled in on the fifth and it was all daisies in the fields.

R: The fields were filled with daisies.

K: The field was filled with daisies, it was ... I was convinced that I would get a job from Rick.

R: Do you recall the feeling of coming through the gate and seeing the daisies on a western ranch.

K: Yea, it was breath taking. It was what every storybook that I had ever read - there was no other way - it was picturesque. I was awe stuck and then Rick took me down to meet Frank and Nona the very first day. They didn't have a cabin ready for me so Rick was trying to send somebody to get Chris to clean the room up. It was an interesting greeting. Frank offered the kid, that gave me a ride, a job too but I think he went back and worked for Scott. He knew he wasn't going to stay. He had other things back in Illinois.

R: So, the West, the mountain, what were, if you had to say, are 5 things that were magnetic to you or perfect for you in your image. What would you say those things were?

K: The mountains, these mountains definitely. I spent some time as a child in Flagstaff, Arizona in the wide-open spaces, the freedom, the independence. You could just go and go and never worry about it and I just loved it. I just wanted to be out there in the fresh air.

I grew up with 16 siblings so it was a crowded house. Space was not something I had a lot of. It was in the country. Every book that I had read about the West and anything to do with animals and I just wanted to be here. I wanted to be a cowboy and when you rolled into Jackson that first time all you saw were black hats and black coats on the boardwalks. It was all cowboy town, that is all that Jackson was back then. Had to get me a black hat.

R: (14:02) So, you tried?

K: I definitely was going to try. I didn't own a good pair of cowboy boots but I had found something. I can't remember.

R: Perfect, perfect. Well, you say that with a lot of joy in your voice and you say that like I (Kelly) found my spot and you're here and never left.

K: Oh, yea, I definitely was not leaving.

R: (14:26) Okay, let's move forward and come back to Reno because you were on White Grass longer than Kelly. So, my first questions to you are about 1982, 83 and 84 and we will do 1985 together. You were hired as a wrangler?

RH: No, actually when I first came here (White Grass) I was hired as maintenance.

R: Maintenance, that is news to me. What were your jobs, what didn't you do?

RH: I didn't cook, clean cabins but just about anything else.

R: Give me an example of 4 or 5 jobs that you would do as maintenance.

RH: We had to mend all fences. He had to clear all the trails, chainsaw everything open, and feed horses, that sort of thing. But, when they found out (and this was mainly because of Little John, who was a wrangler that I had known from before) that I did horses, that I could ride, they wanted me to help them wrangle early mornings because they needed help in the early mornings,

R: So 'wrangle the horses' early morning and meant doing what?

RH: That meant getting up at 4 o'clock and, I should say, rain or shine which there was no shine and often a lot of rain. The first of the season is really wet, really cold but we had to get up, get our horses, saddle up. Then we had different areas of the lease, where we run the horses on and we would just decide on the lease, just depending on the boss at the time, Curly Temple. He would decide where he wanted you to run.

R: So, these were parcels down in the flat area, in the meadow or are these areas up in the mountains?

RH: These are all areas up on the mountain.

R: So, why are the horses up there?

RH: Just horses pasture, green grass and a lot of it.

R: So, the plan was, or the routine for the ranch was, at the end of the day, turn them loose and they would gravitate up the mountain to graze all night.

RH: Yea, we would turn them out the back gate that ran onto the lease and then they would find their own. All those horses had particular areas that they liked. Some horses would go way up high and then there was one spot called "the mountain" where they would go. Certain ones would go there and certain ones would go to the ridge. So, they would just scatter where they would like to go.

R: (17:27) So, how many wranglers and how many horses are you trying to pull off the mountain ever morning?

RH: Well, the number of wranglers depended on how many; say there were 5 or 6 wranglers and then there might be 2 or 3 that were extra maintenance staff or there could even be cabin people that rode that would come in and help.

R: You are talking about dudes, guests?

RH: Well, sometimes dudes would help us but mostly it was hired help.

R: How many horses?

RH: You know, I always used to say about 120 but I keep thinking it was probably closer to 100 and that depended on colts and mares, which ones were down. Sometimes, we kept those down here on the ranch.

R: William "Dub" Lloyd, who was also here in 1983 with you as a wrangler has also done an oral history too. He oftentimes used the figure around 120. That was his figure.

RH: Yea, there were a lot of horses and then when you scatter them out up on the mountain then there are...

R: Some of those horses had a bell around their throat?

RH: (18:56) Yea, there were some of them that we belled and a lot of them we didn't. But the belling were the leaders. Some of those horses were like the ringleader for "Let's hide." It just made it easier for them to be found.

R: So, you are up at 4 o'clock, you are probably leaving here 4, 4:15, heading up. Have you had breakfast?

RH: No.

R: So, you are up the mountain looking for horses. What time did those horses need to be down here so they are going to be used for the dudes and guests of the ranch.

RH: We tried to have the horses down here by 7:30/8 o'clock. Depending on which run you made, you could be a little earlier. My run tended to be closer to 8 because there was a lot of area to cover.

R: Was that a good job or enjoyable job?

RH: Oh, in some ways, we groaned about it but yea, you get up in the morning with nice fresh air. And, you are riding, so who doesn't like to ride. Then, on my particular run, I used to do the mountain a lot, we would have a particular spot that we could sit up there and watch the sun rise. And, we would sit up there and watch the sun rise every morning, in the same spot. We would just sit there and wait for it to come up because we needed the light. There was no point messing around in the dark, so you just wait for the light to get up. I think everybody on their runs had a spot where they would stop and wait to get light.

R: So, when you would do that were you alone or was there another wrangler with you?

RH: There were usually 2 of us.

R: So, you wrangled in pairs in a certain area?

RH: Yea, and that was, 2 parts, usually there was enough work that they would have help covering one spot. You needed 2 people really. Then, also if you got into trouble, you needed somebody to get you out of it. If you got bucked off, your partner could catch your horse and help you get up off the ground.

R: Guess that happened at times.

RH: It happened often enough and you didn't want to be by yourself.

K: You have to understand that these are cowboys who were also out until 2 in the morning drinking, prior to getting up at 4 o'clock and they always did. So, there was probably some interesting rides up to the starting point. I've heard stories.

R: (22:00) So, I mean really and truly, the comment you made about watching the sunrise. Was that a special time? Describe that.

RH: Yea, you know it was like you witness the earth coming alive again. You know, it goes to sleep at night. And, then you can be there and watch the sun come. It was like seeing the earth wake up every day. And, it was always a different type of sunrise. Sometimes they were kinda gloomy and sometimes the sky was really, really bright and sometimes the skies were really, really red. So, every day was a different sunrise. It wasn't the same thing every day.

R: Was that a time of emotionally setting yourself up for the day, preparation...

RH: It was like a deep breath before the plunge.

R: Got it, kinda letting go of yesterday and this is new.

RH: And, then thinking Oh, I am so hungover, this is going to be really rough.

R: And, then the sun comes up. Course, you were at that age, 19 or 20, you could do that sort of thing.

RH: Maybe a bit of the wild side, everybody here was.

R: Let's talk about 1985. Kelly, in conversations that the 3 of us have had, you've talk about the staff being a pretty close group of people to be with. Would you go so far to say family ties, sort of thing?

RH: Yea, we were a big family. You know families within kinda a family too. The wranglers were really close. A lot of that came from when you put your life in your partner's hand, when you are out there. Plus, you had the rest of the crew there. We depended on the cook staff to cook food. You know we depended on the wait staff to get us our food. We couldn't go into the kitchen and do it ourselves so they did those things for us. The bedding, all the girls at the cabins, they washed all the sheets and everything so when you start looking at services, they provided services to us and we provided services for them. So, you ended up being a family because you did stuff for each other. In this particular way, we were really close. Not everybody got along, we had times when people didn't get along. As a majority, most of us got along really well.

