Summer 1957

Letters from a Cabin Girl at the White Grass Ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

SHARON CRARY GRIFFIN

Letters from a Cabin Girl at the White Grass Ranch
in Jackson Hole, Wyoming
by Sharon Crary Griffin

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Dedicated to

Rachel Trahern

Guiding light in keeping in touch with
White Grass guests and staff and for making our
many reunions possible.

and to

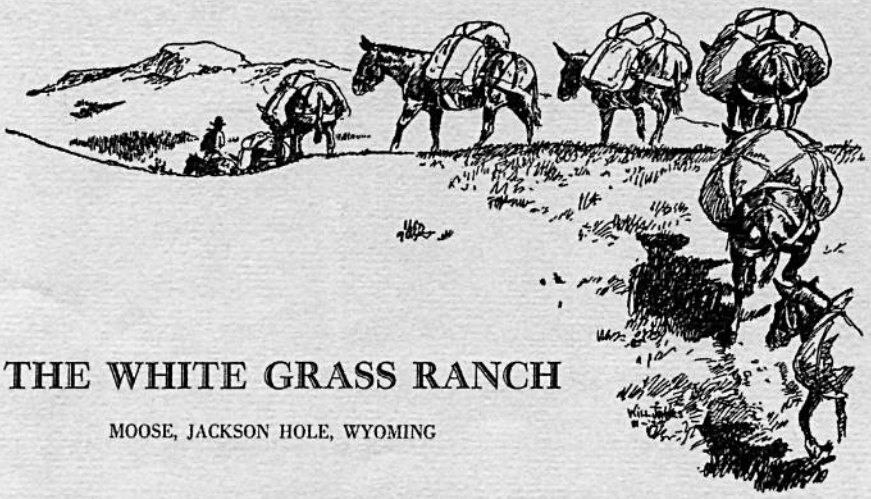
Ceci Clover

My long time friend. Her parents, Elise and George Clover,
were special friends during my 1957 summer
at the White Grass Ranch.

Sharon passed away Nov. 8th - 2011 -

The White Grass Ranch was one of the oldest dude ranches in Jackson Hole. The ranch has a long and lively history. Harold Hammond started the White Grass with Tucker Bispham in 1913 as a cattle ranch, they turned to dude ranching in 1919 — hence the brand — H for Hammond and B for Bispham. H quarter circle B. The final demise of the ranch was with the death of Frank Galey in 1984.

The present restoration undertaking is Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation becoming the Western Center for Historic Preservation(WCHP).



THE WHITE GRASS RANCH

MOOSE, JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING


GREETINGS
from
CALIFORNIA


Greetings from
WYOMING

Preface to my summers at the White Grass Ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

I grew up in a normal and happy family with an older sister, Phoebe and a much younger brother, Tom, in Palo Alto, California and graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1959. I was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority.

For several summers while in high school my father took my older sister and me on the Sierra Club High Trips in the California Sierra Mountains. In those days there were 90 strong hiking and camping in the high Sierra with pack animals carrying our food and luggage. That began my love for the outdoors and the high mountains. One summer I spent a month in the mountains and the road head was just out of Bridgeport, California. I had connections to a wonderful working ranch there called the Circle H, so I stayed between trips and filled in as a waitress. Someone at the ranch suggested that I look for work the following summer at a ranch in Jackson Hole because the setting was so spectacular.

That idea returned to me when everyone in the Kappa House at Berkeley began making summer plans. Many of the girls were going to take group trips to Europe. That idea appealed to my parents but not to me. I decided to write to the Jackson Chamber of Commerce for a list of Dude Ranches to write for work. Low and behold I had an answer from the White Grass Ranch because one of the workers there, Elise Morris Clover, had been a Kappa Kappa Gamma at University of Pennsylvania. Sorority sisters are usually loyal to one another. It took a little time to persuade my parents that this was the best summer solution for me!

This collection of memories are dear to me and I hope that they help bring back your own memories or at least trigger the imagination.

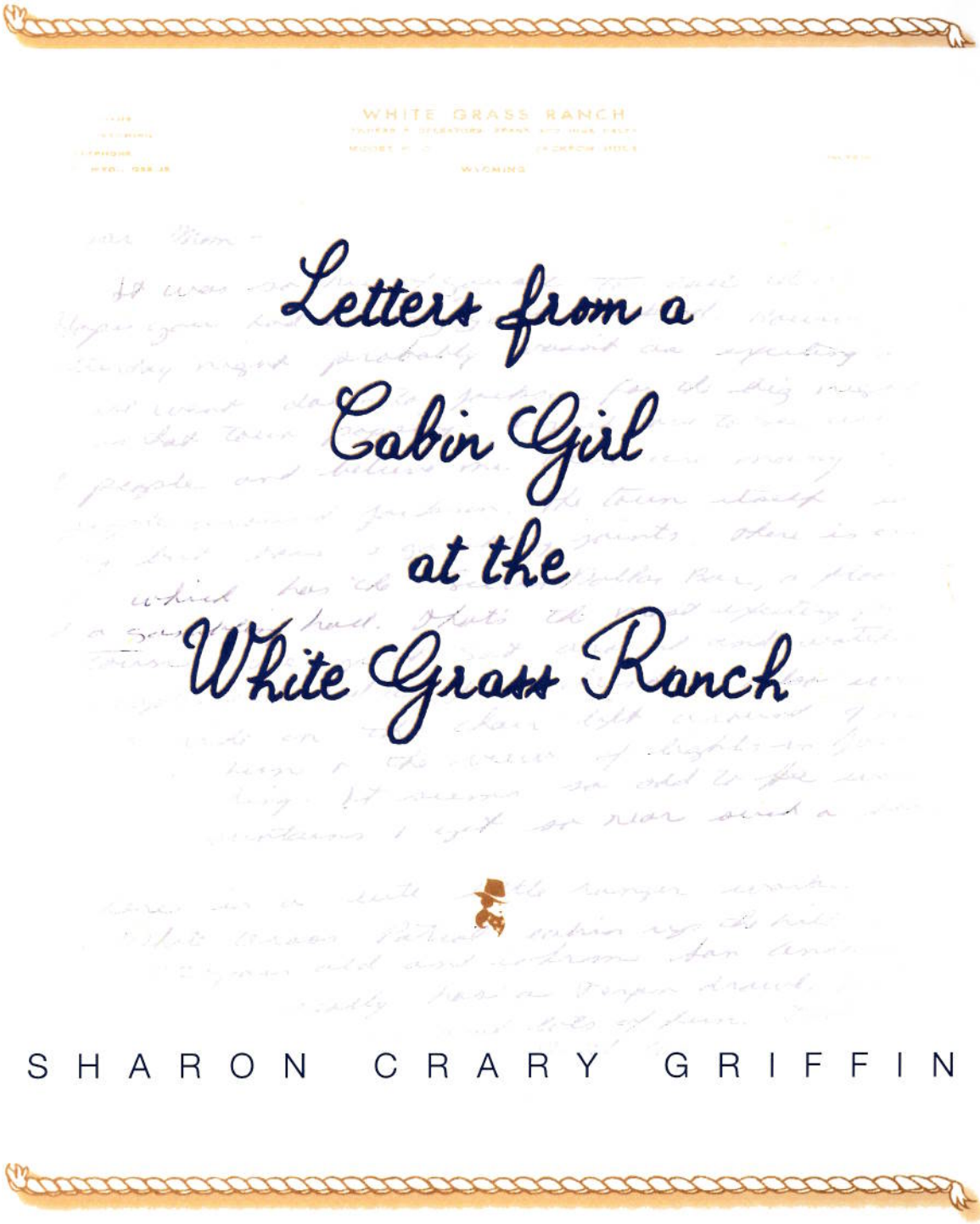
Enjoy!

