

White Grass Heritage Project “Sharing the Legacy”

INTERVIEWEE: Al Williams (A), Project Manager for the Western Center for Historic Preservation, NPS/Grand Teton National Park Employee

INTERVIEWER: Roger Butterbaugh (R), Coordinator of the White Grass Heritage Project and Caretaker at White Grass

LOCATION: White Grass Ranch, Moose, WY

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Transcribed by Julie Greene 2022

Note: This transcript has undergone minor edits e.g., false starts and other extraneous text have been removed to make it more “reader friendly”. Al’s complete interview transcript is below:

R: The topic for today is the establishment of the Western Center for Historic Preservation’s (WCHP) Shop and Offices which are located at Grand Teton National Park Headquarters in Moose, Wyoming. Al was significantly involved in the establishment of that building in Moose as it originated from the JY Ranch, which was the Rockefeller compound before it was dismantled and reassembled.



Current Western Center for Historic Preservation Shop and Office Building. Photo courtesy of Roger Butterbaugh, 2010.

R: Welcome Al. This is an interesting story that goes back many years. Where do we start?”

A: We start in the early summer of 2005. I was a maintenance supervisor for Grand Teton National Park dealing primarily with the resident quarters and the quarter’s crew. (But the work in maintenance) it wasn’t my cup of tea after having been 7 years as a supervisor there. I was becoming very burnt out. So, when the plan was to have a Western Center for Historical Preservation, I volunteered and was detailed (assigned) into this position.

I was one of the few people working at Grand Teton National Park that had the skills to be part of this at the beginning, i.e., I had log building experience and had been working with Historic Preservation

crews for many years before 2005. So, I was detailed into the White Grass (rehabilitation) project before it was determined exactly what it would become. We just knew that it was going to be a training center. That being said, early summer of 2005, I was coming up here to work at the White Grass, by myself, installing black Visqueen and lathe on the roofs, trying to seal them the best I could given the condition of the roofs at that time.



Girls' Cabin at White Grass with Visqueen cover to protect roof. Photo courtesy of WCHP 2002.

Al: On one of my trips back down to Moose, I saw another major (park) project going on which was moving all the buildings off the JY Ranch. The Park Service took 13 buildings from the Rockefeller Ranch which they did not want.



Moving cabins from JY Ranch. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

Note: Laurance Rockefeller had agreed to previously to give the Rockefeller Ranch/JY Ranch to the Park if the park agreed to remove all JY ranch buildings and return the ranch property to a natural state with hiking trails and more for park visitors, i.e., later named the Laurance Rockefeller Preserve. Some

of the buildings went to a newly established Rockefeller Ranch called Granite Canyon located to the south of the JY Ranch and the remaining buildings were given to the park for use for park housing, etc.

A: The project manager in charge of moving all the JY Ranch buildings had just given notice that he was accepting a position at another park. Apparently, I was in the right place at the right time. The people that I was loosely working for just looked at me and said, 'I was the new project manager for moving all the buildings off the JY'.

R: Would you then have 2 positions?

A: Then, I had 2 positions to deal with. I thought what have I gotten myself into? Why couldn't I have waited another 20 minutes to get the supplies that I needed (and I would never have seen the buildings being moved on the Moose Wilson Road).

It was an interesting proposition. (With my background) I was familiar with buildings, something I was comfortable doing. I thought why not. I will be your project manager. I didn't quite realize exactly how it was going to evolve but it had been running smoothly before I got involved.

There was contractor that was doing the foundations work and taking the buildings apart and another contractor was moving the buildings. Both had already been there the previous summer. (During the first summer) they had moved all the buildings the Rockefellers wanted to their new compound (Granite Canyon Ranch) down south of White Grass on the Moose Wilson Road next to the R Lazy S Ranch. They (the Rockefellers) bought a parcel of land there and they wanted all their buildings moved there. The crew had actually been working for quite some time moving these buildings, but no buildings (from the JY Ranch) had been moved into the park when I became supervisor.

(The preparation to do so) involved walking the Moose Wilson Road and making sure that we had clearance to get 24-foot wide buildings down the road. If anyone has ever driven down this road before, it is about an 18-foot road with trees on both sides. So, it was kind of a stretch to see where 24-feet was but weaving in and out of the trees, we managed to find a route in the road that gave us 24-feet. That being said, the contractor wanted about 15 or 18 trees cut down. The Park Service said no but the Park Service agreed to drop maybe 3 or 4 key trees that were absolutely preventing us from getting a 24-foot corridor through there.