R: Frank was the owner of the ranch, what was he like as leader or would you call him the leader of the ranch?

RH: Oh, yea, he was certainly the main guy.

R: He made his presence known.

RH: Yes, and he was very generous and always helpful and without a doubt, he was actually really smart. He taught me a lot of different things, a lot of different tricks of doing stuff that I normally would not have even thought of doing if I hadn't been around him.

R: (26:10) Did most people think of him in those terms that you just described?

RH: I think so. I know all the wranglers did; all the wranglers loved Frank.

R: Some of the wranglers came back year after year, which would suggest that they had had a good experience the year before or they would have gone somewhere else.

RH: Yea, there were some of those wranglers, some of the older guys, who I think had been here 10, 12, 15 years. They might have missed a year here or there but they would come back.

R: So, wranglers would come in the spring and leave in the fall, so where would the wranglers go wintertime?

RH: I think most of them would go south to wrangle horses. I don't think all of them did but some had different jobs they could do in the winter.

R: You were a young fellow in those first couple of years at the ranch, how would you describe the guests? What were they like?

RH: Well, the guests were, you knew them to basically have more money than you had or else I would be a guest. So, when you take into consideration, that from their point of view, from where they come from, they are paying for an experience because this is their vacation. They came to a guest ranch to see cowboys, to see horses, to ride horses and see the mountains. And so, we thought very highly of our guests, most of them. Every once and a while, you get one you would like to drop off in the lake with an anchor around the neck.

R: I heard a couple of wrangler stories where they would say, well, let's give that one so and so horse and we will see how cocky they are after that.

RH: Yes, we did have a horse that we had, Rooster.

K: Rooster, oh my goodness.

RH: Rooster had 5 legs, maybe 5 ½ legs. He had no gait, I swear, unless he was in a slow walk; he was the roughest horse ever.

K: He was horrible.

RH: We all tried him. I think all of us tried riding because we thought he can't be that bad - you are just not doing something right. I tried him once and said I am never getting on him again. My wife tried him, and not getting on him again. I don't know what it was about him but if we could get away with it, that person we don't like would ride Rooster.

K: And, he was beautiful and sweet, just a horrible ride.

RH: Yea, like I said, we had a few, I might misspeak, if my memory serves me well, I think they have had guests who actually had to leave the ranch that, for whatever reason, were too demanding or too mean to the employees, and that sort of thing. They were just asked to leave.

K: (29:59) Frank backed up his staff. 100%

R: Thank you for saying that. In all the time, I never heard that statement that he would ask people to leave if they were that disruptive.

K: He wasn't after the money. He said he "Wanted people to enjoy my place. It is still my place." He enjoyed his guests. If he didn't enjoy you, he didn't want you there. He was a happy guy.

RH: When I came to work here, I think it was Frank that told me when I was taking out rides, "Just remember, when you are out there, you're the boss. You say what goes, and I back you up." So, he backed us on whatever we said out there because it is safety. Certain things you can't do. And, people would want to do something and you had to say no. And, if you had to be really forceful, you just really got forceful about it. Sometimes they would complain but Frank would say the wranglers, they are the boss out there.

- K: And the wranglers would do anything Frank asked. Vice a versa... he would bail you out of jail as well or pick you up if your truck broke down. He was there.
- RH: One time before I got here, the crew, quite a bit of them, ended up in jail. When he got them, he had the horse trailer to haul them back in. A 4-horse trailer, so there was enough room to bring them all back to the ranch.
- K: He brought them all back.
- R: Is this the story when the wranglers went down and cut all the signs along the highway? Is this the story?
- RH: No, that is a different story. I can't remember what actually happened and it was before I got here. But they ended up with most of them in jail. And. Frank just came and bailed them out and he brought the horse trailer with him and brought everybody back. And, before they even started back, he just stopped off at the Wort Hotel and told the crew to come in and get a beer. That was the kind of guy Frank was. He wasn't mad, he wasn't going to punish them or anything. He was like let's go get a beer and then we will go to the ranch.
- R: It was a playmate, don't do that again.
- RH: Well, I don't think he would expect something not to happen again. If it came up, he just handled it and that was the way he did it.
- R: Do you get the feeling the things the wranglers would do that would get them in trouble, would be the things Frank would have done at some point in his life?
- RH: Oh, yea. Frank grew up in a kinda different era of the valley. Him being older, there were wild things that went on in the valley. People just had a blind eye to it, like okay. People used to ride horses through the Cowboy Bar, right through it. You won't see that now. And, if you do now, the police are involved, courts are involved, you'll get fined.
- K: I was told once that this is the lowest paying ranch of any of them. It was like you work for dirt out there but staff was probably the loyalist of anybody. The wranglers and staff didn't work out here because they were expecting a big paycheck. They were loyal and it was great, just a great place to work. You just loved it. I would have done it for free. So, that was the first feeling you got out here, this was a loyal crew, everybody belonged. You belonged to White Grass.
- R: That tone was set by Frank?
- K: Oh, without a doubt. That is just how it happened. I don't know how it worked that way but when you walked in the barn, you belonged. There was no initiation. If Frank hired you, you were part of the group right then and there.
- R: (34:35) Did you get the feeling that knowing Frank was a leader for you all and he was a leader for the guests in terms for setting the tone (for the guests) that this is how you deal with people working as employees here. Whoever the staff people, the roles they may play, the guests were

told or expected to treat the staff with respect. That was very clear if you were coming in, even if you had lots of money. And most people did treat you well?

K: Yes. I never got a feeling of the money.

RH: Every once in a while, we had some guests who were really a little overboard but as employees you just treat them the best you can and just work around them.

R: Did the guests use a lot of alcohol?

RH: Probably more than most any other guest ranch I've seen. But you know, half the time, half the guests were lined up down at the wrangler's cabins and sat around the campfire and had a party with us.

R: And, during your days here at the ranch, did Frank have his cocktail parties at 4:00 whatever? That was typical in earlier decades.

RH: I think it was less when I was around but I think they still had them. I don't think they were quite as involved but I do believe that they would share a cocktail hour but usually we, as wranglers, weren't around that cocktail hour much. Every once in a while.

R: (36:37) Were you told not to do certain things with the guests, like don't go with a female to town.

RH: Not so much that but just for proper sake, some things looked nice not to have certain things go on. But, if you had guests who wanted to go to town, we would have the whole ranch in town at the bar, all the guests minus the kids. White Grass tended to do things as a whole, a lot of times everybody would look around in town and say, "Oh, White Grass is here" because when you walked in, it was wranglers, all the girl wranglers, it was the kitchen crew, it was the cabin crew plus about ½ the guests from the ranch.

R: Was that true for the other ranches? When you went to town did you see that sort of thing?

RH: Not necessarily

K: Not at other ranches I had worked at. It was actually discouraged, which was hard for me because my first ranch was here.

R: What was discouraged?

K: The guests and crew intermingling because here it was encouraged so when I went off to other dude ranches, after we left here, it was discouraged and it was really weird for me. Because "What do you mean (at White Grass), we are suppose to talk to them and sit around and have a wonderful conversation with these people?" But, a lot of the other heads of ranches did not encourage that.