Sharon Crary Griffin

Sharon & Andy Griffin in Jackson Hole, 2001


HOWDY
STRANGER
YONDER IS
JACKSON HOLE
THE LAST OF THE OLD WEST

HUB



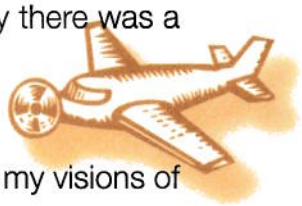
Letters from a Cabin Girl at the White Grass Ranch

SHARON CRARY GRIFFIN

Early May, 1957

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well here I am after a pleasant airplane ride. Everything was fine except the small plane was a little rough, thought I was going to lose my breakfast a few times. By chance I met a friend from U.C. Berkeley at the Jackson Airport. He gave me a ride into the booming town of Moose — one post office and a small trading post. I called the ranch so Mrs. Galey came in her pick-up to meet me. Evidently there was a slight mix-up — she wrote me but probably to Berkeley.

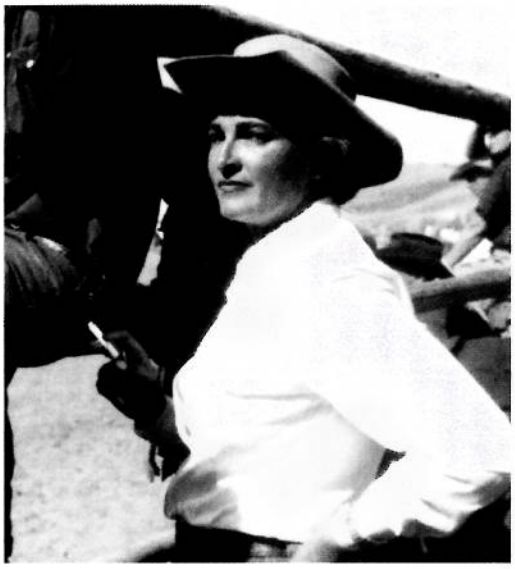


The country is beautiful — the Dude Ranch just matches my visions of a rustic ranch in the last of the Golden West! White Grass Ranch is nestled in a very beautiful property directly beneath the Teton Mountains. The people are all very kind and attractive.

There are five girls, three of us are sophomores, one is a girl from England with a very pronounced accent and the other is a graduate of Vassar, 1938. She and I are the "cabin girls". We all sleep in one big

Some of the wranglers and their black hats ...
Fran Strawbridge, Ben Morman, Don Kipp & Jay Mathews

log cabin that is cozy and crowded. There are about eight young boys. Most all of the crew are from the east and several of the boys are at Princeton. They all wear black cowboy hats to play the role of a real cowboy! Also there are several married couples here that help in various ways.



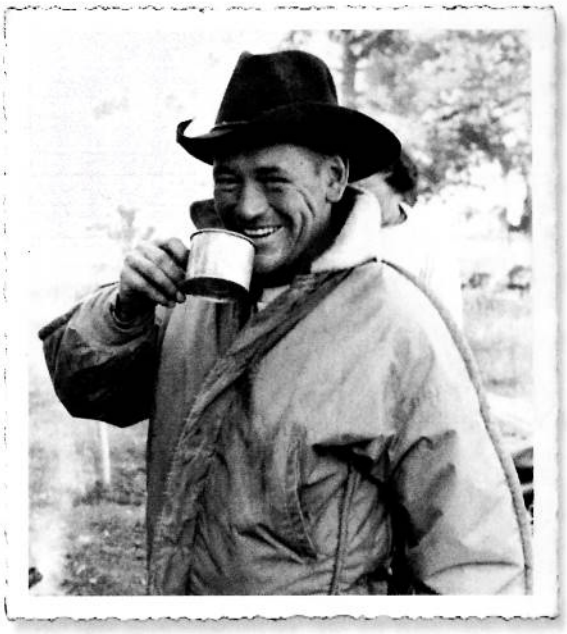
Inge Galey

Frank Galey

The Galeys are a most delightful and attractive couple. Mrs. Galey is German and I've the feeling that she will be very stern and quite strict (there's going to be no fooling around)! Last but not least, there are many, many mosquitoes.

Today I worked hard all morning. There are about 13 log cabins, mostly

Inge Galey



Frank Galey

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Today I worked hard all morning. There are about 13 log cabins, mostly

3 bedroom cabins, which have to be opened up, washed out, swept out, oiled, windows washed and put in order. It's one hell of a job. We have to move everything out and put it in again. All the walls, ceilings, beams, floors, beds, etc. have to be oiled down. And it follows that we will have to make all the beds later and change them over and over again through out the summer!

I'm taking it easy this afternoon because they said I should get acclimated in the high altitude that is about 6,500 feet above sea level. I'm really not very tired but I'll take a rest break.

Hope you are fine and that you will plan to come and stay here for at least a week.

Lots of Love,
your cowgirl daughter,

Sharon

Sharon & Madeleine cleaning the cabins.

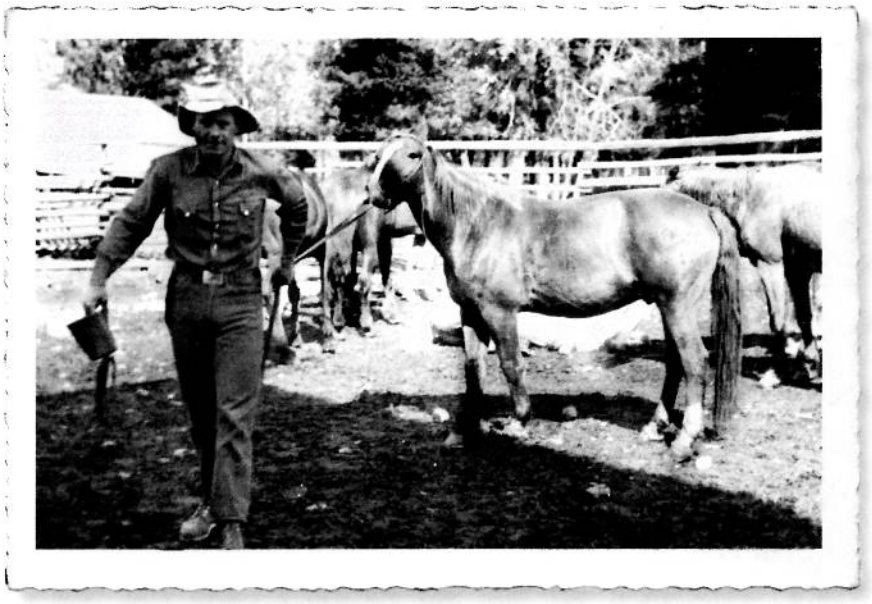
May, 1957

Dear Mom,

Was glad to get your letter.

Today is a beautiful, warm sunny day. I'm sitting out in the sun, relaxing for the first time since I've been here. Remember how brown I was when I came here — well, I've had jeans and long shirts on all the time and now I'm as white as a sheet! You should see all the pretty wild flowers in bloom now. They are so colorful. Also there are many birds flying around.

