



Interview

Judd Groat

(Walter Thomas Groat)

Guide, Outfitter, and Packer

Interviewed by
Peter J. Murphy | Bob Stevenson



Part of the Forest History Program Interview Series

August 12, 1998

Edited by Bob Udell and Jeff Zroback on August 30 2010
Also edited by Sherry (Groat) Maine in 2016



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Informing Land & Resource Management



About the Forest History Program at fRI Research

fRI Research, originally the Foothills Model Forest, has been conducting research in sustainable land and forest management in Alberta since 1992. The positive impacts from the application of this research (e.g. Grizzly bears, watershed, forest history) to improving forest management and resource sustainability can be seen across Western Canada and beyond. The Forest History Program began in 1996 when Pete Murphy, Bob Stevenson and Bob Udell began a project to record the natural and management history of its Hinton Forest. This project soon expanded to add more reports and to encompass the entire model-forest land base. The program has produced a series of seven books and e-books including an Ecotour, an Ecotour App for west central Alberta, one DVD project and a series of reports about the evolution of adaptive forest management in the West Central region of Alberta.

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The Forest History Program Interview Series

Between 1997 and 2000, the Forest History Program conducted 33 interviews with various people who played important roles in, or were connected otherwise with the development of the remarkable forest management operation at the Hinton Forest of Weldwood of Canada. These were background information that would be used in a series of books and reports that would follow, all initiated by one book project linked to Weldwood's 40th anniversary celebrations in Hinton in 1997. Some of these interviews are posted to friresearch.ca for general reading, others are available only with permission for research purposes. All interviews were professionally edited to retain content but improve clarity but preserve content.

However, Dr. Peter Murphy had previously conducted interviews with Des Crossley and Reg Loomis, the two prominent foresters whose influence permeated the Weldwood history. These interviews are included with the Forest History Program Interview Series, with permission from Dr. Murphy and the University of Alberta, because they are too important to be left out.

Dr. Peter Murphy—Interviewer

Interviewer Dr. Peter Murphy is Professor Emeritus in Forestry at the University of Alberta, where he taught and conducted research in forest policy and forest fire management from 1973 to 1995, during which time he also held positions of Chair of Forest Science and Associate Dean for Forestry in the Faculty of Agriculture & Forestry. During his time at the University he was active in promoting the study of forest history and its importance as guidance for the advancement of forest science today. As part of this he initiated and conducted a number of important interviews with key players in Alberta's forest history, most notably Des Crossley—Hinton's first Chief Forester—and his counterpart in the Alberta Forest Service, Reg Loomis who together established the foundation of Alberta's forest management agreement system. Dr. Murphy is the Chair of the Forest History Association of Alberta, and has been a member of the Forest History Program team at Foothills Research Institute since the program began in 1996, where he has authored and co-authored a number of books and reports.

Bob Stevenson—Interviewer

Bob Stevenson, another forester who retired after 33 years with federal and provincial governments, has observed forestry operations and research at Hinton since the 1960s and is an avid historian. In particular, he rescued several collections of historic photographs and developed the major library of forestry photographs in Alberta. With his horses and friends, he has travelled many of the trails that Judd talked about.