R: There is a famous rancher in the valley, who is now deceased, Jack Hyler. He did a lot of ranching, wrote several books before he died and he was around in 2011, 12, when the dudes and

wranglers here had a reunion. He sat on the front porch here with several wranglers and dudes (because he had his own dude ranch for a long time) and he looked at them and said, "I've said it before and I will say it again, I don't get it. I don't get it why, given all the years that have passed, you people still come back to this ranch. I can't think of any place in this valley where that happens." How would you answer that?

RH: (39:15) You were here for the ambiance of this ranch. Those guests came back not because they had a good sauna and the nicest hot tubs and didn't have bats in the cabin, I mean they were pretty worn down. They came because it was a family; it was the crew you knew you could tease with them and joke with them. These guys were gonna make sure when a dude came in - they would make sure she got a good one. They made sure her saddle fit, they rearranged it. And many times, we took people to exactly where they wanted to go because they wanted to go. Where was it, Windy Point? On Sunday mornings, because everyone wanted to have their church -- they would get us up on our days off and say, "Can you guys take us up?" And sure enough, we would take them up. It was fun, you were here for fun. It wasn't because it was a job. You were here because you wanted to be here. You could leave any time. You were here because you wanted to be.

R: You are describing that your staff enjoyed being around people.

K: Yea, you didn't take the job unless you enjoyed being around everybody else. So, if you were just a snot about it, you didn't stick around very long. There was no judging. They didn't judge you and you didn't judge them whether they were guests with lots of money and you were just a wrangler with a grubby old hat. You weren't judged.

R: Were those questions even asked, like what do you do back in Philadelphia or whatever?

K: No, I had no idea what any of them did, I had no idea.

RH: I mean there were a few of them that you knew because their last name was Johnson.

R: As in Johnson & Johnson?

RH: You knew who they were and where their money came from but that didn't make any difference to us. They had been coming for years and they were just part of our family.

R: Well, you alluded to the fact that the facilities here in the early 80's to 85 were not 4 Star. So, it may be if you were a guest and you needed 4 Star, you wouldn't come to White Grass. So, that certainly set the tone for what to expect and what they were comfortable with and that other things besides amenities were why they were here.

K: Yea, they all could have gone to a 4 Star anything if they wanted to. They didn't come here because they wanted a 4 Star ranch. They occasionally had to go get the guy to get the hot water up and things broke and fell apart. Never did I hear anybody complain, not once.

R: Well, in your time here did you have the sense that the ranch was strapped for cash, that the finances were on the low end? The context of the questions was why weren't the cabins fixed up? You had said earlier in our conversations, that the ranch was held together with duct tape, bailing

wire, string and that sort of thing. How did the staff perceive it like 'Frank, why don't you fix things up?'

RH: Well, a lot of it was in the years that I was here. We knew that Frank had sold and we knew the ranch would eventually go to the Park. So, it was like from his point of view, we could understand why you are not going to make a 4 Star resort when Frank could die at any minute and this 4 Star resort could now be the property of the Park. And so, we could understand why so and so is broke. So, let's just fix it so we can get it going and good enough.

R: (43:47) Help me with your statement. The staff bought that. Did you get that thought from Frank or was that assumed?

RH: No, it was more assumed so we weren't going to be saying "Well, gee, Frank fix this right." We knew that eventually it was not going to be Frank's and that it was going to be the Park's. There was no point in Frank putting millions of dollars into this place when he was going to lose it.

R: So, to do the things that needed to be done, given even what you just said, you didn't have the sense that there was nothing in the bank, there was money to pay staff.

RH: We always got paid and there was always enough.

K: That was a year of hot dogs, wasn't it?

RH: Yea, there was a year of hot dogs.

K: I wasn't there but I heard the story that the staff got nothing but hot dogs for a month because somebody forgot to buy groceries.

RH: Or maybe the hot dogs were on sale so they bought lots of hot dogs.

K: So, the crew ate lots of hot dogs.

R: So, I am going to ask you both about Nona, Frank's wife, but Kelly, let's bring you more into this because you were here in 85, that was your first summer. What were your responsibilities?

K: I was a girl wrangler. It didn't make a difference. When there were kids and teens here, there were 3 of us and we pretty much got assigned the kids and teens. When there weren't, we took the adults, we did the same thing. Reno and I would ride together just like I would do with Phil, Steve or whomever. It didn't matter or Rick would assign us and say why don't you just go with them.

R: So, what did you do with the teens?

K: The teens, we took them anywhere like we would do anyone else. We would give them a load of horses and take them on rides that were probably more open pasture. We did a lot more loping. They didn't care to see the sights. They wanted to get out and ride and play. Chris and I took them once. They wanted to go to Moose Village. It rained most of that time and we had all 15 totally riding along the mountain. They got wet but we managed to get them all singing before we got in. We ran into one of the other ranch's group coming the other way and they said, "Well, I take it

that there is no wildlife because we were not quiet.” We took out at the R Lazy S, and we probably weren’t suppose to. I know we hit all their culverts and jumps as we went through their arena.

RH: I think there was kinda an agreement between R Lazy S and Frank because we all did it. We all did it. When we came back from Teton Village to go to the river, we went through that part of R Lazy S. So, I think there was some kind of agreement that we could use that. I am not sure if they do it anymore.

K: It was just fun with the kids. If they all wanted to stop and play in the ditch, we stopped and played in the ditch. We were out just having a good time. I remember we would just go up to Phelps and swim. We would take them all up there and just spend the whole day and swim and they would be jumping off the rocks the whole time. We would just hang out with them and have fun. A lot of times, some of the returning teens knew the ranch better than we did. They would say hey can we go? And we would head up to wherever they wanted to go.

RH: We knew we are the wranglers but you guys know where you are going, so tell us where to go.

R: You are in charge of the lead.

RH: The first time I went up to Stuart’s Draw, Curtis said, “Hey, Reno, I need you to take this all day ride up to Stuart’s Draw. I can’t remember who the guests were but there were like 7 of them, so they are going to go with you and they will show you how to get there.” I said “Good, because I have no idea where we are going.” When we started the ride I said, “Point me, which trail?” Then, it would be okay, which way do we go from here. So, it was kinda funny. I was supposedly the wrangler, the leader in charge, and the guests were saying go that way, take that trail.

K: That was why a lot of the guests returned, it was that.

R: Guest would stay how long?

RH: (48:46) Usually a week or 2 weeks.

K: There were some that stayed longer. Benedicts stayed a whole month, I think.

R: Did people typically stay the whole season?

RH: I am not sure if we ever had anyone that actually stayed the whole season.

R: The reason I ask is that many decades earlier, in the 50s and 60s, it was not uncommon to stay all summer. Part of what we are trying to understand is why that changed. I think we have some reasons: transportation, people spending money differently, a lot of things like that.

K: I can understand there were others. By the 80s, very few people could give up their entire summer no matter what they were doing.

R: Do you understand, Kelly, that when you were doing the youth, were you in a position teaching riding skills?

K: Yes, but it is also what I had done prior to coming here. I spent 4 years as a riding instructor. So, that was no big deal to me. Chris had also done some instructing so she was the other wrangler that I worked with. Although a lot of the riding we taught them was how to start and stop and keep it rolling. When they finally got to loping, R Lazy S had the biggest fields, where we actually let them all lope. That is where we discovered Rooster, the one horse who absolutely could not. But, we let them have a nice session and when we get to the arena, we let them play. Most of them just wanted to get out and just go for a ride and go to a place where we could swim.

R: (50:50) Did the families do many rides together?

K: Yea, the all-day rides were usually the family rides.

R: Were you involved in pack trips at all, overnight, that sort of thing?

K: I didn't.

RH: I did. A few out here. Most of the pack trips I ever took were out of Lost Creek.