Yesterday I drove over to the Jackson Lake Lodge and saw the gang from Cal. I invited them all over for a Sunday evening BBQ. It is nice that we are able to have guests here. My Cal friends told me how lucky I am to have this Ranch summer job because they must work inside all day and wear uniforms, to boot! The Jackson Lake Lodge is really huge and the view from the grand room is very spectacular — one can see the Grand Teton and Moran Lake perfectly from the picture window



George Clover wrangling the ponies and then he'll wrangle some guests!

in the Lodge. Monday I might go on a 16 mile hike with some of the kids from there. (We now are getting our days off!)

There is one cowboy (married to a girl from a prominent Philadelphia family) who is the funniest character you've ever met. Grandpa would just love him. He is really a very sharp man and has graduated from college. His language is a little rough around the edges. I shall quote some funny things he has popped up with out of a clear blue sky at the dinner table (all of the help eat together in the room in back of the kitchen).

George Clover & Fran Strawbridge sizing up the Rodeo competition

One time I brought him in some flapjacks and he picked them up with his hands and said "These goddamn things are as cold as a well-diggers ass on a Klondike". I nearly died. Then I took the flapjacks back to the kitchen and put them in the garbage can. The cook then yelled "you're the god damndest throw awayer I've ever seen around here" and then he pulled them from the garbage can and put them back on the grill to heat up and serve to the dudes. By the

way, we now have our third cook for the summer. I hope this one will prove satisfactory for at least a month or two.

Last night George (the cowboy) was telling us about hunting camp in the Fall. He said "they hunted from dawn until it was so dark you couldn't find your ass with two hands". Every other word he says is a swear word but he has an art of doing it and we all love him.

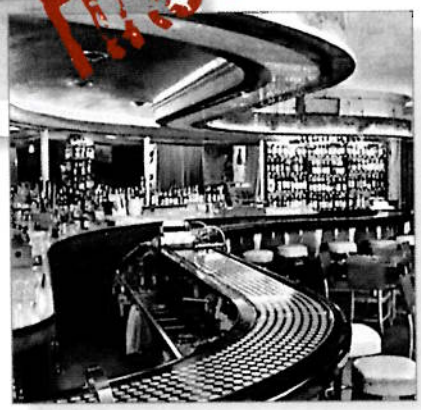
Tonight we are all going into town to celebrate Saturday evening. I'm going in with a very nice good looking and smart boy. However, he is only 16 and I think I'm robbing the cradle. He's very mature for his age and acts and looks much older. I might as well have fun with the younger ones because that's all there are and all of us will be here all summer. What the heck!

The dudes are very pleasant people and there are many little children. The adults all drink like fishes and crow like roosters. I'm being very nice to them, so I'll get some tips.

Love,

Sharon

FIRST CLASS



Inside the Wort Hotel's famous Silver Dollar Bar

This is how everyone drinks here!

June, 1957

Dear Mom,

It was so nice of you all to call the other night. Hope you had an enjoyable weekend. However, your Saturday night probably wasn't as exciting as mine. We all went down to Jackson for the big night. Boy is that town popping. I just love to see all of the different people and believe me there are many types of people around Jackson. The town itself is really nothing but bars and gambling joints. There is one big hotel which has the Silver Dollar Bar (because there are at least 1,000 silver dollars embedded in the bar counter), a floor show and a gambling hall. That's the most exciting place in town. We just sat around and watched the people and had a few drinks. Also we took a ride on the Snow King chair lift around 9 o'clock. We had a good view of the lights in Jackson. It seems so odd to be way up in the mountains and yet so near such a booming town.

The town of Jackson at night

There is a forest ranger by the name of Courtney working in the White Grass Patrol cabin up the hill. He's about 22 years old and is from San Antonio, Texas. He really has a Texan drawl. He's very sharp and lots of fun. Today we went on a hike up Death Canyon which is a good 10 or 12 mile steep hike. The country is beautiful. Evidently the Sierra Club started their hike from here last year because at the ranger's little cabin at the top of Death Canyon there is a registration and I saw all the names of the people I knew from the Club. We ate lunch up there — found some good cookies and canned pineapple in the

Dear Mom -

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Courtney Atkins with Sharon

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There is a cute little ranger wa
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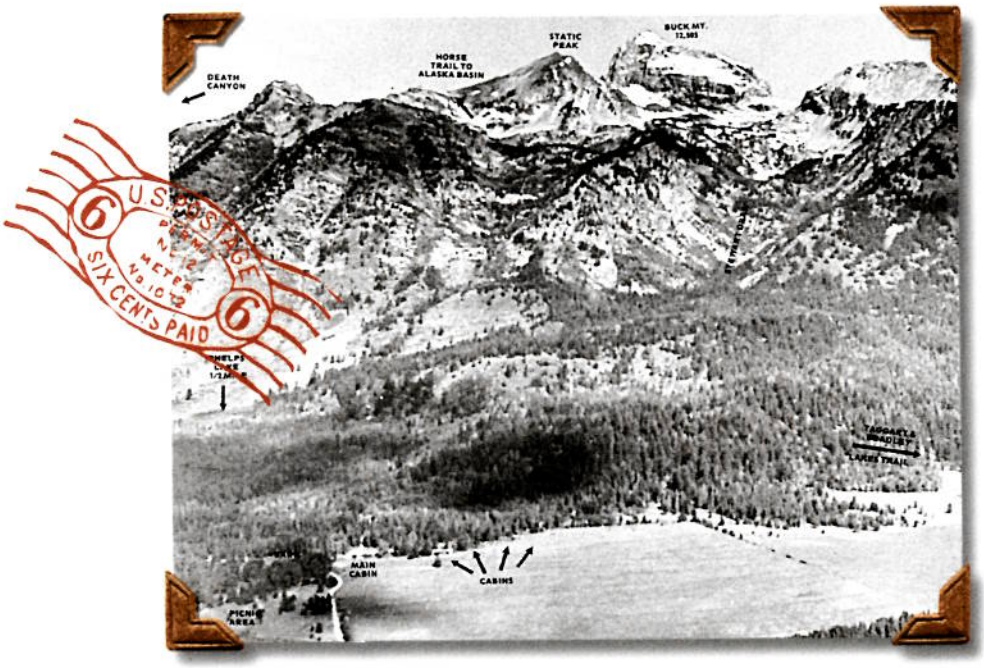

From the official brochure, an arial photo of the White Grass Ranch

cabin, Courtney had the key to the emergency supplies. While we were eating, some tame marmots came right up to us and ate from our hands.

Courtney has a sister working at Yellowstone Park so he is going to take me there sometime when I can break away from the regular routine here. By the way, today is Sunday so we decided to take a day off

before the dudes get here. Probably it will be my only day off this summer, unless I'm lucky.

Sunday night is the cooks night off so the girls rotate Sundays and we prepare a barbeque dinner for all the ranch hands and dudes combined. The Sunday night barbeques are supposed to be fun.

Mrs. Galey said a lady just wrote the day you called and reserved the only cabin she had. Now there is only a possibility for you to come up in early August and stay in the large cabin which holds 6 people. Why don't you get some of your friends and drive up here. I'm sure you all would enjoy it. It's too bad there isn't enough room for you — you should have written sooner. Maybe you could stay at another ranch near by — then I could meet some other people too.

R Lazy S. Ranch is supposed to be good and its close by. You'd really get a kick out of Saturday nights at Jackson. When I find out for sure about where and when you can come and stay I'll let you know, Okay.