Interview Date: August 12, 1998



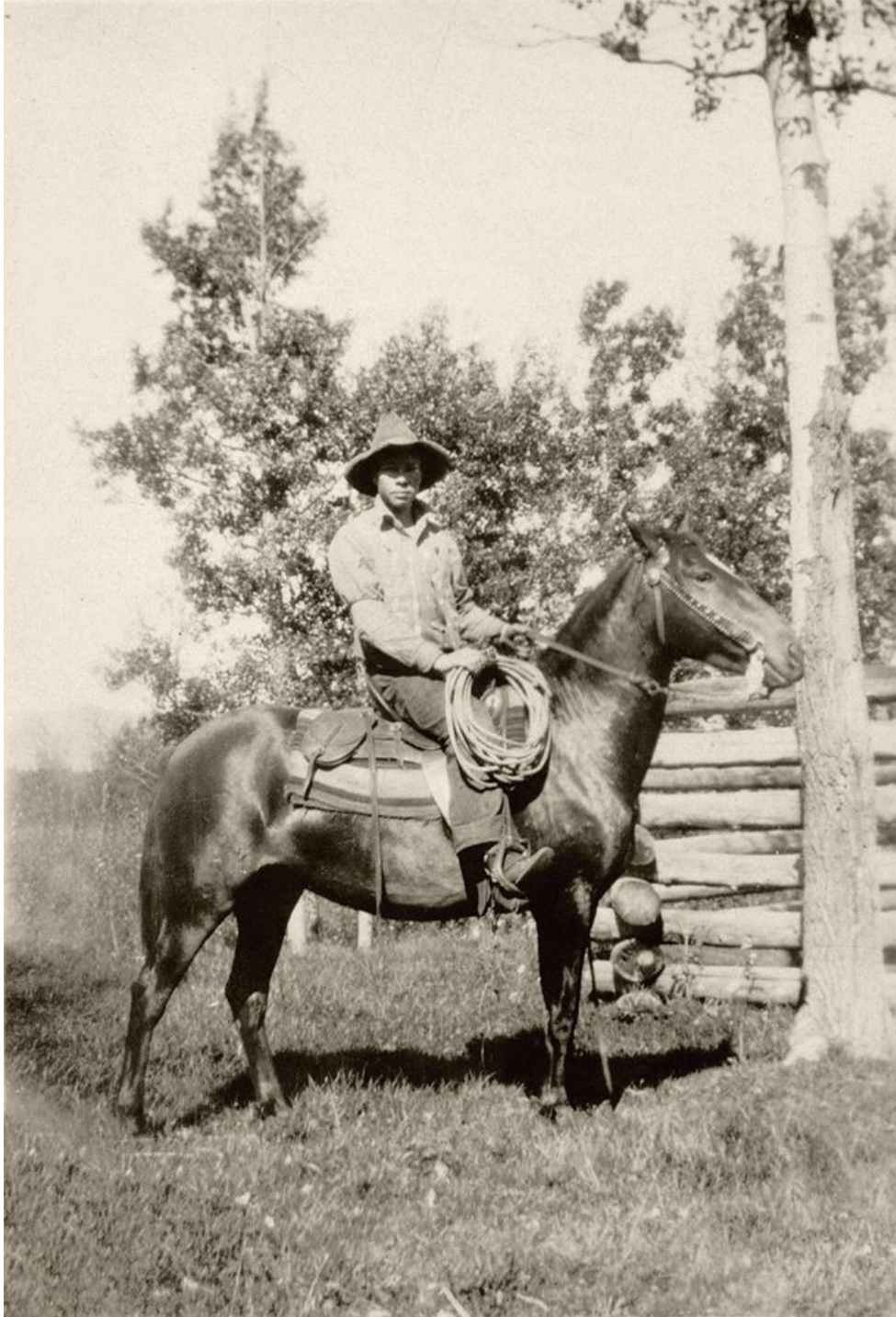
Forward

Judd Groat was a noted guide, outfitter and horseman in the Edson-Jasper area of western Alberta. He lived in Brule with his wife Darleen, raising nine children. His parents, Thomas and Clarice, lived on Montana Pete's homestead at Entrance at the time he was born on April 1, 1913. They moved into Brule about 1917 when he was four years old. Thomas was also a guide and outfitter, and Judd made his first long fall hunting trip with his father in the fall of 1928 when he was just 15. Judd appears to have never looked back from that experience, excelling in his own right.

This interview was conducted on August 12, 1998, just over four months before Judd passed away on January 3, 1999. We had hoped to review the typewritten draft with him to make sure we had transcribed it correctly, and were saddened to learn that this was no longer possible. I will consult with members of his family to ensure that the text is as correct as possible, while maintaining the integrity of Judd's original responses.

Peter J. Murphy

St. Albert, Alberta
January 5, 1999



*Judd Groat
Brule, Alberta.
1928*



Interview with Judd Groat

August 12, 1998: Tape 1, Side A

- Murphy** This is an interview with Judd Groat at his home in Brule on August 12th, 1998. Where were you raised, Judd?
- Groat** I was born in 1913, April 1, at Montana Pete's homestead down there at Entrance. We moved into Brule about 1917 because I had a sister older than I was and it was time we were getting to school—and that is the sole reason of moving to Brule.
- Murphy** Was the mine running at Brule at that time?
- Groat** Yes. It hadn't run too long but it was running.
- Murphy** What was your dad doing?
- Groat** He trapped, and he was an outfitter and a guide. He ran a business right up to the time he died—guiding and outfitting big game hunters, or whatever. But it was completely all horse work, you know.
- Murphy** Where would he guide into? What part of the country did he work in?
- Groat** North of here, around the Smoky River and across the Smoky.
- Murphy** Did you go out with him?
- Groat** My first trip I took with him was about 1928. We travelled and seen a lot of country that year. We had an old hunter that had hunted with my dad previous to this. His health was going and he didn't have too much time to live, but he wanted to come back and spend them in the mountains. So he come out for 45 days to get off in the mountains, you know, by himself and do as he wanted. He had a hunting license but he didn't shoot nothing. He had hunted before and he just wanted to be out and reminisce about old times and places where he had been—like up north here hunting. So I went on this trip and we packed right out from Brule here. We went up to Kakwa Lake and down that over to Sherman Meadows they called it. That was named after one of your old Forest Rangers. I forget his first name, but Sherman was his last name, and he trapped over in that country. Well, later in years I met him again down here and he was working for the Forestry during the war. In them days them Forest Rangers worked six months of the year for the government and six months of the winter doing whatever and wherever they could get a job. It was quite an outing for them. They all patrolled on horseback and pack horses. You had to have your own horses, like your saddle horse and pack horse. That is about all they took is a saddle horse and a pack horse, and they were out a month at a time. But they kept a diary, because they had no communication whatsoever with the Forestry. They were just out patrolling in the area, but they kept a diary of what went on every day, and they come in at the end of the month. I think they were allowed about two days in town to buy their grub and repack it. They would get their horses reshod, and then they were gone for another 30 days. They had no communication at all until later years they got these radios. Well, then they had to have another pack horse to pack this radio and the battery! They were cumbersome deals, you know, not like any modern things we have today. But you had to carry a lot of batteries with you—to last a month on these two-way radios, It meant another pack horse to pack the radio and batteries. It took a lot of them B batteries to use on the telephones, and they



carried quite a supply of them. When the batteries got low they couldn't hear, and so they'd put new ones in—but that was their line of communication.

Murphy They had to string an aerial with that one too, I guess.