R: A different ranch?

RH: But, that was kinda a different deal. But, we did them out of here.

K: We did and they canceled one that last summer. They had a big pack trip because I was going to go along but it was canceled because of Frank's death.

R: Tell me about Nona, Frank's second wife. She was on the ranch from the time you (Reno) were here, from the beginning and, of course, the last year you were here, Kelly.

RH: Well, okay. So, Nona could be a really nice lady and when I first met her, she had already known me from before when I was a kid. I just didn't remember her or Frank. But, she was pleasant when she was taking to you. It wasn't like she was snippy or snotty or anything, but she did have some quirks in that she was a little looney. Of course, after working for a while, working with people who had known her for several years before, they would also say she would get to be a certain way and she is cooky and had lost it.

R: Was she drinking a lot when you were here?

RH: Yea, always. I don't think there was ever a time she wasn't drinking. I don't think there was a time that anybody wasn't drinking, at one point or another.

R: Did you see the alcohol use a problem for her and her interaction with the staff?

RH: Well, I really think she tried to stay away from the staff.

K: She didn't interact.

RH: Of course, if you were down there, at her place, that was a different deal.

K: She was the hostess of hostesses. When you were in her house, she was a hostess, but other than that ...

RH: She could be a little cooky. She could make some really weird decisions. Things would be going and she would loose it and shut the whole damn thing down.

R: What was her state after Frank died?

K: And, that is when Rick intervened. After Frank died and he stepped in, he was the only one who spoke with Nona. And, he would take whatever she was telling him and then make his own decisions to make it look like he was doing what she wanted. But basically, he handled it and we would all sit around and he would say this is what we are going to do, this is how it is working out. But, I remember, everybody's first fear was what if she would quit buying the groceries for feeding the guests. What are we going to do then?

At first, it did kinda down slide. Rick had access enough because he got groceries. I do remember the cook going down and fishing in the pond to feed them all trout one night. She thought Flash was crazy, Rick was nuts. He did it just for her.

I met her the day I started, I talked to her on the phone. We knew she watched us out the windows a lot because she knew things about me that I was doing with having never talked to her or seen her on that last day. She was a different character.

R: So, let's focus on the last season. Frank died on July 6th or 7th. 1985 was your (Kelly) only summer, You (Reno) had been here earlier in the season. Had the guests arrived?

K: Oh, yea, it was a full ranch. The Fourth of July was a huge party.

R: So, you were up and running – the community was here, a big party, the Fourth of July.

K: I wasn't here but I heard all about it.

RH: We had it down at the pond, so it was very involved.

R: So, from your perspective, because you had known Frank earlier, was he acting/behaving like he had always behaved. So, what happened the last 2 days before he passed. Anything unusual happen that period of time?

K: Other than what we told you earlier?

R: If you want to share that, that's fine, that would be great. If you are not, that is okay.

RH (56:37): Well, after that party, the Fourth of July party, that is when things started to kinda unravel.

R: There was a fight, right?

RH: The fight was basically between myself and my brother. That fight basically ended with me putting a 30 aught shot over his head to get my point across.

R: Which was meant to say, "Leave me alone."

RH: Yea, I am not going to take you (my brother) coming into my room and beating me to death with a club, which he threatened to do. Then, that (shooting the gun) ended up turning into the cops involved - the Park Service was here, county sheriff was here. It ended up that they split both my brother and me up. I ended up staying at Frank's house for the night, slept there, and basically ate breakfast with Frank the next morning. I keep thinking that it was probably 9:30 or 10 but it was probably later than that that I left the ranch house, meaning Frank's house, to basically go back to work. It wasn't until after lunch that we found out the Frank had passed in the morning.

R: Your brother had been asked to leave the ranch after the altercation that the two of you had. From your thinking, brother's gone, back to normal, here we go, let's get back to the normal routine for the summer. Right?

RH: Yea,

R: You had breakfast with Frank and he seemed okay and he was okay with you. Again, back to normal, that sort of things.

RH: Yea.

K: I had come in the day before and had met Reno's brother and thought he was Down's Syndrome. I didn't know. We all had been sitting around here with a bunch of the crew and I thought how neat it was for them to hire a special needs person to help with the laundry. I had no idea who any of them were yet. I was just there for a day.

I had met Frank. It was the most picturesque to walk on this ranch. I came in and met Frank and Nona, the bosses, they called Rick because he was at the barn and Rick came up and got me and I walked up to John and Brian, they were maintenance. I mean they were doing exactly what you picture if someone was writing this down as a story. They're gassing the truck and doing their things. I walked over to the barn and got with Little John and Phil who were washing tack, cleaning tack. The horses were tied. Someone was shoeing and I was introduced to all that crowd. The kitchen was cooking and I was handed a cookie. They came up and played volleyball that night with the guests because that was when the preacher was up here. He was a guest from Sedona. Reno would get front row with him playing volleyball and he would just knock this poor guy down. He must have been 70 and he would knock him down every time.

RH: In my defense, he was a scrappy old fellow, he would get into the net.

K: It was all volleyball, staff and guests. They would give him a hard time.

I thought we could not get a more picture perfect place. I was in heaven; I couldn't have written myself a better story. And, then the next morning I got up, we all had breakfast. I can't remember what we did but everybody was talking. I was still unaware of the fight and what had happened (the night before). My roommate had been down there the whole time so it was pretty much

breezed over. The biggest talk was that you (Reno) had a black eye. But, everything was breezed over and everyone was just going on in the morning. We didn't do a whole lot of rides because the guests had gone or done something else. We had afternoon rides planned. Frank came up to me because I was the newest crew member and put his arm around me and walked me up to lunch. So, we had just walked down and gone up to lunch at the main cabin. He was happy and jolly, just regular ole Frank.

I had not known much more of him other than that. I had met him the day I started. I had not really talked to him much but I was thrilled that he made a point to come out to the barn and talk to me.

R: That was very nice. He made an impression on you.

K: He made a very big impression on me in that one little moment. I had not heard any stories, I knew nothing, I was still learning what a dude ranch was and had no idea what any of it was. I had met at the campfire, that night, and we had all gone down and sat around with the staff. My roommate sat back and I was like, come on teach me something. She never said a word. She sat back and everybody walked past me and introduced themselves. I thought this is just weird. They all are drinking beers and having a good time and sitting around the fire and whatnot. But, she was one of those people. She said she had to go early and clear my bed off because her dresser was either the floor or the bed. She never used the dresser. That is how she got up in the morning. She would feel it, sniff her clothing, she would get dressed and go to work. I had just come out of the pristine college dorm and I am thinking this is fine with me, I am game.

R: So, how would you describe events, what were the events, that happened following Frank dying and everyone knew he had died? What happened that day, that afternoon?

K: I know exactly what happened. I was terrified. I came out from lunch and all the lights and everything was here. Police cars were flashing lights all around the house so he had to have died while we were eating lunch. I still didn't know for sure what had happened. And, as I am walking, someone said Frank died. I said "No, wait a minute, the owner?"

I had just traveled all the way from southern Illinois and had \$50 in my pocket. I thought this is going to be interesting. Everyone was talking do you think they will close and all the rumors going around. Rick, the boss of the barn, and his girlfriend, Kevin, who wasn't staff but she knew all the horses. Rick had said and Kevin asked if this is the one I need to talk to? Last hired first fired flashed through my head. I thought I am out of here. And, what it was, he immediately had everybody doing their jobs. She showed me a trail. We had 5 or 6 teens and we were taking a river trail and that is all it was. Then, I remember maybe it is not what we think is going on or maybe there is a plan for our guys. So that day, everybody took rides and Rick just plowed right through.