Love,

Sharon

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Love,

Sharon

TELEGRAMS
MOOSE, WYOMING
TELEPHONE
JACKSON, WYO. 626-J3

WHITE GRASS RANCH
OWNERS & OPERATORS: FRANK AND INGE GALEY
MOOSE P. O. JACKSON HOLE
WYOMING

EXPRESS
JACKSON, WYOMING

Dear Tommy —

Thought I write you a little letter, I'm so glad you are doing well with your baseball — all you have to do is hit a few more homeruns. Hope your team does well this year.

Well yesterday I had a very exciting horseback ride. We were riding down the steep rock trail and all of a sudden the bridal came off of my horse. The horse started to buck so I jumped off. As I was [illegible] off, the horse threw me around and down [illegible] rocks, then the horse fell down & rolled [illegible] legs — I tried to get up & then the [illegible] rolled down on me again. Finally we [illegible] ~~I didn't get hurt at all~~ (just a little sore up) & the horse cut his leg. After we had both calmed down a part the bridal back on the horse & we continued on our way. Everything was fine after that — it was fortunate that I didn't get hurt.

Today is 4th of July and we are all having a big bar-b-que tonight if it doesn't rain. All afternoon the weather has been threatening rain with thunder & huge clouds. Also we are having a big cocktail party & fire works

AIRMAIL EXPRESS
DELIVERED QUICKLY

A Sunday in June, 1957

Dear Tommy,

I Thought I'd write you a little letter. I'm so glad you are doing well with your baseball — all you have to do is hit a few more home runs. Hope your team does well this year.

Yesterday I had a very exciting horseback ride. We were riding down a steep rock trail and all of a sudden the bridle came off of my horse. The horse started to buck so I jumped off. As I was jumping off, the horse threw me around and down on the rocks. Then the horse fell down and rolled on my legs. I tried to get up and then the horse rolled down on me again. Finally we got up — I didn't get hurt at all (just a little shook up) and the horse cut his leg. After we had both calmed down, I put the bridal back on the horse, we continued on our way. Everything was fine after that. It was fortunate that I didn't get hurt.

Today is the 4th of July and we are all having a big Barbeque tonight if it doesn't rain. All afternoon the weather has been threatening us with thunder and huge clouds. Also we're having a big cocktail party and some fireworks. It should be fun. What are you doing for excitement?

Most of the dudes have arrived now and there are loads of little boys and girls. They all make lots of noise and are having much fun. Maybe someday you'll have to get a job at a ranch because you probably would love it.

This is God's day of rest
but not mine —

Storms building over the Tetons at sunset.

This is God's day of rest
but not mine —

Storms building over the Tetons at sunset.

Next week we start to get our days off which sounds good to me. I'd like to go to Yellowstone Park sometime and also there are many lakes up in the mountains which I'd like to see, maybe I'll even go swimming. I've just about lost my beautiful tan because I wear jeans and long shirts every day.

It's time for me to go feed one of the working couples babies tonight. I'm really being nice to them so they can go to a cocktail party.

Write me a letter to tell me what you are doing and about your baseball. How's Chuck Taylor's training camp?

Love,

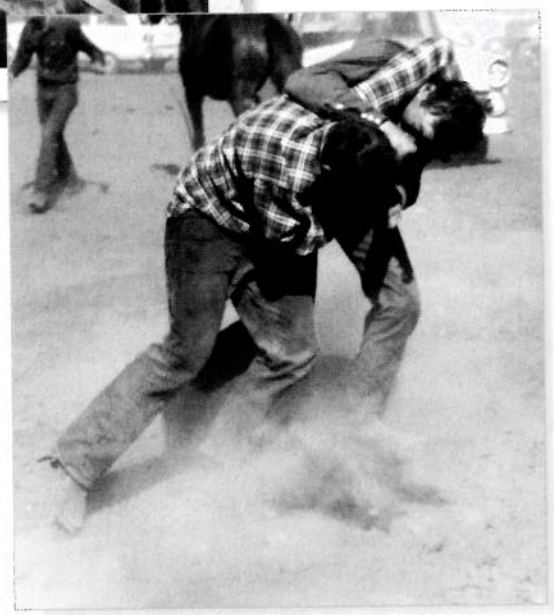
Sharon

P.S. Please ask Mother to send me some shirts.

Sharon babysitting Tom Clover, George's oldest son

U

RODEO!



A Sunday in July, 1957

Hello again,

Just thought I'd add a little to this letter. Last night we had more damn fun — went to the Rodeo at Wilson. It was really exciting inspite of all the disorganization. You should have seen the strange people, lots of true cowboys. Then we all went into Jackson. I've made friends with several of the old timers around and I talked with them last night.

One man "Singing Sam" has a small jewelry and leather shop in town. He is an old, crippled wanderer and it is most interesting to talk with him. He also plays the guitar and sings folk songs for all the ranches around. Next week he is going to come to White Grass and we are going to try some duets together as long as I have my accordion here. Maybe I can have him teach me the guitar. I showed him your

bracelets and he took quite a fancy to them. He wants me to bring them down to him so he can tighten the stones. I'm trying my hardest to bargain with him for some good jewelry but don't think I'll have much luck.

Stayed up too late last night and now I'm beat. Today was hell — we had to change 43 beds and get another cabin ready. Then in 2 hours we have to prepare the barbeque and clean up when it's over. I'll learn some day to go to bed early. Today it is very hot for there is little wind.

I'm debating whether to go swimming, riding or sleeping. I think I'll take a cat-nap. Good night.

Love,

Sharon

Madeleine & Sharon make more and more beds

Postcard in June, 1957

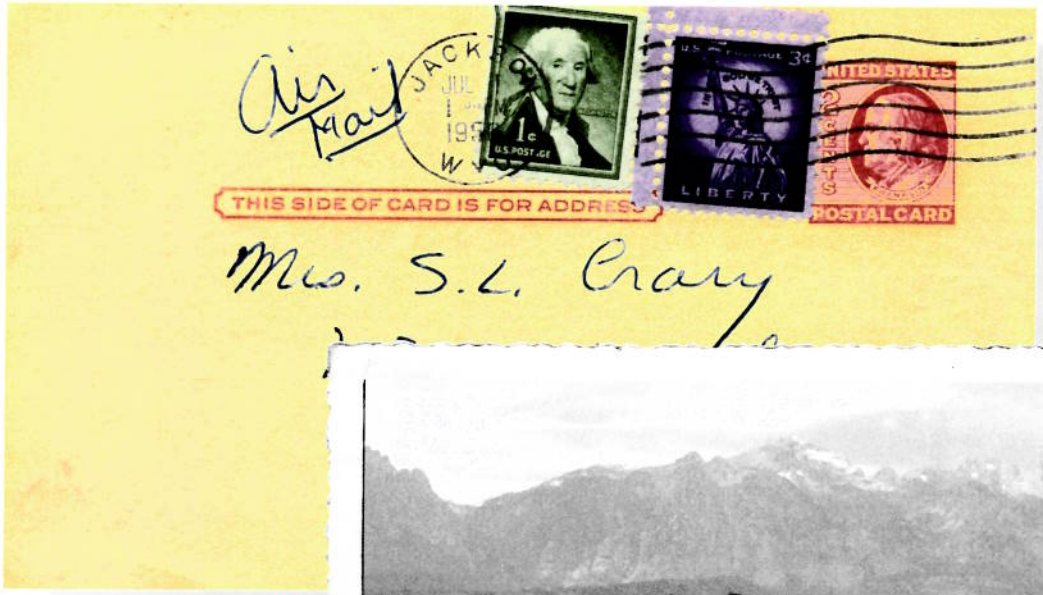
Dear Mom,

Here are the open dates 7/18 – 7/22; 8/16 on; now until 7/15; 7/18 – 7/21; and 8/13 on. I think Dad would like it very much. We could do some hiking and there is lots of wood to chop. It's $105 per person, per week (sort of expensive — but you could drive up, it's nice to have a car). Please phone and tell me when you would like to come — because someone else has been given the same dates (1st come, 1st serve).