I remember it was July 5 (2005) when we moved our first building. I remember because I was listening to a lovely concert with an orchestra on July 4th while being in a stress-freak-out mode. I knew our first move was going to happen the next day and I wondered what had I gotten myself into. It was going to be an easy move, (we thought) for our first one, a small cabin, coming through the park. I had coordinated it with the utility company to move or lift power lines with us. I had coordinated with law enforcement to stop traffic. I had 2 people to help me stop traffic, one on the south end of the road and one on the north end of the road. I had gone over in my mind where all the turnouts were going to go. I was given a 15-minute window to stop traffic. So, we had 15 minutes to move from one turnout to another, but I realized right away that wasn't going to happen.

You could only move a building as fast as the spotter could walk backwards and guide the truck to weave the truck in and out of the trees because we just couldn't drive straight down the road. You had to be able to turn here to get a quarter (of a building) around the tree; turn it there to get a quarter around the tree; back it up. It is like pulling a large 12-foot beam out of an 8-foot door. You have to jockey it back and forth.



Maneuvering a cabin around one tree and then another on Moose Wilson Road. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

So, we would move the building down the road a little ways and pull off into a pullout; get on the radio and have my guards let traffic through. We would let traffic through and relieve the congestion and then when we were ready to move again, i.e., we would stop traffic and wait for the last car to come through and then move the building down the road to the next turnout. It was about the 3rd turnout, less than $\frac{1}{4}$ the way down the road, that we found our first problem. The 21-foot wide building (we were moving) had gotten wedged between 2 trees.

(8:49) And it was wedged! So, we were stuck in the middle of the road. The contractor who was responsible for the building did not want to move the building further because he would be responsible for any damage that would be done to the building. The moving contractor didn't want to do anything because they were both kind of tight and together on the same contract.

We spent some time, quickly, trying to figure out how to bend these trees apart so we could get this building out of/freed from between the trees. We tried climbing on the roof and pushing on it and rocking the trees. Neither worked. We tried pulling rope at the top of the tree and going to another tree and tying 2 Dutchmans (knots) in the rope. We then wrapped the rope in between the two and then had 3 or 4 people pull on this trying to compress the tree back and forth. We couldn't get that done. By this time, I had grossly exceeded my 15-minute traffic delay time.

Come to find out that one of the people in the traffic jam was our Park Superintendent (Mary Gibson Scott) who was trying to get to a meeting down south. So, she is calling and the Park is calling. So, finally I just went to the contractor and said just drive. He said he couldn't because it would damage the

building. I said I didn't care and just to go. I would take care of anything from there on and I would work it out even if I had to work weekends to fix it. I didn't care.

(10:21) So they shrugged their shoulders and decided why not, what the heck, and took off driving. The building received significant damage. We left blown-in insulation and fiberglass all over the place. But we managed to get the building on its way and from that point forward, we were able to finish our move. That was my first experience with moving a building. I thought I would have a stroke before we got done. That was just ½ of one of the 13 buildings that we had to move.

Some of the buildings had to be cut in half or into thirds before we moved them. The shop, which we will get into later, got cut into about 15-18 pieces. We had an awful lot of moving to do. Once we got the building through the tightest part of the Moose Wilson Road and managed to get it through the kiosk (fee gate to the park), everything else ran fairly smooth.



Navigating around the fee entrance station to the park in Moose. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

(In order to ensure the other buildings would fit easily down the Moose Wilson, I had to address our clearance problem with the trees that caused our first building to become stuck.) At the time, the park was already done removing trees (down the Moose Wilson Road). We couldn't get any more trees cut down without having significant paperwork and significant "No's" going up through the chain of command. So, I decided, for my own health and the ability to do this without having a heart attack, that I would put my career in jeopardy and take matters into my own hands. I had a coworker who had the same thought process that I had. So I asked him if he wouldn't mind coming to work real early the next morning to address the issue I had with the trees.. He said he had 'no problem' joining me.