Groat I don't think that they ever put up an aerial, not to my knowledge anyway. I would imagine that they later put up aeriels on these lookouts, but they operated on the same deal. They were something new in them days. That was the only communications they had.

Murphy Was there a ranger here at Brule when you were living here?

Groat Yeah, you see Brule used to be in Jasper Park until 1930. They moved the boundary back to natural boundaries—like over here at the park gate going into Jasper. It followed the watershed, then on top of this mountain over here was the dividing line.¹ How I remember so well is that the Superintendent at Jasper Park died of a heart attack over here at the tunnel while they were surveying this boundary. So that is how I remember the date that this all took place. So, until 1930 you used to have the wardens from Jasper live down here. Then the Forest Rangers took over in Brule—they have been Forestry ever since.

Murphy Did the wardens have a cabin here?

Groat They did have down at the mouth of the Supply Creek where it runs into the Athabasca down here a ways.

Murphy Is it still there or is it gone now?

Groat I haven't been down there for years, but I imagine some of the old foundation would be there. In them days you didn't have no cement. Underneath them you know, the logs were right down on the ground, so I would imagine it has rotted away now.

Murphy In 1930 when the Forestry had a ranger, did they use that same cabin or did they put up a new place?

Groat No, see this Brule mine closed down in 1928 and there were lots of vacant houses here. The Forest Ranger that came in here was Tom Coggins and he moved into one of them company houses, like up the hill here. Forestry just sold that house recently. I say recently, but not too long ago.

Murphy There were rangers at Entrance too, were there? Was that a major centre?

Groat Well, it used to be the headquarters for the Athabasca Forest Reserve. In them days the Athabasca River was the boundary between the Brazeau Reserve and the Athabasca Reserve. On the Brazeau side they had a headquarters at Coalspur. I remember the first warden/ranger that went in there. His name was Fred Edgar² and he looked after the Brazeau Forest Reserve and operated out of Entrance for the Athabasca Forest and later on they moved everything to Edson.

¹ Editor's note: Groat is probably referring to Errington Mountain, which is near his home in Brule.

² Editor's note: Alberta Forest Service records show Fred Edgar worked in the Athabasca Forest from 1933 to 1935.



- Murphy** Who was the first ranger here at Entrance then?
- Groat** Stan Clark was the first Forest Ranger. Stan Clark was there in 1912 at Hinton but that was the end of the steel there for a couple years and then they started a Forest Ranger Station there (Entrance) and Stan Clark was one of the first Forest Rangers they had here. But after they moved to Entrance, they had different fellows. Stan Clark had a homestead that he got there and he proved up on it, and that is the Entrance ranch there now. But there have been various guys I remember, Tom Burrows followed Stan Clark. He was in charge there and after he left, Ernie Harrison got to be a Chief Warden there, followed by Wayco. But in later years I forget who was there.
- Murphy** Did Jack Glen fit in there somewhere?
- Groat** Yes, but he was the ranger. He was never in charge here.
- Murphy** Yes, I see. These other guys were in charge?
- Groat** Yes, the Chief Rangers. Glen was a Forest Ranger right from the start as far as I can remember but Jack was the Strawboss for some of the forestry cabins they built—the first forestry cabins that they built north of here at Rock Lake. That went up at Mile 58.
- Murphy** Summit Cabin.
- Groat** He built a cabin in there and some of that has cement foundation under them but they had to whipsaw that lumber. Did you ever see a whipsaw in operation?
- Murphy** I never did. Only pictures.
- Groat** Well, they built one up there and sawed lumber in there for the roof and the floor and the rest was log building. But Jack was a good cabin builder. But I remember Jack done real good. He used to be a policeman apparently before he joined the Forest Service.
- Murphy** Do you know who worked with Jack on the cabins?
- Groat** I don't. No, I don't.
- Murphy** Can you tell us a little more about Stan Clark? Was he from around here?
- Groat** No, he come from Ontario. I believe he come from Ontario but he was I guess a Magill University man but he got to be the first ranger that they had in the Athabasca Forest and that was at Hinton. That was the end of the railroad because they had to put in the Athabasca bridge and the bridge over that Maskuta Creek so they were held up there for a couple of years. So that is when Stan come to Hinton.
- Murphy** Did you say the year was 1910, around there?
- Groat** 1911 or 1912. My dad and mother got married in Hinton in 1911 and that was the end of the railroad at that time. No, in 1910 they got married.
- Murphy** And then you said Stan homesteaded across the river then?



Groat It was on the north side of the Athabasca and the place was sold out to these people and these people still got it.

Murphy That is the Davidson family.

Groat Right.

Murphy Do you know when he sold it?

Groat About in the early 1930s. It might have been around the first part of the 1930s that he sold that.

Murphy Did he take up that homestead when he left Forestry?

Groat Yes.

Murphy And how did you guys get across the river at that time?

Groat They had a ferry in at the mouth of the Muskuta Creek.

Murphy I didn't know that.

Groat Yes. They had a ferry when they were working both ends of the bridge and then they built a road that you cross the Athabasca Bridge there. Just on this side of the bridge you could see the old grade where they built a wagon road up there.

Murphy That is it.

Groat You see, there was no bulldozers in them days. It was horse work.

Murphy Now how did your dad cross the river before? Like the ferry went in with the railway did it? Was that their ferry?

Groat Pardon?