Thanks for your letters and cute picture of Linda and Sam. Also I would like it if you sent me 3 or 4 of my plaid sport shirts. I don't have much time to wash and the shirts get dirty fast. Work is still hard.

Love,

Sharon



Dear Mrs
Here
7/18 - 7/22
now until
and 8/13 on -
Dad would
river. We
hiking, there
to stay. Sta
per week. (sort of expensive -
but you could divide up the
how to have a car) Please phone
& tell me when you would like
to come - because someone
else has been given the same
dates (1st week, 1st serve).
Thanks for your letters - or
cute pictures of Linda & Tim
also & would like it
if you would send me 3 or
4 of my plaid sport shirts, I
don't have much time to wash
& the shirts get dirty fast
Work is still hard - Love, Sharon

PARCEL POST

EAT MEAT!

July 1957

Dear Mom & Dad,

Thanks Dad for sending me the Sierra Club notice. I guess they are doing the same trip they did last year here. It is rather a coincidence that the Club is starting out near this Ranch as they did last year near the Circle H Ranch in Bridgeport, Ca., I think it will be fun to see all of the old hikers again.

Many new Dudes have come in the past few days so we have been kept quite busy cleaning cabins. I'm getting fairly tired of making beds and cleaning johns by this time but I will be able to last the summer out. We have such a good time here that the fun makes up for the work. The tips have only been so, so. I've gotten $25 — I'm saving it for an Indian ring. Hope we do better as the summer rolls along.

Tonight is Sunday and we are expecting 90 people for the Barbeque. Some people from other ranches are coming. The Galeys are having a

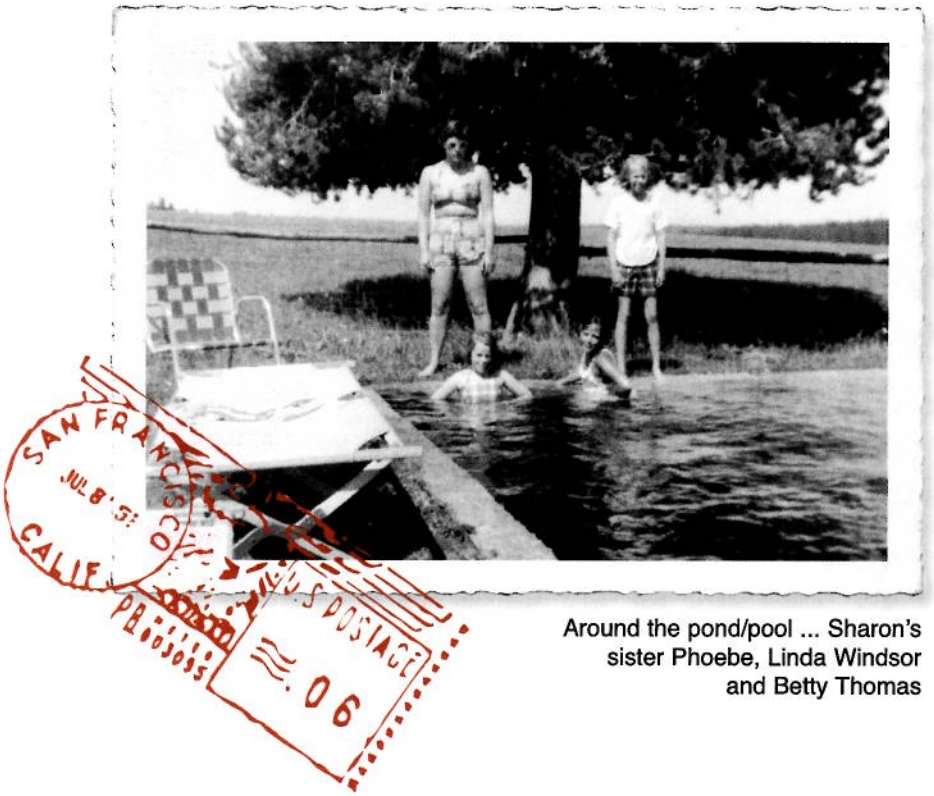
cocktail party before so everyone should be in gay spirits. Thank god I don't have to work tonight!

Last night we had another big evening in town. It's really nice when the dudes come to town because they all buy us drinks. Saw some strange people in town as we went from bar to bar. There is a good floor show now at the Wort Hotel with Rusty Drapper and some jazz band.

Tomorrow the Galeys are taking a group of 12 on a four day pack trip. I tried to go along as a cook but no dice. Frank said I could be cook for hunting camp in September but I won't be able to be here then — darn. The ranch will be left without the managers so I hope everything runs smoothly. Probably the plumbing will break or the cooks will leave or something. By the way, the cooks we have now are excellent. The man bakes all the rolls, cinnamon rolls, coffee cake, Napoleon squares, brownies, jelly rolls, and many other delightful things. I just look at them and drool.

Have not done too much riding because there are not many extra horses and the ones that are left are terrible, also there is a shortage

the swimming pond



Around the pond/pool ... Sharon's sister Phoebe, Linda Windsor and Betty Thomas

The 'Moose Ponds"

of saddles and reins etc. Have been swimming most every day in the pond here. The water is not extremely cold and it feels most refreshing.

Last Friday on my day off, another girl and I packed a lunch to take and hiked up beautiful Cascade Canyon. We went to Jenny Lake and took a boat across, then started from there hiking up the canyon. We did not see many people. Fortunately we saw a huge Moose foraging in the bushes, some marmots and many colorful wild flowers.

I don't know if I'll get any more days off for a while because the "fill in girl" fell out of a truck doing 40 miles per hour and got quite badly cut and bruised. I'm sure I'll get a day off when you are here.

Can hardly wait to see you. It's too bad Tommy can't come because he'd love it, there are several boys his age here and quite a number of young ladies! Maybe in a few years he can come for his vacation.

Love,

Sharon

August 1957

Dear Mom & Dad,

Have been fairly busy since you left so haven't had time to write. It was really fun having you visit the ranch and I hope you all had a good time (which I think you did). Everyone said you were such nice and fun people. Sorry you had to leave.

A few days ago I came down with a cold, which I tried to ignore. Now I'm in bed up in our cozy tent. (Judy and I have moved from the log cabin to a tented platform in the woods). I need to be healthy tomorrow because we are entertaining about 60 doctors at a Barbeque dinner. It will be a great deal of work but also fun. Everyone probably will be feeling very happy around the campfire.

We brought three kegs of beer for the event and I don't imagine the adults will drink much beer so we can have it!