We went down the road at 6:00 am. He would go about 100 yards in front of me and let me know if there was anybody coming. When there was no one on the road, I would "fix" our problem ('widen the roadway for moving the buildings'). And so, a few trees were cut down - the ones that gave us the problems and a couple that were close to giving us a problem. I called it (said they came down because of) 'a freak windstorm or accident.' (Laughter) (In reality, these trees came down because of the chain saw in Al's hand.)

There already were plenty of trees that had been cut or had fallen down on the Moose Wilson Road. Granted, I did not have the authority to do this, but I knew that in order to get something done, I just had to do it. (In doing so) I made a major gamble for my career but I didn't care anymore. I dropped them at a perpendicular angle to the road, rubbed mud on the fresh cuts, cut the stump to where it was at ground level and threw that away. I stood the grass up around the stumps and it didn't look like I had been there.

(13:22) (Luckily) nobody was counting trees; nobody was counting cuts; nobody noticed; not a word was said. So, I worried for about a day and a half for nothing. After that we never had another problem.

The second move we made, and all other moves, went easily down the road. We continued moving buildings on Mondays and Thursdays for the rest of July and into the early part of August. We got all the buildings from the small cabins moved from their location on the JY Ranch to where they were going to sit at Beaver Creek (park residential and administrative area).



Once the buildings were relocated to Beaver Creek (park residences), they were placed on new foundations. Photo courtesy of WCHP 2005.



To prepare this cabin for transport, it was cut in half while at the JY Ranch. Once relocated to Beaver Creek, the two halves were merged and placed on a new foundation. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

That left us with the shop building, the main shop building of the JY Ranch. It was a 5,000 sq foot building and was around 30-foot tall at the peak of the ridge; 50 feet wide and 96 feet long.



Dismantling the JY Shop in preparation for move to Moose. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

At the time it was constructed, it was the largest log building in Teton County and I believe it was built in the 1940s. That was our last challenge. Prior to moving the shop, the Park had wanted the contractor to dismantle it and move it log by log. Just put them (the logs) on the trucks and move them down the

Moose Wilson Road. Once the house builder and I started walking around the building, we realized that it wasn't going to be quite that simple and they would never be able to dismantle this building in the time that the contract said that it had to be done.

(15:14) We devised a plan to disassemble it in sections. The beauty of this huge building is that it was a steel framed building with log siding bolted to the side of it. That lent it to where we could take it apart. This steel structure had an I-beam girder every 12-feet that formed the walls. So, there was a steel truss, every 12-feet, across the entire 50-foot span.



Steel structure inside the JY Shop. Photo courtesy of WCCP, 2005.

We were able to dismantle the roof section in 12-foot sections as well and put those on a truck. We could move them back down the road being only 12-foot wide. That was a very easy move. Because we had already moved so many buildings, we had the moving down the road as a well-oiled machine. We were able to take the roof off the JY Shop with relative ease. The trusses for the roof were basically about 15 feet wide at the peak from the bottom core to the top peak. That didn't cause much of a problem. It was just the size of the bulk and that was 2-3 truckloads for that one.



Beginning the process of dismantling the roof. Photo courtesy of WCCP, 2005.

R: The steel girders were bolted together so you're taking the bolts apart.

A: Fortunately, it was a steel building built after the rivet revolution in the 1920s and 1930s. So, the majority of the building was bolted together. Everything came apart like a giant erector set. They were able just to take a big bucket and start undoing bolts. To dismantle and load the building sections we had a 120-ton crane on sight with a 100-foot boom.

The house mover built a gantry that was welded together so it was 40-foot long and 12-foot wide at the same angle the roof. When it was suspended from the crane, they were able to lower down and chain each roof panel together, pick it up, and then take that down and put it on the truck itself.



Transporting a 12-foot wide section of the roof to Moose. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

The reason we had such a large crane was because the weight calculations used were for the span. We were reaching in some places probably close to 70-feet away from the crane. If you are reaching 70-feet away from the crane, the weight that a crane is able to pick up is greatly diminished. In order to get a crane large enough to pick up the weight that was required to pick up 70-feet away, a 120-ton crane was required. The daily cost was phenomenal. It sat there all summer long and was on site to dismantle the entire shop.

(18:45) Once we got the roof panels off the shop building, we took the trusses apart and all that went down the road in a load.