R: He set the tone for everybody else.

K: With the exception of Phil and Steve. Steve lost it. Big Steve, very much loved Frank.

RH: It was down to the point with Big Steve, he basically just blazed. He went somewhere on his horse and he never was really back, even after dark. He didn't work but when the ranch shut

down, Big Steve left and went back to Arizona, where he taught school and I don't know if he ever stepped a foot back in Wyoming.

R: So, he stayed the summer and left the end of the summer.

K: He was most dedicated and would have done anything and everything for nothing. Steve was there, his dad came up and stayed with us. People just sorta wandered in and out. There wasn't a lot of strictness on who stayed where like they had in the past.

RH: Yea, if there was an extra bunk in your cabin, you had somebody stay there. You didn't know who they were.

K: You put them to work or they somehow earned their keep because none of us ever thought we would get paid. I remember that was the first consensus but no one said to shut it down. Rick had gotten together with the wranglers and said, "No, we have this many guests coming and that we will be here. We are going to run it just like they would expect." And, Nona pretty much checked out, other than a few things here and there. We just didn't see much of her. Everybody knew, they definitely had that feeling, the cabin girls, the cooks, the whole staff knew that the wranglers were running the ranch. I remember watching and thinking, they are just taking over and they will run this place no matter what happens. And, they ran it.

R: (67:07) As if Frank had been there?

K: Oh yea, they ran it totally like Frank would have wanted it run and they did not let guests, other than knowing he wasn't there, everything ran just like it should of.

R: So, if I were a guest here during the first couple of days, (it was clear) the ranch did not shut down into an abyss of grief and loss; nope, let's go forward.

K: No, everything that had been scheduled went on, everything that was planned. We had a lot of kids come in that week or that day. Chris and I had taken a lot of short kid rides, even the service that the Dornans put together. All the guests went to that. It was a group effort and not a single effort.

R: The service you are talking about, if you would explain when that happened and what all that involved?

K: That was a couple days or week later because it was sorta, okay, this is what we are doing (service for Frank). I know the staff had a lot to do with it. The guests also put it together.

R: In terms of planning.....

K: I bet you there was financing. I bet you because there was a lot of alcohol put together and a lot of organization put together. They got the chapel (in Moose) put together.

R: Was there a minister involved that did that service?

RH: I am sure there was but one of things like we were talking about, a lot of the wranglers did security duty. I spent all that service out at the front gate.

R: And, the reason for that was what?

RH: Because Nona had promised everybody that if there were any kind of service, she was going to come down and bomb it.

R: Bomb it.

RH: Dynamite it.

K: Blow up the place.

R: And, we were thinking all these people inside this Chapel and she tosses in 2-3 sticks of dynamite. She is mad. We were like not going to allow her to do it.

K: Rick said she wasn't of sane mind. He was there with her every single day. He was constantly with her. He didn't think about it. Bob Dornan intervened a lot. He probably organized the locals. All the local ranchers, everybody who knew Frank was there because there was no other place for people to grieve, for everybody locally. It (the Chapel in Moose) was packed. I don't know how we could all stuff them in there.

R: So, the whole ranch went down there except for Nona.

K: Oh yea, I don't even know what she did when the ranch was empty but it was empty.

R: So, as protector of the chapel and the people in it, were you armed?

RH: No, my thought was if we did see her coming was to get her stopped in her car. We could have tackled her to the ground, if we needed to. She wasn't going to get anywhere close to the chapel.

K: (70:34) I don't think anybody had actually been armed. It was Park and they were reasonably respectful there. Bob Dornan may have been packing.

R: Did law enforcement know about Nona's threats?

K: I believe the Park Service were there, weren't they?

RH: I don't know. I can't remember.

K: I think Park Service were there; I think they participated.

R: I mean law enforcement?

K: I am sure Roger Milworth (?) was there. They all adored Frank so this was there one chance. Whether he was there in service or otherwise, he was definitely there. I say it went from there (the Chapel), it all went to a huge drinking party right there below, along the river at Dornans.

R: Was there a service at Dornans?

K: It was at the Chapel of the Transfiguration.

R: I know the service was at the Chapel but then it broke up and everyone went to Dornans. Were there any stories or anything organized there or did everybody just party and do their own thing?

K: There were definitely stories and talking and a lot of older guests had come back. So, people who had heard, who weren't actually guests, were here for that service. So, word got out because it drew a huge crowd. I don't know if they were all staying in Jackson. I know this place was packed. (I don't know) if there were any spare spots (but somehow) we would put them in it. Nona was unaware, she didn't know. I think that was part of it. I think she had taken her medication and she was completely unaware for that.

Then, all summer, people straggled through to where he was buried. Didn't we have an older gentleman show up that had been like a wrangler years before he came and stayed? A lot of old staff came through that hadn't been here for years and years that came through that summer.

R: Let me put a couple of things together. Frank died. He was cremated. His ashes were put down in the cemetery down the service road here at White Grass where he still has a spot in the cemetery and has a stone on top of it, (creek) stone or large rock. His name is carved into it. And, the summer did continue?

RH and K: Just like it did if he would have been here.

K: The wranglers were the older staff. They probably were the ones who had been here the longest and they pretty much ran it like they knew Frank would run it. The rest of the staff did whatever. If they had a problem or issue, Rick usually kept it together -- talk about bringing out the duct tape and bailing wire, anything that need repaired. There was no money for repairs, but I don't remember anything breaking. The horses were taken care of, everything was right. We didn't wrangle up the mountain.

RH: We couldn't do any mountain runs

K: So, we just kept them all out in the fields. We no longer worried about feeding these horses because they weren't going to be here (after the season) so it all turned into pasture. We still pulled them off here but then us girls got to do it then because we didn't have to get up early so we could go out and bring the horses in the morning. It was a lot easier to open the gate and run them right out that way. They went out in these fields here.

R: So, I am thinking that both of you were early 20s when Frank died.

K: I was 19.

RH: I was 22.

R: (74:41) So, I am wondering at that age, most people, you may be exceptions, don't have a lot of experience dealing with older people dying. My question is, on a personal level, what was it like dealing with Frank's, someone you enjoyed and admired, even though by a couple of days, Kelly, and yours (Reno) 3 or 4 years. What was it like going through that personally?

RH: For me, it was really rough. So, my childhood growing up with the Neils was really rough, border line maybe abusive. So, even though I grew up with them as my parents, I didn't have as strong a feeling for them as I did for Frank. Frank was more of my Dad.

R: He felt like more of a Dad to you?

RH: Yes, so, when he died, it was really rough on me. It took a lot to keep my composure. I really had to work at it. Like if I were somewhere and got up to go to the bathroom, take a deep breath, pull it together. I might spend 4 or 5 minutes before I came out.

R: Close to tears?

K: Oh, yea and that was all of them. These big cowboy wranglers, these were guy guys. And, then ever once in a while, you could see a trigger. I could watch it from the outside in because I didn't have the pain. So, watching the trigger, you just knew how much these guys loved Frank. There was no doubt that it was two sided, that Frank loved them and it went both ways.

He loved you immediately when you walked down to his place and you were his family. These wranglers knew that and they had that sense of belonging. And, you knew that all these guys looked around going, we just lost our home. We just lost our next summer. I wanted to come back and I had only been here a couple of days. But, they all knew it was going back to the Park. I didn't quite understand the concept yet but all of them are going, "Wow, this is gone." And, there were many times I saw Phil just disappear.