TELEGRAMS
MOOSE, WYOMING
TELEPHONE
JACKSON, WYO., 048 J1

WHITE GRASS RANCH
OWNERS & OPERATORS: FRANK AND INGE GALEY
MOOSE P. O. JACKSON HOLE
WYOMING

EXPRESS
JACKSON, WYOMING

Dear Mom & Dad

I got a joint letter from Rhoda & Alan. Sent it me that they were able to join each other in Paris. From the sound of the letter they were in for a marvelous time having a mo[illegible] on
[illegible]nda [illegible] be
nice if [illegible] of those
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Sharon's parents, Sherman & Elizabeth Crary

Many [illegible] I love
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Last night we had another big evening in Town. [illegible] the dudes come to Town because

Sharon's parents & Mr. Dunne

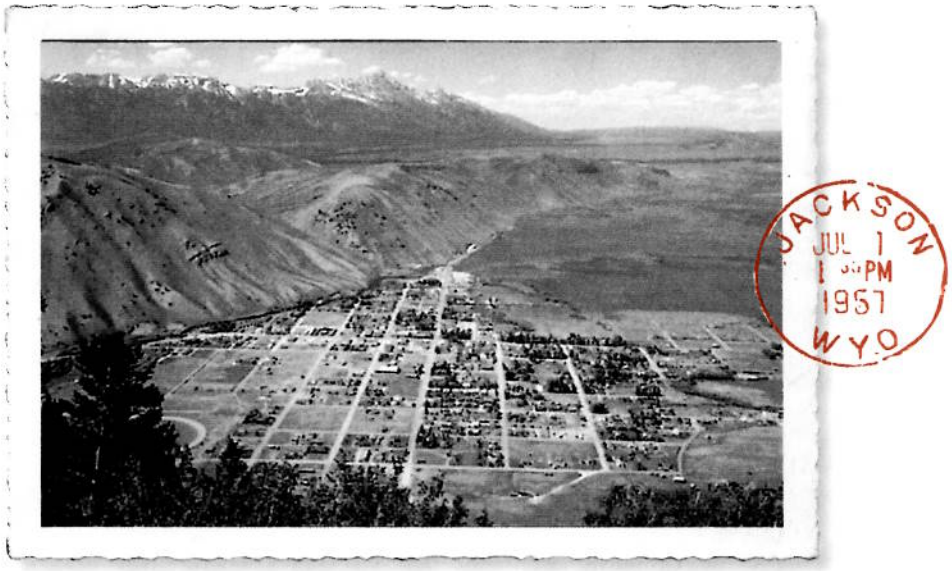
The Sierra Club was in yesterday — all 150 of them. I went over for the campfire and saw many of my old hiking friends.

Have been riding most every day. Elise and I have been picking huckleberries down near the Rockefeller Ranch. We pick for hours and end up with few berries and stained hands and faces. I'm going to bring home a small jar of jam for you.

The Dunnes

Last Saturday morning I got out of work because I had to go up to Turpin Meadows with the gang going on the back pack trip so I could drive a car home. It was a pleasant trip and the country was beautiful. Today the pack trippers are expected home. Hopefully they had a good time and no accidents. Another trip will head out Saturday AM.

I'm reading a book called the *"Diary of a Dude Wrangler"* by Struthers



The town of Jackson from Snow King Mountain

Burt who started the Bar-B-C Ranch and ran it when it was at its prime. You'll find it most interesting because it's all about this area.

Life at the ranch continues about the same as usual. After you left all the plumbing along your line of cabins broke. The Dunnes invited Madeleine and me over for cocktails. They are such pleasant people. Sometimes they become very disturbed about the disorganization of the ranch.

Gambling in Jackson resumed last Saturday night. I went to town with Steve Thomas and had a good time. Courtney and Steve thought they figured out a system of beating the Roulette game but it didn't work out well because the dealers caught on in every bar.

Inge expects me to stay over Labor Day weekend. I think I'm excused from RUSHING at the Kappa House so maybe you can buy me a ticket home for September 4th. Thanks!

I've really had the very best summer here and certainly will hate to leave the special White Grass Ranch and all of my new summer working pals. I look forward to seeing you and returning to my sophomore year in the Kappa House and my studies at Cal.

Love,

Sharon

Sunday horseback ride to the Church of the Transfiguration

Other summer activities when my parents were visiting:

- Saturday night Rodeos in Town
- Horse races
- Dude Ranch rodeos
- Fishing trips out of the Ranch
- Dances at Dornan's
- Sunday horseback rides to the charming Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration in Moose. Behind the altar is a huge glass picture window of the Tetons. The ride continued to Dornan's in Moose for lunch.

My parents were not really horseback riders and fly fishers — so the White Grass Ranch was a totally new and happy experience for them. They were slightly nervous about riding — my Mother rode a "mule" named Blue and the wrangler named a slow horse, Sherman, after my Dad. Dad really liked the morning picnic ride to Dornan's because the riders arrived just as the "sun was over the yard-arm". Dad felt fine at that time to order some "moose milk" — a bourbon and milk to help him relax for the return ride.

Naturally my parents loved the beautiful country, the other Ranch activities and meeting so many eastern people. They even found some Bridge and Dominoes (a very San Francisco game).

The mule named 'Blue'

Late August, 1957

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well, thank you for sending me all of the wedding invitations. When I return I'll be busy shopping for presents!

Daddy, please buy me a ticket for September 4th. I should stay here over Labor Day to work. I would like to "hide out" at home for a few days of rest, OK?

The past week has really been fun here. Since the summer is drawing to an end, we have been raising the roof! Madeleine and I were invited to a Fish Bowl Punch party (a great Philadelphia drink). It consists of Brandy, Rum, Bourbon and more. It's a powerful drink. After dinner that night, Mr. Lee, the Clavers, Madeleine, Rachel and I went to watch the excellent Indian Dances at Jackson Lake Lodge. Wow what colorful and beautiful Indian costumes. Everyone loved the evening — the chance to see the stunning lodge grand room.

Sharon & her Dad, Sherm

Last night Courtney and I had a barbeque at his patrol cabin. He furnished the steaks and I contributed the rest of the meal. We had our final visit after a strictly platonic summer friendship. Did I ever tell you that sometimes when Courtney was tired he would saddle up his horse and tie him to the hitching post — just in case the boss came over!

Some new dude arrived from Los Angeles named Westmore — the man was written up in the Post Magazine for his beauty conservation.

Around the campfire ...
Paula, Charlotte, Tink, Patsy, Frank & Mrs. Thomas

Also a Mr. Browning who plays the accordion. He let me practice on his special "squeeze box". We played together one night just for fun. We also have a new dude here who attends Bennington College, Vermont. She doesn't seem to know Phoebe (my sister) in the class ahead of her. So I'll show her Phoebe's picture, perhaps she'll recognize her. I wonder if she is a typical Bennington gal as she seems a little "put on".

Hay season has finally started. Frank bought a new tractor and now he is broke. I'm not kidding. It's new and rather strenuous work for me — but I like it for an hour or two!

After the W.G. Sunday barbeque there was a big dance at Cookie's Bar B C Ranch with a hot jazz band, some wild vodka and grapefruit juice punch was served, which knocked most everyone for a loop!

Many of my favorite guests are on their way home now after a month's stay. I hated to see the Lee's, Crouter's, and the Dunne's depart because they were all so very kind, pleasant, and full of spirit. They all send their best regards to you.

Please let me know about my tickets Dad. Naturally I'll hate to leave W.G. in "Gods Country". I've made some great friendships here with many of the girls and eastern "cowboys" on the staff. I hope we will all keep in touch and meet again next summer.

Thanks so much for everything and soon I'll be turning into a "city slicker" and a "golden Bear".