From then on, all we had was the main wall structures which were probably close to 20-feet tall. We had a square perimeter (consisting of 2 sides and 2 ends) and one interior wall. The way the building was constructed there was an I-beam riser every 12-feet. The original builders had stacked and attached the logs to those I-beam risers. They basically just sided a steel building with logs. They didn't worry about staggering the seams. There were a few places where there were 3 or 4 logs that we stacked with the seam on the same I-beam.

Everything was bolted together and there was a vertical log on the outside at each riser that was coped to match all the logs along the wall. That was sandwiched between the outside log wall and the inside I-beam. So basically, we were able to take the building apart, anywhere we really needed to take it apart. We were feeling comfortable that we could put it back together (once moved to Moose Headquarters) and that it was going to be just as structurally sound as it was when it was first built.

So, with that, we took the two end walls and we cut all the logs there down along that first 12-foot section of the log wall at the corner. The building had 3 walls (sections) that ran the narrow part of the building (the end), which is where the gables were that followed the truss line. In between those (end) walls (on the original shop) was a very large garage door. At the time the shop was designed, it was to

have a smaller section for a heated shop and then a really large section for equipment, boat and hay storage. They designed it where they could open up the garage door and drive completely through the whole garage shop area.



Preparing to lift the gable section of the roof and place it on a truck for transport. Photo courtesy of WCHP.

(21:23) We had 3 really large openings in the walls that allowed us to go from those garage doors, once we took the garage doors out, and cut the gable ends up to where the gable ends actually started. We then took the log gable, put that on a truck and sent that down Moose Wilson Road. We then basically had a square box.



Gable ends loaded on a truck trailer for transport to Moose. Photo courtesy of WCHP.

(In summary,) That is how we cut the 2 end walls, at 12-foot where the beams were. And, we cut from the garage door and staggered up 3 or 4 courses to where the gables started and cut those. We were able to take the 2 (end) walls and slide them together and put those on a truck and then send that down the Moose Wilson Road. The 2 outside walls were 12-foot wide and with the log ends sticking out, they were probably about 18- feet wide so we had no problem moving them given our 24-foot wide corridor down the Moose Wilson.



Roof and its steel structure removed; two ends and two sides remain to be taken apart and moved to Moose. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

That left us 4 wall sections; two of them were quite short and 2 of them were about 36 feet long which we were able to lay straight down on the truck. We had about a 22-foot wide load going down the road. Those were taken down to the location in Moose where we had our staging area around the foundation that was already poured for the shop.



Lifting a corner of the Shop for placement on a truck. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.



Lifting a wall section attached to its steel structure for transport to Moose. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

(At that point) the only thing left was to take the steel structure apart, take the steel structure down and then reassemble the steel structure on the foundation that had already been designed and poured to accommodate this in Moose That is when the crane moved from the location at the JY Ranch down to Moose.

(23:50) We set the crane up and then for most of September and into October, the building was reassembled but in an order that was the exact opposite of how it was disassembled. That left us with a shell that I spent the rest of the winter welding inside seismic bracing even though, being a steel structure, it had already come with plenty of seismic bracing. (I welded more seismic bracing because) the Park engineer wanted some additional seismic bracing on it. That is what I did for the rest of the winter. I welded a lot of steel crossbeams and I-beams throughout the entire roof structure and throughout the entire wall sections. That was a cold, slow process.



Once in Moose, the walls have been erected/secured, the crane lifts the first section of roof for placement. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.



Interior wall now in place separating shop space from WCHP offices. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2005.

After that, we started designing the interior of the shop but, at that point in time, things were going slow because one person (me) couldn't build a 50' x 90' building quickly. By that time, we fortunately had a base budget and we used some of our funding and some cyclic funding to get a contractor to help do the framing and help build the shop in the configuration that it is today. That happened in 2006, throughout the spring and summer. E Corps finished the interior work and, after that, we started buying equipment and setting up the shop to the configuration that it is now. It has been a woodworking shop ever sense.

R: (25:50) So, in the interior of the building, there is a conference room and offices. Better yet, you tell me what was actually put into the building.