Murphy The ferry—did that come in with the construction?

Groat Yes, it was with the Grand Trunk.

Murphy Before the ferry went in how did they cross the river?

Groat They had no occasion to cross it actually. They rafted, I guess, and swam the horses. There was nothing back in this country but Indians and trappers. I guess they built a raft and jumped the horse in and swam them.

Murphy Was there a ford or a crossing at the Athabasca that, you know?

Groat Ford?

Murphy Yes, the ford?

Groat There is a place down there going out of Hinton going up to some of them logging camps. They have a bridge built in there. There was a ford there.

Murphy There was?



Groat

Yes, and you could ford that in pretty high water but I would say that six months of the year you could ford that Athabasca there. The water only comes to the horses belly in some places there, even in the spring. You could ford it pretty late in the spring if you knew where the ford was. It broke up stream and the water kind of shallowed down. That's the only ford that I knew of, although there were lots of places you could ford it. But that was used quite a bit, I guess, in the early days, this old ford there.



Wagon Ford on a river—from the Judd Groat collection

Murphy

So when Jack Glen was coming out from his place, he crossed on the ferry then would he?

Groat

No, Jack Glen lived on the north side of the river. He built a cabin and lived there but that was not on the Forestry headquarters but across the old railroad track from there. Down along the river, he had a cabin built on there.

Murphy

Was he in partners with somebody?

Groat

No, not to my knowledge anyway.

Murphy

The Forestry, to do their patrols, had to build a lot of trails.

Groat

Yes, they built lots of trails. They used to send out road gangs. Trail gangs they called them. There was an old ranger. His name was Louie Holmes and he used to be in charge of maintaining some of these old roads, putting in corduroy mostly over muskegs and stuff like that. They cut a lot of trails.

Murphy

Those trails up in the Willmore area, were they all put in by Forestry or were some of them beforehand?

Groat

Well, Moberly's in 1910, when they run him out of Jasper Park, and they told him they could go live someplace else where they could hunt and trap; as they were going to make a park in Jasper. At that time the park was only about seven miles each side of the Athabasca. Then of course they extended it off and



now it is over 4,000 miles of parkland. And old Moberly, after he left Jasper (what they call Moberly Flats), he moved to Grande Cache but he apparently had seen that country and hunted it. They had that in mind when they left Jasper because that is where they went. They took some cattle in there with them and they hauled a mowing machine out there and a rake. They took the rake apart and packed the wheels and pulled the rest of the rake on a travois behind a pack horse. He cut a trail up and that trail went up to what they called Moberly Creek and he got up away, there is a lot of muskeg up through there, so he moved over on the left hand side of the muskeg up towards the mountains there and he went up Moberly Creek and then went over to Little Berland and the Big Berland and he cut that road out. Where the hell does it come out at? He stayed pretty well out on the left hand side of where they're travelling today, but in later years they had a pack trail on the right hand side going up but it was following the ridges. It was staying on the right hand side of the muskeg, like going north, and that is where the road pretty much follows that now. It was the first wagon road they had up through there, was pretty much on the ridges on the right hand side going up. But there were a lot of hills, but they got pretty well up on top and stayed pretty well on top.

- Murphy** Was there a wagon road there then before the oil road went in 1949?
- Groat** Yes, the oil well that went in there—I think it was Shell Oil. They did a lot of exploration work in there, but I don't know what the first outfit in there was. They just got some Cats so they could drive a truck in, but they followed the old wagon road.
- Murphy** They did? Yes. There was a ranger station at Muskeg. From Entrance there was going up to Hay River and then there was a Moberly Ranger Station?
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** There was a Cabin Creek.
- Groat** Yes, there was a cabin at Cabin Creek and one at Moberly Creek. You left Cabin Creek and the next one you come to is the one at the Muskeg.
- Murphy** Now were those cabins put in before the oil road went in?
- Groat** Yes. Those cabins had been there before that. Forestry had two teams (horses) there at the headquarters, and they used to use a four-up and they hauled stuff in for cabins and stuff like that on this wagon road I was talking about. I remember the fellow who used to drive, his name was Harry Hammer. His brother got to be a big shot for the Forestry in Edmonton.
- Murphy** That must have been Ted Hammer.
- Groat** Yes, that is right. I knew Ted when he was a Forest Ranger here.
- Murphy** You did?
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** Was he at Entrance as well?