Rick would walk around the corner because I am sure there was something that triggered him, that would pull all that emotion in and all that's lost. Yet, they held it together for all the ranchers and they would come back out and help me go right along. But, this was the summer (their place) and some, (it had been) for a long time. And, they were about to have no control from having it pulled it out from under them and (they knew) they couldn't do anything about it. Home and family, it was definitely their family that had been completely broken apart. We never knew if we would see each other again.

R: (78:45) So, there was a real strong, "We are going to get through this, we are going to do it right for Frank, we are going to get through this." And, then you did it. I am assuming from your description, that most people on staff said that it was successful. "We did what we set out to do," maybe as a tribute to Frank, maybe a real gift to him for the way he treated you, i.e., what you said you would do for him (because of) the way he treated you. Come September, what happens then? No more guests, they're gone. What's unfolding now at the ranch, how are people saying goodbye. Some staff before the auction were leaving, right?

RH: Yea, we actually had, like Big Steve, he just left.

K: No, he didn't. I remember being outside in front of the barn and actually one of those pictures, I think it was Jo leaving, when she was sitting with Phil and whatnot. That was her last day. That is what these are (Kelly give Roger) the addresses of everybody when they (the staff) left. Because, we probably sat around at Dornans. Not everybody left the same day.

RH: Yea, there were a lot of meetings at Dornans.

R: As part of saying goodbye?

K: Everything because it was safe.

R: Because Nona was not there.

RH: Yea, it was like a neutral ground. You didn't have to worry.

R: In the conversations we (Roger, Kelly and Reno) had earlier, you said, that Nona gave all the staff something. Could you describe that and did she pull everybody together in the main house down there, meaning Frank and Nona's place? What happened that night, I assume in the evening. Did everybody gather down there?

RH: As much as I can remember, she just called everybody down. Some people got their last paycheck and some didn't.

K: Only those that were leaving.

R: You were leaving.

K: Right, the only people that were allowed to stay that she said 6 of you; right, that she said could stay.

R: So, she pulled you down, some got paychecks.

RH: Some didn't. We all got a photo of Frank from her.

K: She had made prints for everyone of a photo and I believe she told a story of that photo. She did go around and speak to everyone. She was the ultimate hostess. She spoke to all of us. She had sat hot hors d'oeuvres and food and a large array of alcohol. She gave everybody a tour that hadn't toured the house, I believe she gave house tours for everybody. We all went and toured her home.

R: Did she, herself, actually give the photo to each individual staff?

K: Yes, individually with our final checks. And, she spoke to me like she knew me. I mean she didn't just give it to me but "Lovely summer," like there had never been anything, but, she was perfect for what she was doing. She had an atmosphere of a party and she was just absolutely perfect. You would have never known and me, not knowing other than why did we hide from this lady, she seems perfectly wonderful!

R: Was Frank's death talked about at that? Did she bring it up?

K: She brought up past stories of how he had done this or things with this so she had Frank stories going on.

RH: I don't ever remember anyone every mentioning it.

K: Or, the closing of the ranch. It was the closing to her of the season. This was an end of season party.

RH: (83:17) So, it was kinda like a nice goodbye without talking about anything bad.

R: About the reality.

RH: Yea, there was no reality. Later on, she was really irate at me and, which of course, she probably had a reason to be.

R: She was angry because of the fight and all that (the night before Frank died).

RH. But at that time, we went down there she smiled and said, "Hi," and said, "Here's yours." It was very brief but it wasn't real snarly like I expected going down, like I don't want to do this I because she was mad.

R: So, how many people were at this gathering?

K: Pretty much all the staff that was still here.

R: 20 people?

K: I don't remember any guests; there were no guests. It was after all the guests had left. A lot of the staff had left, because I think it was my last day and I only stayed one more night. They had already closed up cabins. Dusty was still here and he was in charge of housekeeping but I don't think any of the cabin girls were here. Flash was still here. AJ was still here.

R: So, this gathering was August/September?

K: It had to be the end of August.

R: You had mentioned you helped prepare things for the auction which was the 17th of September 1985. What did you do to prepare for the auction? Can you describe leading up to the auction; were you here the day of the auction?

RH: I was here the day of the auction.

R: Tell us about the lead up. What took place and what were your instructions.

RH: We didn't have any instructions from Nona. We just did things. Well it was like, you didn't want to go clean cabins because what was the point. The ranch was then done/closed, no other guests were going to stay in them. But, it was just general pickup. We made sure the grounds looked nice

and there were certain areas for the auction. Some were down further towards the main house and some up here. Some of those areas we just set up chairs and different things like that. And, making sure the horses were taken of (was one of our tasks).

K: Didn't you set up that little corral? Didn't we ride in that little corral? Yea, we set up a temporary corral to ride the horses into auction.

RH: So, we brought all the horses, one at a time down, we led them down. Then, somebody would drive them though.

K: Rick had asked me to ride. And, then they (the auctioneer) did the horse. And, then the saddle you were sitting in usually went immediately. The cabins went with everything in them. I'd thought they may have walked through the cabins and auctioned the things that were in the cabin. Anybody that was interested could walk through. It was a fast auction for as much stuff.

R: It went 2 days.

K: There wasn't as many people, I've been at auctions that were 10 times more people bidding. I only paid attention to the horses because I was curious where they were going. I bought saddle bags and couple of things that were there. Jack was the one helping me get organized.

R: (87:14) Somewhere along the line you told me that there was an inventory made by the staff.

K: Did you guys inventory?

RH: We inventoried mainly for the barn so it was barn tack, the saddles and such. Now, that was a whole different deal because we did acquire (I hate to say we stole) saddles that belonged to Frank that we knew Nona would not care about because she really didn't but there were other people that did.

R: Care about them.

RH: So, those saddles we took out the back and gave them away.

R: Anybody that you want to mention or know that got some of them.

RH: The lady that has them, knows, so I am not sure I really should say because it is one of those things where I had to toy with my ethics; do I actually take this? Yea, because it is going to go and Nona is not going to care.

R: So, you chose to pass those saddles along to people/individuals that you knew would appreciate them.

K: Yea and had a sentimental attachment.

R: And, had a real positive connection to Frank. Am I saying that right?

RH: And, all the way down to it was Franks' and it is like an inherited item. It really does belong to them because they are Frank's blood. We gave it to them or took it for them.

R: And, that was mostly horse related items?

RH: Oh, yea.

K: And, it is funny that as much as those wranglers had been there forever and had known that they had used that exact same piece of tack, most of them had their own tack, which I do believe you guys got out very quickly, before Nona wouldn't let you.

RH: That was the other thing, you had to get your own out so Nona wouldn't claim yours.

K: Because she would have had a fit because I remember everybody getting their own tack because most everybody brought their own, getting it out and getting it stored away somewhere so she didn't come in and have a fit because someone was stealing. We didn't want to have to have the police out there and explain it over and over.

R: So the tone really changed from we are going to get through this and have a good experience with the guests to the ranch is closed, and to doing things that you thought would be in honor of Frank and people he was connected with. And also take care of yourselves and protect your tack.

RH: Yea.

K: And everybody had to find jobs. Most of that staff expected to be here through October that you guys usually stayed through the winter.

RH: At least until September 15th.

K: Because I went to Red Rock.

R: (90:38) So, you were around for the auction, Reno, what reflections/memories do you have for that day?

RH: Well, I spent most of that time down with the horses and then I had members of my foster family that were here so I kinda hung around with them and visited with them, mostly. I helped lead horses up, and that sort of thing, when they needed the help. I really kinda tried to stay like a mouse in a corner.

R: Was it a tough day for you emotionally?

RH: Yea.