A: Interior wise, originally, Al (I) wanted the entire 5000 square foot building for a shop only. (It is noteworthy that) During the time that I had been appointed as the project manager for moving all the buildings off the JY Ranch and for working on the White Grass Project, the Park had hired a director. So, for the first time in almost a year, I actually had a direct supervisor (Craig Struble). He had a vision of operating the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) that is similar to what we do today.

At that point in time, my dream shop got whittled down significantly because we (WCHP) needed some offices. That being said, you can't argue with that. So, we designed 2 large office rooms in the building itself. We basically made a 1/3-2/3 floor plan (1/3 office; 2/3 shop) with a log wall separating the two. We left the largest section of the shop for our shop operation proper. We took the smaller section and decided to turn that into offices, a kitchen area and some storage. We decided on a paint

room, we discussed the possibility of a lead contaminated window restoration room; we decided on a lot of uses for the other half of this room that we were going to utilize.

At the time, we were still part of Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) and under the direction of facility management there. The facility managers at that time decided they needed a conference room that didn't require stairs or elevators to get to. So, we had to sacrifice the other half that we didn't plan on using for office and kitchen area to accommodate a fairly large conference room, which is used as a central meeting place. It has been used by the Park and by us since it was finished.



Conference Room in WCHP Shop and Office Building. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2006.

(29:00) With that being said, we definitely had a floor plan and with that, we had a contractor do pretty much all of the interior framing, all the drywall and all the drywall finishing. After the contractor left, I painted and installed the windows, installed the doors, installed the drop ceiling. At the same time, I was also doing the electrical in the building which included pulling a 400 amp service panel from an outside concrete platform that needed to be built/poured.

I remember pouring that platform out of the side door of my work van with sacked/bagged concrete. It took me most of the day and about 30 bags of concrete to pour a pad big enough for the transformer that we needed. When I was done trenching laying conduit and pulling wires from the transformer to the main subpanel, we had Lower Valley (electrical cooperative that served the Jackson area) come in to 'heat' all that stuff up (turn the electricity on for the building). With the help of the park electrician, I was able to wire up all the shop, the offices, the conference room - everything.

Further fragmenting the shop, we had to make room for the Grand Teton Park carpenter/sign maker. That took probably 20% of the shop we planned to use for other purposes. So, the sign maker and I designed a layout and location for all the equipment needed in the shop area so we could move 16-foot material through each piece of equipment and around the shop with relative ease.

(To summarize) it is a very beautiful shop, large and spacious. With the sheer amount of equipment, we have in there, it is a little tight and a little snug when you have more than one project going on. But it is still an absolutely phenomenal operation and just a phenomenal shop. Everyone that comes to see it, thinks it is a thing of beauty.



Interior to WCHP Shop in Moose. Photo courtesy of R. Butterbaugh, 2011.