- Groat** He used to travel with [Jack] Glen and I wouldn't be surprised that he might have helped Glen build some of those cabins because he was here at that time and his area was on the north country where Jack Glen was. I believe that it would be safe to say that he helped Jack Glen build some of them cabins.
- Murphy** Was the four-up used to build the Athabasca lookout? Do you remember when that went up?
- Groat** Well, yes. They had a ranger station at Winter Creek and Forestry used to keep some horses there. If you were packing for the Forestry as a ranger in the winter time, you could run your horses with theirs at Moberly Creek and on Hay River, but Winter Creek mostly. There was lots of flat country there and lots of feed through that Jarvis Lake and down at Greg Lake. They used to winter their horses there. It was Harry Hammer that drove those four-ups there. He worked for the Forestry a long time.
- Murphy** Do you remember the year the Athabasca lookout was put in? It must have been in the 1940s or was that an earlier one? Was that in the Dominion days?
- Groat** I forget what year it was but I remember one of the first lookout men they had there—Fred Hendrickson.
- Murphy** Yes, Fred Hendrickson.
- Groat** He was one of the first lookout men that they had there.
- Murphy** You mentioned all the meadows where they wintered the horses along in that Winter Creek area. Were those meadows ever burned off in the spring to keep the country open?
- Groat** No. Right there at Winter Creek they had a good sized field there and the Forestry planted grain and put up oat bundles and used them horses for doing the farm work, like plowing the land and discing and getting the crop in. They grew their own feed out there. Where that airstrip is at Entrance, the Forestry had that for a horse pasture at one time, for the rangers when they come in. You would put your horses in their pasture till they got shod up and got the hell out of town. It was time to get back in the bush.
- Stevenson** When was the railroad bridge put in? Was it in 1911?
- Groat** It was at Hinton in 1911. At that time that was the end of the steel and previous to that they used to get all the supplies at Wolf Creek. They were held up there at Wolf Creek when they were putting in that Big Eddy Bridge at Edson. It is all woodwork that bridge and there's a turn in it, you know. So Wolf Creek was the end of steel³ for quite a while when they were building that Big Eddy bridge. They done a lot of freighting from Wolf Creek up through this country. My Dad worked for Burns (Burns Foods—a meat packing company) one year, and the end of steel was at Wolf Creek then, but there was construction camps all the way along the line, - like crews were blowing out the tunnels down here and doing a lot of blasting in the mountains. They had various camps so they brought a bunch of cattle out, it was over 300 head - My dad used to tell me about it, He had some pictures at that time - and they would pull into this construction camp here and say "What do you want for meat?" Well, they would take maybe four or five steers or whatever they could salvage, you know they couldn't keep it. There was no coolers.

³ Editor's note: The term *end of steel* refers to the end of the train track at the time referenced.



- Murphy** So all those supplies had to be brought in there with team and wagon then?
- Groat** Pretty much. Yes.
- Murphy** Your dad was doing some of that freighting?
- Groat** Yes, he freighted in there. They had another ferry up there above Jasper Lake to get over on the other side of the river. You see, at one time that Pocahontas Mine was on the south side of the river. They went up one side of the river and the other railroad followed the river up going through the mountains. They blasted out the tunnel here at Brule, and so they went on up that way. They would sell beef at all the camps—beef at this camp and beef at that camp until the cows were done. Then they go back and try something else, like freighting. But there was always an old road up through there that they used to freight with, it was pretty rugged.
- Murphy** It must have been a tough one—soft ground and some steep slopes.
- Groat** Well a lot of them places there was so much rock work there and they were kind of held up.
- Stevenson** Did many Indians come through here even just passing through?
- Groat** I beg your pardon?
- Stevenson** Were there many Indians, Judd, through here? You mentioned Indians in Jasper.
- Groat** There were quite a few of them. Of course all the old fellows are all gone it is mostly the third generation down now, what is left of them.
- Murphy** Do you know why old Swift didn't get kicked out along with the Moberly family?
- Groat** Well, I knew old Swift well and he had a cabin there at what they call the Palisades today. He homesteaded in that creek there and he had a log cabin that you could see from the railroad and he had a big sign in front of this log cabin "Settled here in 1892" and he wouldn't sell out. I guess at one time he was the only one who had property inside the Dominion park land. But he didn't sell out to them. He hung tough, the old guy. He eventually sold out to a fellow that come out from England by the name of Wilby, and Wilby started a dude ranch sort of deal there. That Wilby eventually sold out to the government.
- Murphy** Did you ever see Swift's water mill there?
- Groat** Yes, he grew his own wheat and ground his own flour and he packed some pigs and chickens from, I guess it would be close to Edmonton, around Lac La Nun or some place. He had pigs and chickens so he could have a change from moose there.
- Murphy** Yes, he could. Do you recall how big in diameter that water wheel was?
- Groat** I wouldn't have no idea. It wasn't too big but that creek is not actually too big.
- Murphy** No, it is not a very big creek.
- Groat** But he hammered out his own wheat there anyway.



Murphy Did anybody else use water power for sawing or grinding grain?

Groat Not to my knowledge. He was the only one I knew of.

Murphy Then I understand there was a contractor who had a permit to cut railway ties up the Whirlpool in the early 1920s? Do you know anything about that operation?

Groat Yes, the boys that done that was the Otto brothers—Jack and then there was Bruce and Klaussen. There were three brothers. They cut logs up the Whirlpool and they floated it down the Whirlpool to the Athabasca and down there at Henry House Flats on this side of Jasper⁴. They had a jack ladder there and they had cables or ropes, I imagine, they cut the logs there and got them on the jack ladder and got them up on shore so that was their timber operation.

Murphy Do you know how long they operated there? It was in the early 1920s, I guess.

Groat Yes, they operated for quite a while and they were also in the outfitting business taking out tourists, hunting, summer parties.

Murphy I hear that the logs got away from them one spring. Maybe it was the first drive. They hit the boom in the high water and went right through.

Groat I wouldn't be surprised.

Murphy Did you ever see the jack ladder?

Groat No, it was gone when I was up around there. I knew where it was.

Murphy Is that where that camp kitchen is now? The picnic area?

Groat It is down there close to—they got a natural airstrip there and it was right around in there.

Murphy Do you know how it was powered? Probably steam was it?

Groat What was that?

Murphy The jack ladder?

Groat I wouldn't, no. It wouldn't be steam.