K: Oh, for everybody.

RH: Yea, you see some stuff go and horses loaded into trailers. Stuff going, chairs and stuff that got loaded up. I even saw, we had this, we called her the Pink Lady, but she was like a dance hall girl painted in pink. It was a plywood piece that was on the door of the shower house down at Curly's

cabin. (Once) I was down there doing something and I turned around and I started to laugh, because he pulled that Painted Lady off the bathroom house door and then (someone at the auction had) it under his arm. He is carting it off. He is like 12 years old. I was like “ya vultures.” There was so much going on and people were just walking off with stuff.

R: Well, I am struck, again, how it was your home and, you were watching on the day of the auction, your home being taken apart, dissipated and taken elsewhere.

K: On that particular day, it was so chaotic. I don't know if that was the feeling. It was when all the guests came back and we went to Dornans. Wasn't that a couple of days later or was it that night? It might have been the night of the auction, after all had been done, all the staff got together at Dornans. We had a table full of staff and guests and they sat around and it was like guests asking, “Where are we going to go next year? Now what are we going to do. It was definitely a deep thought type where do we go, what happens next? It was amazing how quickly they detached. It was a definite a lot of where do we go?

I would say people who hadn't been here as long, didn't have as much trouble going on. Carl went on and found a job and most of them stayed in Jackson but they wanted to be here but this place - bet if you asked any of them, they would tell you details of days of that final summer. Everybody that was here, whether a first year or long timer, that summer had such a strength. I remember feeling it. I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't have any intention. You (Reno) were the one that said I am going to Arizona you can go with me, they're ranches down there. So, I pretty much just hung out. I had no idea. I went and worked at a ranch up in the Gros Ventre for the rest of the summer.

R: That was September, though?

K: I was already there before the auction. I went up there immediately. One of his foster uncles had it and they needed somebody up there immediately. So, I went up there and worked and then I helped get their hunting camps ready while you (Reno) were helping this place shut down. When everything shut down, he (Reno) was basically my ride down to a ranch down in Arizona. He got me right on. I had family down there so, Okay, I reconnected with them. But, it was definitely where do we go feeling.

R: Big loss, big loss.

K: I know a lot of people came back after it was cleared out and walked through the barn and we came back and walked through the burned house. I talked to a lot of the folks who had worked here that said they had gone down such and such time, some had camped and some had stayed on the hills. They couldn't give it up. So many people have no idea (the ranch) has been redone like it is.

R: It is a training center now. I watched the buildings come back to life, new foundations, new logs and new roofs that don't leak and all this sort of things. It is a training center for national government employees and students and all sorts of different people in the private sector. Is that an honor to what White Grass was before in your minds? What do you think about it?

RH: I do think that is really nice that it is being used. I have always said you look at houses that stay empty for too long, it is like they have no life. They crumble and here, with the rehabilitation of the ranch with people in and out, the ranch looks alive.

R: Is that a good feeling?

RH: Yea, its better to have it here so people that actually want to come to be trained or do whatever can.

R: Historic preservation, primarily. How to take care of buildings.

RH: And look at the buildings and be able to use the buildings and say, "Hey, this ranch is really neat. What a nice place," because it was a nice place. When it was a guest ranch, it was a nice place. The years after, it was gloomy. I remember coming through and it was so sad. There was no life here.

R: What are your thoughts now, Kelly?

K: It is neat. It is fun to come and look at. I actually didn't get in all the cabins but quickly here and there. It is not the White Grass, it is definitely not (as it once was). There are areas that carry so much meaning. Some places more than others. Like the girls cabin, even though it doesn't look anything like it did, it has more feeling. But, I want to say it is more the areas, to walk under a similar tree, where the barn was or where the corral was. I am sure if we ever went riding and rode up, it would be super emotional.

RH: That in one thing we were never able to do -- to come back and ride out on the trails. I know that some of the long-term guests that had been here went to the R Lazy S and different places, I know that R Lazy S trailered guests and horses down here so they could come up and ride trails.

R: We frequently see them out in the field. One of the wranglers at the R Lazy S for many years is a Balderson from Sky Ranch. She would be a great granddaughter of the original owner who built that ranch. So, they would ride up several guests from R Lazy S. They would go down to Sky Ranch and have lunch on the porch and ride back. And, just for your information, a few years ago, some people rode the valley trails who were guests at White Grass. They had lots of experiences that I think you are referencing when you said you would like to ride some of those old trails. So, how do you look back, this is 34 years ago, how do you look back on those years? How was it influential in who you are and what you are doing today or how you are lived your life?

K: (141:13) It completely changed mine. I was a little country bumpkin on the way to a vet school. I thought I was going to run a stable. I couldn't go back to what that was, ever, after spending a summer here. The people I met that one summer, Phil, Big John, Rick to this day, I know I could walk up to them and start visiting right there and it wouldn't be fake. We still look for them. We did loose connections with most of them. We've ran into several. We came over several times on purpose to come over to see if there was still anybody from White Grass. We still run into Becky, who was around staff a lot, she was one of the wranglers.

This was a huge turning point in my life, I met my husband for the rest of my days. I had no intention. I had come from a school of 3 guys to every girl and I walked out of there and said if that is the male population of the country, I am doomed. And, then I came out here. I realized there was a whole new world I did not know existed. It was just great. I've drag buddies out and said you can't miss. It is the best place in the world.

R: (143:06) So, do you carry the spirit of Frank Galey in who you are today.

K: I don't know if I carry Frank as much I definitely carry White Grass. The kids (ours) talk about it because we have talked about it so long. There were so many stories.

R: So, what is it that you carry, can you put words to that? You carry White Grass, I think that is what you said. So, what is it you are actually carrying?

K: I have big, beautiful, loving family but the White Grass ranch was where I definitely belonged. There was no doubt from the minute I walked on here that I belonged. This is where I was meant to be and it will always be there.

I didn't hardly know Reno for the first couple of days because the way it got chaotic. But Phil and Steve, they were right there. I have 12 wonderful brothers and those guys were so much more right there if I ever needed them. And, I only knew them a day. There was no doubt it would end that summer. I had worked on several ranches, never the same belonging that you had here. This was the biggest family. We had worked at Red Rock and Lost Creek but nothing compared (to White Grass – sense belonging). I can't imagine how much he (Reno) felt a belonging in the time he worked here.

R: What do you carry Reno?

RH: Well, I was thinking about that. I think when you are young, you think you know certain things and then you realize... (Reno becomes emotional and takes some time to himself)

R: Take your time. Runs deep.

K: Really deep. Let's take a walk.

R: And again, Frank was like his father.

K: And, this ranch was like his salvation. Without any doubt in my mind, this is what saved him from a really rough childhood.

R: Helped him move past it, is what you are saying. It worked, gave him love, acceptance?

K: Gave him a family. It was the best family he ever had.

R: Lucky for both of you. Lucky for him but because Reno was getting healthier or growing while he was here.

RH: I think it was Frank. There were so many people while I was growing up, there were negative things. Frank smoked, Frank drank, Frank was rough. I was old fashioned, didn't keep up with the Joneses. But that was the best thing about Frank. He was real rough/talked rough. He was his own person.

K: He didn't judge; he was judged but he didn't judge.

RH: I have seen him pull people off the road and give them a job because they needed it. Not because he needed them to work but because they needed a job. They needed food. He was really more of a man than most I had ever met.

R: Good role model.

K: Sometimes, I am sure there were people who would say he was a horrible role model. He drank and partied and walked around with a cup of gin. But, if you did know him, he was a great guy. I wish I had known the younger Frank. I am sure he was amazing.