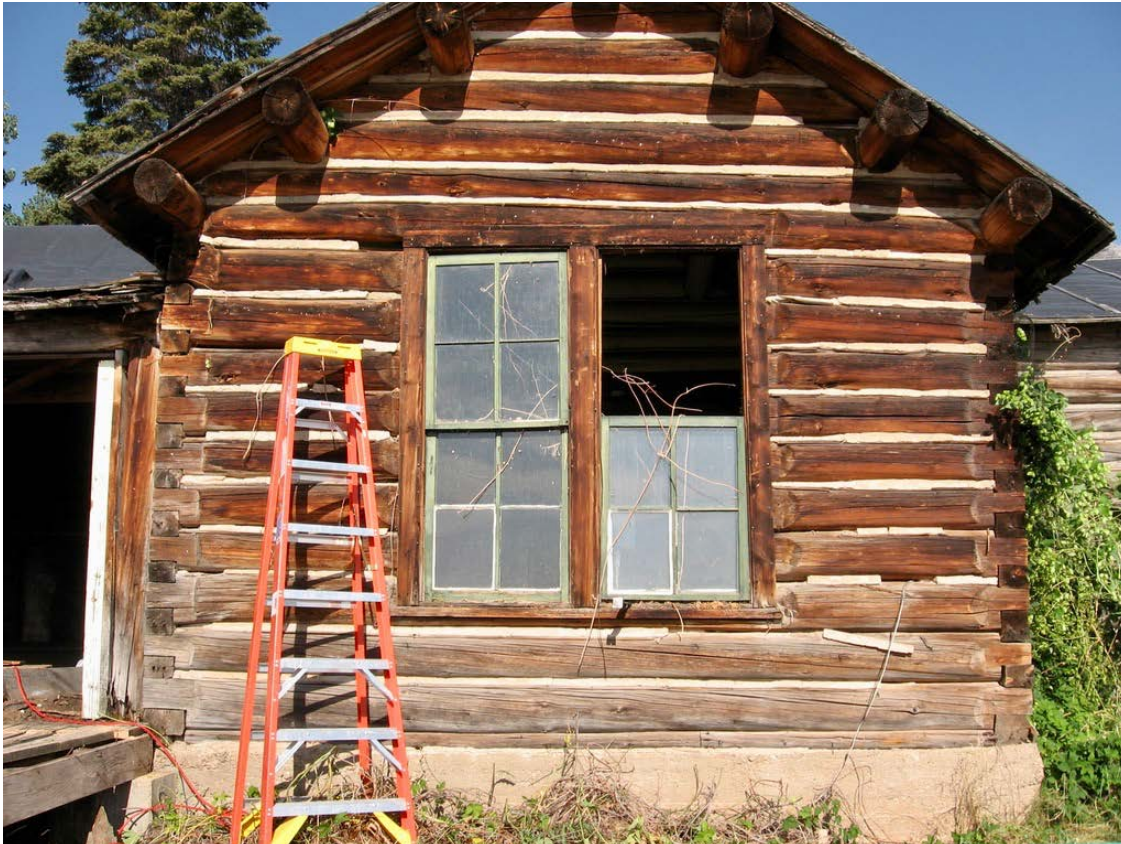
R: (31:35) The shop was designed primary to accomplish what task/what job?

A1: At the time we started to do the shop, we got our second full time employee. Craig Struble, WCHP Director, hired an acquaintance of his, Bob Williams. Bob was a woodcrafter trainer, who Craig knew from HPTC (Historic Preservation Training Center in Frederick, Maryland.). Bob was tasked with designing the shop so we could do our historic door and window restorations there. He came up with a tool list and we started acquiring tools that were primarily designed for replicating windows, doors, any kind of millwork from any type of historic casements meaning windows, doors, trim - basically anything that has a shape or profile to it, we wanted to be able replicate it. That was what our shop was set up to do. We called it our projects operations. (It was clear that) the only way we (WCHP) were going to survive was to supplement our base budget with money earned doing projects (for other entities, e.g., other national parks/national forests). We have been doing historic door and window restoration out of that shop since 2008.

R: Meaning other parks would contract with you to do their doors and windows restoration work?

A: Correct, we would reach out to the parks and they would tell us what they had. We would either go to that park and remove all their windows that they either wanted repaired, restored, or in some cases

replicated. Then, we would take them or what was left of them to our shop. Then, we designed and replicated the windows.



These windows were removed, taken to WCHP Shop for repair, restoration and also construction of a replacement window. New window sashes were built. Then all windows were reinstalled. Photo from White Grass Ranch, Moose, WY. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2015.

We have a complete setup where we can take a small piece of wood with a profile from a window and replicate it. We can do that because in our shop we can fashion (grind) shaper knives to match the profile given us (on an old window, door or trim) and make the new wood look exactly the same as what was on the original window. Some parks will bring their windows here. Some parks will send an example of the window itself or a piece of the window or full plans for windows. I have recreated windows from a small piece of the original sash, all I need is a small example of the profile and the dimensions of the window.



(Top Center) is a wood profile from window that needed to be reproduced, i.e., replicated. (Bottom Center) is a metal knife precision ground to match the profile. A total of three identical knives were created, put on a large shaper machine where wood is run through to create replacement parts matching the original wood profile. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2014.

We have remanufactured doors. We have repaired doors and we have replicated doors the same as our window work. We have also reproduced siding and other trim work and basically anything that has a profile on it. We were able to create and match all of those items.



Doors repaired/rebuilt and new doors duplicated in Moose Shop. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2011.

R: So, some of the work that the WCHP has done has been to refurbish, repair and/or replicate doors and windows but WCHP has also gone to some parks and installed them. Is that correct?