Murphy What kind of power would they use to get the logs up to the top of the bench there?

Groat It is not much of a bank. I imagine they would pull them up there with horses.

Murphy Maybe so.

Groat Because there is not much of a bank there. But I would imagine that they used horses because it was before steam engine days.

⁴ Editor's note: The flats referred to are adjacent to the current airstrip, near the south end.



Murphy And speaking of steam, there is a steam boiler up on Pope-Thoreau in the Eagle's Nest. Can you tell us about that?

Groat That came from the Blue Diamond Coal Company here, which ran the mine here in Brule, they had some coal claims up there on Carson Creek and up Pope-Thoreau Creek Trail and they had to do some improvements on that. So they had this Diamond drill and the fellow that owned the Diamond drill his name was Bush. He went up there with the Diamond drill and drilled out, and they took that in with horses. They would get coal samples and stuff, with the Diamond drill, to see what they had there. They had some miners in there, too, digging tunnels to different places to find out how big the seam was or how much coal was there, because this mine (Brule mine) was going to peter out and it did peter out in 1928. But the coal was there, there was lots of coal there left in the mine apparently, but there was something in the coal that created more ash than it should have and were Clinker. They can overcome that today I imagine. But that was the reason the coal was dirty because there was other ingredients in it. It was dirty coal so they give it up. You see at this mine in Brule, they used to have a coal dock down at the old Brule Station. They had their own locomotive and they got a spur line running from the station clean up here to the mine. Most of that coal went to this coal dock down at the main line. They had a coal dock man and they unloaded the coal right there and put it in the coal dock so every train come along and took coal there. They had a water tank at Entrance very close to the river so they had lots of water, there was one at Miette. But most of that coal they got out of this mine went to the coal dock right here.

Murphy It was used mostly by the railroad?

Groat The railway operated the coal dock but the Blue Diamond Coal Company—I think the CN built that, they call it the CN now. I don't know what the CN stood for the Grand Trunk or the Great Northern. That was the two railroads that went through here—the Grand Trunk and the Great Northern. They run a spur line up here to get the coal down to the coal dock. I imagine that they hauled it someplace else but the majority of that coal went to the railroad right here where the coal dock was.

Murphy Were you up on the Carson Creek coal operation, then? Did they pack that steam boiler in as well? Back up on that Pope-Thoreau there, did they have a boiler there as well?

Groat Yes, that was steam but that is where they got that power for the Diamond drills. That was what that was in there for.

[Tape 1, Side B]

Murphy So did they use a stone boat to pack it in?

Groat Well, I think they put it right on the sleigh runner.

Murphy Yes. It could have gone in, in the winter time.

Groat Yes. You couldn't take it up there in the summer time. You would have to wait until muskegs and creeks froze up.

Murphy Did you see them operating there?

Groat Yes. They used to have Diamond drills around here before they went up there.



- Murphy** What would they use for fuel? In the boiler up there, then?
- Groat** They got the coal out of the mine, which they got up there.
- Murphy** Oh, they took it right in place?
- Groat** They dug it right out of the coal mine and burned it in the Diamond drill or that old steam boilers they used to operate these Diamond drills with.
- Murphy** Did they bring it down by sleigh too then?
- Groat** Pardon?
- Murphy** Did they bring the coal down to the boiler by sleigh?
- Groat** They had wagons up there, well it was just ordinary wagons to haul coal. It wouldn't take too much coal to run that steam boiler.
- Murphy** That is interesting. The economics must not have been right to go ahead?
- Groat** I beg your pardon?
- Murphy** The economics couldn't have been too good to go ahead then for the coal. They would have to build a spur line up there I suppose?
- Groat** There would be no problem building a line up there but I guess there were a lot of other coal mines to get it from like Smoky River mines. You know, they were a long time getting that road through there. If it wasn't for the government, I guess they never would have had a railroad in there. But I remember them talking about the Hoppe coal claims on the Smoky. That was previous to 1920 that they had these coal claims on the Smoky. It eventually turned out all right and they got coal out of there. But then they had to have a reason to keep the railroad operating.
- Stevenson** Judd, do you ever remember any caribou in this country when you were small? Do you remember many caribou that would come through here? I say that because we have had caribou and now we don't have many.
- Groat** I can remember the time that they run in hundreds, even around the high elevation out at Jasper. But up through the mountains there was hundreds of caribou but they are all gone now.
- Stevenson** Were there many wolves at that time?
- Groat** Not at that time. I suppose there was but not as many as there is today and it is a crying shame that the government don't do something about the wolf population. Over at the mines at Luscar and Cadomin where they replanted that grass and them sheep moved in. I got some nephews and I got a couple of boys working over there and they will tell you they see them wolves, you know, every day. Those wolves are killing sheep. I will tell you why I know because if you found a head and a wolf killed it and you worked for the mines, you can have that head. Just in the last few years the Fish and Wildlife said no more. The heads got sent over to the Fish and Wildlife. But it is a crying shame that they are not doing something about these wolves because they are going to clean everything out.



Stevenson Going back to the caribou in Jasper, would it be back to the 1920s when you said you saw them?

Groat Later than that. Even in the 1930s. We went in one time with a movie outfit that taped movies of caribou and we went to the Tonquin Valley. I guess they filmed out at Jasper there at Amethyst Lake. There was caribou all over and by God they are gone today. And the same around the North Country. It is a shame that they are killing the game and they are not doing nothing about it. I would like to see them making an attempt to get them anyhow.