Lots of Love,

Sharon

"Brandy" above Phelps Lake

Personalities, Events & Adventures

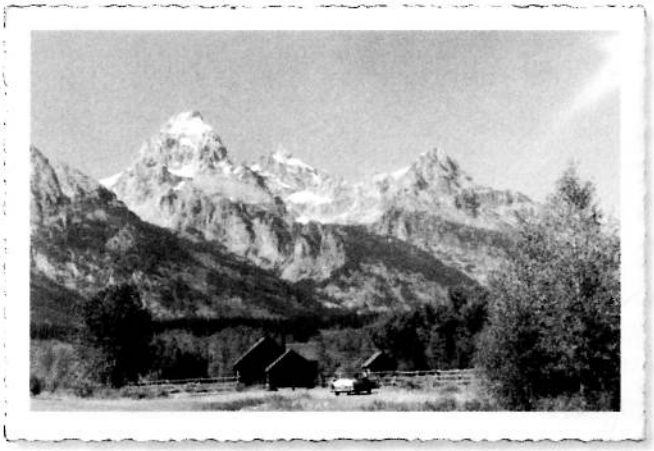
Wendy Mitchell & Karen Windsor in the Parade

Frank, Sharon & Madeleine at the Rodeo

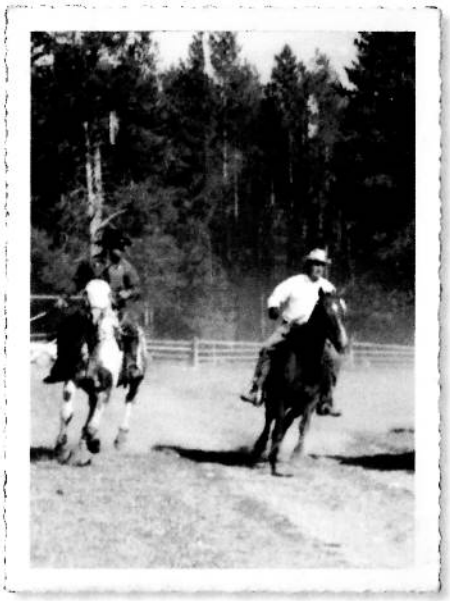
Tinker Fox

Watching the Western Polo games

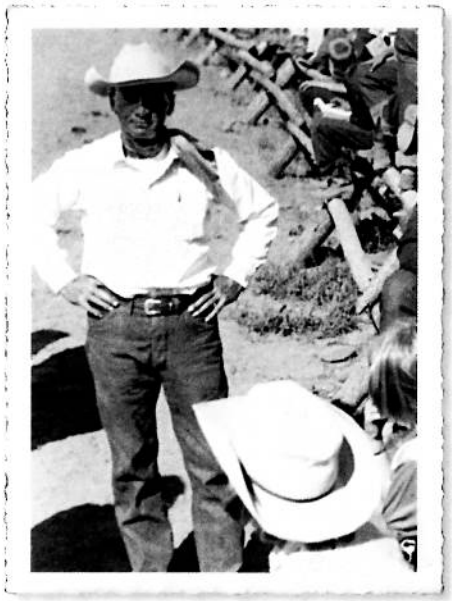
from my time at the White Grass



The Church of the Transfiguration in Moose, Wyoming



A game of "Cowboy" Polo



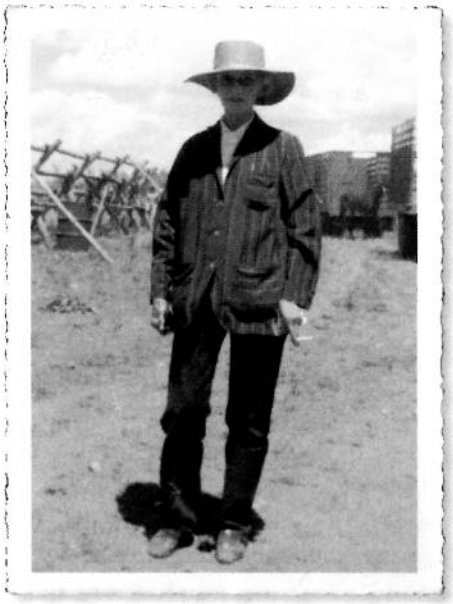
"Herb" at the Dude Rodeo

And more "Cowboy" Polo

Cynthia Galey in the dining room

Indians & outlaws in the Parade

"Twins" at the Dude Rodeo Parade



Elena Hunt

Frank Galey & Rachel Trahern

The barn at the White Grass

"Brandy"

Gibb Scott at the Dude Rodeo

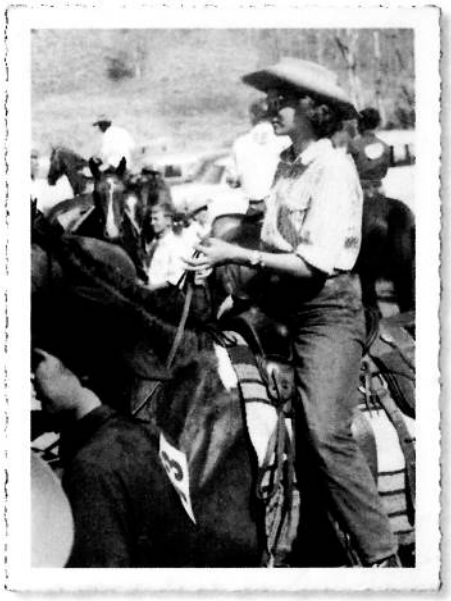
Fred Mathews just leaving the barn

Dude Rodeo horse race

Finish line at the Dude Rodeo horse race

Watching the Dude Rodeo.

The White Grass barn in winter



Cynthia Galey

The cabins in winter

Driving in the snow, early spring

Mother & Rachel

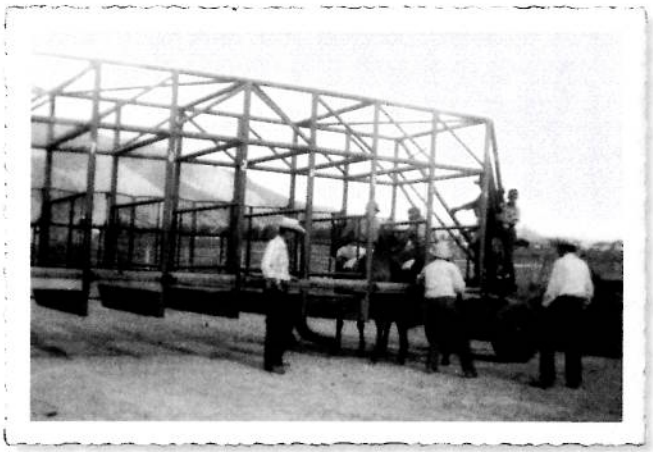
The start of the Dude Rodeo Parade

Judy Allen at Dude Parade and Rodeo

Frank & Inge Galey with Rachel Trahern

Rachel Trahern, the English manager

Haying in late August



Setting up starting gates for the town Rodeo horse race

Daddy, Phoebe, Mother on Paint Brush Trail


GREETINGS
from
CALIFORNIA


Greetings from
WYOMING

July 17, 1971

Dear Sharon,

Thank you very much for your letter. I am sorry it has taken me so long to answer it.

It is quite a coincidence you said to look up Frank Gaily at White Grass Ranch. I spent the first night in Moose staying at the ranch. A man by the name of John Cooke, "Cookie", who I met in Carmel was staying there while he was waiting to move into his house in town, and talked Frank into letting me stay there for a couple of days if I worked for my room and board. The White Grass is a wonderful place and I would have liked to stay there but Frank already had his full crew. I am now a waiter at the Chuck Wagon.