A: (35:28) That is some of the things we did that kept us alive in the early stages and we are still doing such things. It is what we call, project work. In essence, we function basically like a private contractor. When we go to a park, we will give them a proposal, they agree to the cost, and we sign an agreement. We will give them a scope of work and we can often go to their park and perform the work. Or, we will go there for a site visit, remove whatever we are going to repair, take that back to our shop and do the work at the shop.

We have also stayed longer at some parks and done further/additional work on their buildings (historical preservation). We have gone as far as Texas to do this. We have also done jobs for Grand Canyon National Park and traveled to California and to Idaho. I've also shipped a large quantity of windows to Skagway, Alaska and have been doing a workshop there on how to install the windows since 2008. While all this work was being done, I was also working at White Grass to do the restoration project there.



Al Williams (Center) in the WCHP Shop repairing, restoring and replicating historic windows. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2014.

R: So, going back to your building reconstructed in Moose, is it what you dreamed it would be or something close? Is it close or exceeding expectations?

A: It has exceeded my expectations. Is it what I dreamed it to be? No. I dreamt of a 5000-foot square shop with me running around all by myself with all these beautiful tools doing all this work in there. I will have to admit, I needed to be reigned-in many times on what I had fantasized compared to what we needed for the shop and how the shop came out. I still miss the spot where the conference room is. The conference room is a necessary thing. We have used it since the early existence of WCHP. Could we have used that extra space? Yes. Does our shop function beautifully as it is? Yes. It is a magnificent shop and anybody would love to have it.

As I said earlier, it is a little crowded for the sheer amount of equipment we have in the shop. But it has exceeded my expectations – every day. It is what I expected it to be!

At the time when Bob Williams was here, when we started laying everything out, we started to realize what our potential was. At that point, it was quite obvious that it would become a show piece and that a lot of people would appreciate it and like to see it. We do a lot of trainings in this shop and everybody who has ever been here takes pictures and are very much in awe of it.

As a side note, when I do trainings in this shop, I do tell people that we going to learn to replace and repair a window but in a manner based upon the tools the students have back in their park, i.e., ‘make do with what you have’. Granted, I have all the amazing toys here that we are going to play with but there are still ways to do things without all that great equipment we have. But has it exceeded my expectations? Oh yea!



Window Training Workshop held in the WCHP Shop. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2006.

R: (39:50) It is truly a wonderful story to be able to start at the beginning of this project (moving a building from the JY Ranch to park headquarters in Moose) and have general ideas where you are headed. You then help it evolve as you creatively moved through the many steps involved in building a shop and in the end, you have been able to actually work in it. So, as one who has spent many hours working in that shop, I say congratulations to you. It is indeed a wonderful building.

A: It was one of my first large scale projects that I had been directly responsible for which took several years to complete. Before then, I had done remodel projects and building projects, but they were in a relatively short time frame. There were always reasons to get this done and someone was always waiting for this. So, this was an eye opener experience for me to spend 2 years or a full season and half working on one building/project. Little did I know, but once we got into the White Grass project, I came to realize, that it too would take years of work to complete. (AI was the project manager of the rehabilitation work done on the ranch.)

It (working at White Grass from 2005-2016) has been another one of those great experiences in my career that I can look back and say, "I am pretty proud on how this turned out". I was here from the very beginning; I have an awful lot of my own labor in it. It is one of those life experiences where I finally learned how to share (vs I will do it all myself). I always loved gigantic projects but always wanted to be the one to do it by myself. Ego wise, then I could say, "Yea, I did this". In reality I had an awful lot of help here (at White Grass) but my hand is in every step that was completed here and in the shop building. I am very proud.



Pre-rehabilitation of White Grass Ranch Main Cabin. Photo courtesy of WCHP, 2013.



Al Williams in front of Main Cabin. Photo courtesy of R. Butterbaugh, 2014.

R: The shop is a wonderful building and to your credit, as you approach retirement in a couple of months, it is a building that will continue to serve the Park System and the Western Center for Historic Preservation well. Your remarkable talents will always be on display in the shop/office building that will be used for many, many years to come.

A: Thank you, it has been great.

R: Good.

Note: For a full summary with historical photos of the rehabilitation work done at White Grass Ranch under Al's direction, see www.whitegrass.org under Collections/Videos/Al Williams and Collections/Photos/Historical Buildings, and Ranch 1985-2002, and Rehabilitation.