Stevenson It is much like Billy McGee did back in the early 1960s.

Groat That is right. He got 60 some odd wolves and I forget how many cougars he got, but they let him use his own methods and he poisoned them. I know the government one time decided they wanted to take over, and I forget what year it was but I don't think it was 20 years ago. It might have been about that time that they got a wolf hunter up here and they were using these cyanide guns. What he done is carried an auger and drilled a hole into a tree and then he shoved this stick out there with a platform on it and that is where he put these cyanide guns. He travelled up and down the mountain trail to kill these wolves. Now this old Adam Joachim—you have probably heard of Adam Joachim. He was an old timer in this country and he told me that he actually talked to this guy that the government sent up to kill these wolves and he got 20 some odd lynx down on the Sulphur River down there on Adam's trapline. So that was a bad mistake. Well, you take 20 lynx, you know, off a trap line. So they had to do something better than that. Most of them trappers, had their own methods.

There was an old trapper I know, Cliff Falk was his name. He trapped on the Smoky at the mouth of the Muddy River. He used to go up there in the fall, about October, and he wintered there. He never came out at all and would stay there until spring to trap beaver. At that particular time the government did pay a bounty. I forget the sum that the bounty was—right around \$10 or \$15. So the trappers were allowed to poison them or get them any way they could. He was telling me that there was an old horse that was grazing along the river there and he wintered out there close to the river, it was on the banks of the river. I guess he got stranded out there or he got stuck on the ice and he died there. Cliff said he was up there one day looking around to see how the river was opening up to start trapping beaver and these wolves had found this old horse and it wasn't far from this cabin so he went up there with some poison and he got 19 wolves off that horse. I don't know how many females there was but his take out of that was 44—like the pups were big enough and haired out so he skinned them bastards out too and sent them in and he said out of the 19 mature wolves that would be 25 young ones.

Stevenson Yes, what he had, I think, is 25 pups.

Groat Out of 19 wolves and that was just off that dead horse. Now he done a lot of good there. You know that is 19 mature wolves and get them pups, because the pups that winter have to eat moose too, you know.

Murphy Was there a bounty paid at that time?

Groat There was a bounty paid at one time and there used to be bounty on cougar. Twenty dollars on a cougar. That is about the time Billy McGee was trapping for the government and Frank Moberly had this area south of here [Brule], up on the park border, hunting coyotes, but on the south side of the river. Billy was on the north side of the Athabasca. And Billy got them all around Hinton. He used to have a trapline out there and



close to the little Berland so he didn't cover too big an area. But I think Billy said he got 60 some odd wolves all together and I forget how many cougar he got. He got some cougar here, but he did a lot of good, but he knew what he was doing. If they got a man with a little experience, like Billy had at being a trapper, why he fared off better than the guy that had that little pan shoved into the tree there, you know.



Judd with 5 cougars that he got on one trip between Brule and his Trap line at Mumm Creek near Rock Lake. 1935.

- Stevenson** And when did Roy Mockler come?
- Groat** I beg your pardon?
- Stevenson** Roy Mockler when did he come?
- Murphy** Roy Mockler he was on that Berland.
- Groat** Who?
- Murphy** Roy Mockler trapped on the Berland.
- Groat** Yes. I knew him. He wasn't much of a wolf hunter though.
- Murphy** We were wondering when did he start in, do you know? When did he show up?
- Groat** Well, I forget but he didn't really know a hell...anyhow, but I knew old Mockler. But he was up not too far up the Berland. I think his main cabin was up around the mouth of Adams Creek there some place.
- Murphy** Leanne Quintilio was telling me that when they were coming back on this trip that you told them about some old corrals at the Willow Creek Ranger Station there. She was wondering if you could say anything about them. They were in pretty good shape she thought.
- Groat** Well, I will tell you all about them. In 1944 at one time all the outfitters in Jasper had to move their horses out of the Athabasca Valley because that was elk habitat. But there had been pack horses there a long time before they brought elk to Jasper. And they used to winter their horses at Willow Creek. Ruff had his horses,



and Ruff managed that Athabasca Ranch that Stan Clark sold to these people - and he left his outfit go, I mean like he left his horses out there at Willow Creek and they run there quite a while. So we went up there in 1944 to gather these horses, and there was five or six that was all that we left in there. We couldn't corral them, and we had no place to hold horses because we brought out 40 some odd head. We had no place to keep them at night, so we couldn't keep them tied up and hobbled and by the time you'd hobbled them and had them looked after, you didn't have a chance to get them others, so we left them. There was only five or six head though. There wasn't too many.

So nobody ever bothered them until somebody tried to get them in later years. By God, they couldn't corral them. There was a gray mare in the outfit and when we were up there she would be about a two or three year old. We had her and this other four with the bunch, but she was a wild little mare and she could run faster than others. That is how she became leading the outfit, you know. So then they tried to get them and couldn't get them. So this Bob Ekroth used to go up there and look after the government horses at Willow Creek. He had nothing else to do so he thought I'll catch them horses. So he built those corrals there. I forget just what year that was and he built them corrals and he caught them. He salted them and he took hay up there because the government used to haul hay part of the way and then he hauled the last seven miles with his team and horses. So he baited them with some hay and he got them. They weren't actually wild horses but that is how come the corrals have been there.