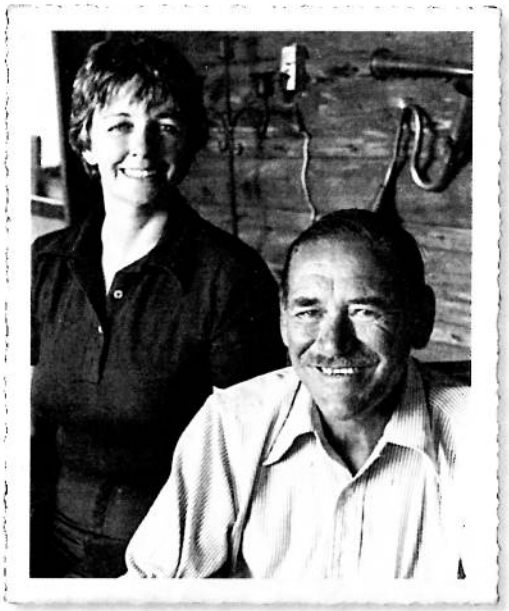
Frank remembered you well and said to say "hi". He was remarried last July 4th so I went to his 1st anniversary party this summer. Quite a party. His new wife's name is Nona, a wonderful lady.

This is great country and I am thoroughly enjoying myself.

Thanks again for the letter.

Sincerely, your cousin,

Ned Thomas



Nona & Frank Galey

Ballad of White Grass

She got off the train filled with excitement; electricity
in the air.
Saw a dark, pensive cowboy, dressed in black,
waiting there.
He was hunched against the wall, looking left,
then right—
was he looking for her, she thought. He was, for it
felt so very right.

He walked over slowly, offered his hand and said softly,
Howdy, Ma'am.
He tipped his black hat, she was speechless, her legs
weak as sand.
Said his name was Ben, smiled, but she still
couldn't speak.
She felt wooden, star struck, a foolish young girl
from the East.

Here she was, in Wyoming, land of her fantasies
and dreams,
where her heroes rode white horses and fouled up
rustlers' schemes.
A place where clouds drifted thru endless blue skies;
Mountains reigned supreme.
Where Elk, Mule deer and Buffalo grazed the plains
and drank from crystal clear streams.

They traveled North and by nightfall he drove up
the long graveled roadway,
Deposited the young girl in her cabin and before leaving
said, I hope you enjoy your stay.
Too excited to go to sleep, too dark to see outside,
she listened to the magical night.
Was that an owl she heard, coyotes singing their songs,
were they, too, waiting for the day light?

That summer, like for so many, started a Wyoming love
affair that she knew was waiting just for her.
The Tetons, the Galeys, the dudes and dudines, Ellen
the cook and Rachel Trahern.
The Huebners, Dick and Pat Quast, the Thomas', Elise
Clover, Alice and Evans Dunn.
The pack trips, picnics and riding that all made up
for great summer fun.

Who could forget the Clearys, Dorothy's beautiful
paintings and pen and inks,
And Cappy Pennock, who drank the bleach in a gin
glass, sitting on the sink?
The Bar-B-Q's in the North pasture, cocktail parties
at the Galey's house, friendly and warm,
Frank's fishing and pack trips, where he spun Western tales
and boyish charm.

Then there was Curt Winsor with his guitar who sang
many a cowboy song,
While we all would sit around that starlit campfire
and try to sing along.
The antics of the Matthews boys, the Fox boys, Tink
Elliot, and Frannie Strawbridge, too.
George must have felt he ran a school for wranglers
when day was through.

The cabin girls, the waitresses, they ran from Inge's
and Rachel's sight!
The trips to town and Dornan's Bar that lasted well
into the night.
We were lucky to have Suki Matthews, the Gordon
Crouters, and the Balderston's to the North West.
Cynthia's Shane, Parni, Captain, Strawberry, Spade,
crafty black Coon, they were the best.

Then there was Rachel's toad sandwich, given to Bob
Lewis with love,
Bananas in George's boots, pigs in the girls' cabin,
bats in the bathrooms, heavens above!
What fun we all had and stories and memories we will
always share —
Our milk runneth over, thanks to the Chore boys'
care!

The young Eastern girl who arrived in Rock Springs,
you know, was me.
We all have our memories, our love for this ranch,
our desire for the West to remain free.
So, raise a toast to all who are here and those who
are not, for never more shall we walk through
this enchanted door.
But, in our hearts wildflowers will bloom, coyotes will sing
and we will hear the Elk's bugle in this place forever
more.

Judy Allyn Schmitt July 22, 1980

Wednesday, September 20, 2000 Jackson Hole Guide, B5

White Grass dudes, wranglers reunite

By Elizabeth McCabe
Jackson Hole Guide

More than 40 people attended a White Grass Dude Ranch reunion between Sept. 8 and 10.

Former ranch manager Rachel Trahern, who worked at the ranch from 1953 to 1963, and Louise Wade, a dude from the 1970s, organized the event. The reunion was attended by people from throughout the country.

The festivities started with lunch Friday, Sept. 8, at Dornans Chuck Wagon in Grand Teton National Park. That night, a cocktail party was held at the Wade residence in the valley.

The Saturday night dinner was hosted by Carole and Norm Hofley at the Fall Creek Road Ranch. The Hofleys purchased and restored the original White Grass ranch barn on their property.

The group also met for a picnic lunch on Sunday at the former White Grass location, which is now Teton park property.

The ranch, located off the Moose-Wilson Road, was one of the most popular dude ranches in the valley. It was homesteaded in 1911 by Harold Hammond, a former JY Ranch wrangler, and Tucker Bisphen, of Philadelphia.

In 1935, Hammond married Marion Galey, a Philadelphia widow whom he met when she was a dude at the Bar BC. Hammond died a few years later.

In 1946, Mrs. Hammond sold the ranch to her son, Frank Galey, and her daughter-in-law, Inga Galey.

Frank died in July of 1985. His second wife, Nona, ran the ranch for the remainder of that season and then closed the ranch.

The closing of the ranch marked the end of another chapter in the history of Jackson Hole.

I remember Frank as one of the most colorful people in the valley. He was friendly and warm. He worked hard, played hard and drank hard. He was one of my first friends in Jackson Hole in the early 1930s.

The reunion kindled much nostalgia. Among the memories were the years the Hammonds raised silver foxes and sold the pelts.

I wore one as a stole for many years until it disintegrated. The stoles were beautiful.

Elizabeth McCabe / Guide

REUNITED AND IT FEELS SO GOOD: Jackson residents who attended the Whitegrass Dude Ranch reunion included Dick and Barbara Barker, Jack and Mimi Crenshaw, Fred Herbel, Elise Clover, Sharon Griffin, Cynthia Quask, Debbie Lopez, Tamie Kinker, Chick Galey, Fran Fox, Rachel Trahern and Cynthia Galey Peck. The former Whitegrass dudes and employees gathered from Sept. 8 to 10.

Left, former Whitegrass Dude Ranch employees and dudes met at the ranch site, which is in Grand Teton National Park, to celebrate and recall old times in Jackson Hole. Rachel Trahern and Judith Smith (back row) and Beth Woodin, Cynthia Galey Peck, Steve Huebner and Debbie Lopez were some of the reunion attendees.

Frank Galey later in life

Letters from a Cabin Girl at the White Grass Ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

A memoir ... a look back at an idyllic summer spent working for and with the quirky characters of a 'dude ranch' in Wyoming.

Through the letters of a young girl experiencing the freedom and delight of the wild western valley called Jackson Hole, we get a glimpse of life on those ranches in the 1950s.

Here then is a gift to all those who also enjoyed similar time spent at that magical place called the White Grass Ranch.

Sharon

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