RH: He was the man you just patterned yourself with his thinking. He was generous, he was kind, he was always true to what he said he would do. If he said he was going to do something, he did it. You didn't have to worry about it. If he said I am going to pick you up down here, you got there and you knew Frank would be there. Because, if he said he was going to do something, he did it. So, he was always who (I tried to) pattern my life after. You want to be somebody that you know will be there. If you say I am going to be there, I am going to do this, you want somebody like that guy.

R: (149:54) He became the standard for what it means to be a good man.

RH: Yep, if you are going to have a good man, he was a good man.

K: And there are people who probably wouldn't agree with that because he was a drunken, partyer, smoker and fixed his fences with duck tape. But, if you needed somebody, he was going to stand up beside you.

R: Was there ever a question or sense of gee, "Frank, wish you didn't smoke so much; gee, Frank, wish you didn't drink so much?" Or did you just accept the way he was.

K: Never, not ever. Frank was Frank.

RH: About the only time I ever wished he didn't smoke was when we were under the main cabin, looking for a propane leak. I am like what are you doing here Frank. We are 6 inches away from the floorboard with our nose, crawling. He is like we are back here to find a propane leak. I'm like "Can you put that cigarette out? And, then he said, "Like what for?" Then, he takes his lighter, and then he finds the propane line and takes his lighter and he slides the lighter along the pipe until it goes "psssssss". "Oh, there's the leak right there!" There was nowhere to go. We were under the floorboards. So, when it goes, we are just going to be in pieces, Frank.

K: But, he also didn't expect you to quit anything so why would you even think about it. I guess you didn't see the flaws. I am sure we all had oodles of them around here.

R: They were just overshadowed by his acceptance and personality,

RH: I think when you like somebody you are not going to like somebody and say, “Oh, you’re flawed. Oh, you do this, you do that; I don’t like this, I don’t like that.” If you are going to do that, you are not going to be around them. Frank wasn’t like that. Frank didn’t look for that. He saw good in people and he saw need in people. That is why he would come in and say, “Hey, we got a new person” and we would almost be like where from. He was down at Dornan’s bar and Frank just told him to come up and go to work. We had a lot of people working that....

K: Frank didn’t need to but he gave them a place to stay and food to eat.

RH: One of my good friends, who was wilder than a March hare was hitchhiking. He was almost to Moose and Frank passed him on the road, coming back from Jackson. Bobby Plunkett was a wreck. Frank picked him up and asked what he was doing. He said he was hitchhiking, looking for a job. Frank bought him a beer at Dornans and brought him to the ranch. We ended up with Bobby Plunkett, who knew nothing about a horse, NOTHING. But, he ended up riding horses with us. That was just Frank.

K: And everybody ended up liking Bobby Plunkett but I guarantee you if you put him in a crowd anywhere else, everybody would just push him away, I think. All the crew was like that. You didn’t have the petty gossiping over here. I don’t ever remember hearing ahhhh, ohhhh. There were one or two people that didn’t always fit in and they didn’t stay. But it wasn’t because the crew wouldn’t accept them; it was just they didn’t want to be accepted by this particular mentality, I guess.

RH: There was one girl I called “BA” because she had a bad attitude. She came in with a bad attitude and we got along with her because we made the point to. She just had a bad attitude and she didn’t want to be nice with anybody. She worked here and that was done.

K: I still like your story, who was it when Flash skipped in? Was that Curly?

RH: Oh, it was Curly.

K: Flash was a tiny guy.

RH: He wasn’t gay but he was flamboyant. He comes waltzing in with a plate of French toast, skipping, first thing in the morning. “By god boys, we have twinkle toast.” That is all he said and we were like okay.

K: And Flash was happy that he was different. When we all got together, we made sure Flash came and nobody cared that he was a little different.

RH: Nobody at all. In fact, one of the older guys was a buddy of mine over in Landers, Terry Summers. He had been here working on and off for years. He was a really tough man and he liked Flash because Flash was part of White Grass. We went to Teton Village because somebody was giving Flash a hard time. Someone called down here and said, Hey -- Terry was here, I was here

and somebody else was with us. We jumped in the truck, hauled up to Teton Village and ended up in a fight over that. You didn't mess with White Grass.

R: Well, let me ask if there is anything else you want to say, points you want to make, stories you want to tell.

K: (156:57) There's endless stories. Amazingly, in one summer, I listened to him tell stories and the kids have listened to him tell White Grass stories and different wrangler stories forever, and horse stories, different runs on the mountain run.

RH: There were so many things that happened. White Grass was like a never-ending story. There was always something. If your day was boring, someone else went somewhere and had a wreck or saw one and they would come back and you would spend the next 2 or 3 hours talking about whatever someone else did. So, it didn't have to be you that had the excitement. It could be someone else but it was always a never ending story.

K: But you were talking about when he was remembering pictures and who would do that and what horse he was on. I look at an entire year of college and I don't remember any of that but for that one summer, I can tell you who they were, what horse they rode. It was one of those things that just stuck with you forever. I still can, don't know why. It never happened twice. It is the one place that has never repeated itself in the same atmosphere.

R: I am delighted that you both had the experience. It is just remarkable having the pleasure and honor of hearing lots of other people talk about their White Grass days. Dub, we mentioned him, William Lloyd, who you wrangled with in 83 here. His oral history had a theme that this is the place that saved his life and that was not unusual. And so, good for you, good for him and good for the ranch.

K: This is the place that definitely started mine. I had kinds of exciting things and definitely out of nowhere, this is where I started.

R: You told this story earlier of the movie SHANE, would you tell that story as an ending to this oral history?

RH: Yea, Shane, the movie with Alan Ladd, was filmed in Jackson. I think it was filmed over toward Moulton's Barn, in that area. My foster dad, Bill Neil, was a double for Alan Ladd in that movie. So, any of the riding scenes are mostly my foster dad. So, in the scene at the end of the movie, where the little boy is yelling "Come back Shane" and Shane is riding off in the distance, that was my foster dad. Even as a kid (everybody has a particular way of riding a horse) growing up with him. I recognized his ride in that movie. So, you see him riding off in the distance and I say, "Yea, that is Bill right there."

K: You can watch the old movie and pick out the scenes where Bill is on the horse.

RH: Just by knowing how he rode and how he held himself on the horse, I can go through the whole movie and tell you exactly the parts he played.

R: I like that story to end up in this interview. It seems that part of the legacy of White Grass and Frank, is people were allowed to be themselves and develop. You can watch how they rode and develop their own style; to develop their personhood. Whatever it was, was okay. And, ride into the sunset as yourself as you are.

K: He is the only one that let me wear my hat. Everybody else had to wear a western hat. I wore a black derby because I didn't like the big brim. It was a fedora, actually. I picked it up at a second-hand store. It was what I wore when I did horses. So, when I came here, that was my hat. I got a lot of teasing and tormenting about it but I am like I am not a cowboy. I have never lived in the West. I am not wearing a cowboy hat. I am not a cowboy. But Frank didn't care one bit, he was happy with my hat. The wranglers didn't seem to care what I wore even though they may have teased or tormented me every once in a while. But, when I was at Red Rock, he tried to tell me but I told him I didn't have one, sorry.

R: It certainly has been a pleasure being with both of you. Thank you for filling in more, as I told you, we needed some more information about what happened the last few years at the ranch and you have taken us to a better understanding, leaps and bounds forward. For that, I thank you but also you are wonderful people and thanks for sharing your story.

RH/K: You're welcome.

Photo of Frank Galey given to all staff by Nona at end of season 1985.