I had one horse in that outfit that I traded Ruff, after we got back I made a deal. There was a good looking Bay horse in that outfit. I remember because I chased him in. I remember this old horse. So the geological surveyor was looking to buy some horses and they wanted a saddle horse then, so Ruff didn't have one handy so I had a brown mare that I had there. I was going to get her bred. She was a good old saddle horse. I was going to get her bred, and this geological surveyor needed a saddle horse so Ruff said, "What will you take for that old mare of yours?" I said, "I will trade you something for her. Go ahead and sell her." When it come to settle up, I took a little horse that we left up there at Willow Creek and so we brought him out and I sold him to Joe Barget for a bucking horse.

- Stevenson** In what year was that Judd?
- Groat** What year that we left some horses up there?
- Stevenson** Yes.
- Groat** In 1944, because that is the last time that I worked at the ranch, was in 1944. I was breaking horses down there so I went up with Ruff to bring them out.
- Murphy** Well, Judd we have talked a lot about other things but could we talk about you for a bit? You were brought into Brule here by your family and went to school?
- Groat** Yes, I went to school here.
- Murphy** And then it went on. Was it 1928 that you went on that truck with that old hunter?
- Groat** Yes, but I didn't quit school until 1930. I missed the month of September because we took off from here in August with this old hunter so my Dad thought it would be a good trip for me to come out. I missed a month of school, but I learned a hell of a lot more in that month than I did in the rest of the nine months.



- Murphy** Of course you did! Did that convince you that you wanted to do guiding and outfitting yourself?
- Groat** Well, I didn't know anything else.
- Murphy** Yes.
- Stevenson** And there were lots of sheep and other animals like grizzly bear and this sort of thing, Judd?
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** What did you do in 1930 then when you finished school?
- Groat** Well, I stuck around here and worked for them outfitters at Jasper, packing on the trails and guiding. I done that pretty well! My dad had an outfit. I helped him every fall in his hunting trips. He passed away in 1949 but I bought his outfit in 1946 off him. We had this hunter that we had out and he owned a brewery so my dad wanted to sell. He was going to sell out. He was all crippled up. He had five strokes before he died, he died in '49. So this hunter that we had out he said "Why don't you buy it?" I said, "Where the hell would I get the money to buy it?" Money was pretty hard to come by but today it would be no problem. But he said, "I will tell you what I will do. I will buy that for you (your dad's outfit) and I will pay him cash and I will see if you can make a go of it and I am going to hunt here myself every year as long as I can. I will take my trips out of yours and I won't leave you short. I will take care of the expense of the trip and everything. You can pay me off that way and I will send friends up to hunt with you to help you pay up." Jesus Christ—fine and dandy. It took me two years and we were square.
- Murphy** Good for you!
- Groat** So I got the outfit. He still hunted with me after that, so that is how I come to get the outfit.
- Murphy** What was your business? Of course hunting in the fall, but did you have summer trips too?
- Groat** Yes but I trapped mostly in the winter time. Christ I raised nine kids. But I had this outfit. Then I got hooked up with some oil companies so I did a lot of exploration work for these oil companies, like with Gulf Oil and different outfits. Then there was that Standard from Indiana and Shell. I worked for different outfits and they were a good deal. I used to get about 120 days a year, just going up through the mountains doing exploration work so that paid off pretty good. Then I done the hunting in the fall after I got through with the geologists. And when I got through with that I went trapping for the winter.
- Stevenson** And Judd where was your base camp for a lot of this?
- Groat** I beg your pardon?
- Stevenson** Your base camp. Where did you work from?
- Groat** Well for what?
- Stevenson** For say most of your operation. For say the summer with these oil company people. They went in from where? Rock Lake or from here?



- Groat** Well, that depends on where they were working. Rock Lake, usually, was the end of the road in the mountain areas, but if we had to start at Grande Cache, that is where I had to take my horses. They wouldn't pay for transporting them there but for 120 days' worth of work with 25 head of horses, it was a good deal. And I seen a lot of country that I wouldn't have seen otherwise. And some damn tough trails, I will tell you. That one year we followed all the mountain streams from the mountains to where they run into the Athabasca like the Berland, Hay River, and the Simonette and followed them streams from one end to the other. No trails, no nothing just Siwashed through the bush.
- Stevenson** There is some tough river crossings.
- Groat** It paid off.
- Murphy** Did you ever have problems with bears and your horses? Would they generally leave you alone?
- Groat** They never bothered the horses.
- Murphy** Did they ever bother you?
- Groat** Oh, I had a run-in with them.
- Murphy** What kind of run-ins? Did you have run-ins when you were hunting them or when you were travelling?
- Groat** Yes, I had a lot of experiences with them buggers. That mark I got on my forehead that is a bear track. I have some scars on my fingers there. I think I got kind of chewed up one time by a black bear.
- Murphy** A black bear was it?
- Groat** Yes. Well we had this spring bear hunt out. That was the year my dad died in 1949. He had killed a grizzly but he had a black bear coming to him, so we were up looking for black bear and we found one on a hill. He was a big bear and he looked bigger when he got on top of me. The bear was facing us when we went up to him but this guy was a pretty good shot so the bear was looking at us and he said, "Where will I shoot him." I said, "That white spot on his throat." So he up with a gun and shot. The bear dropped and he started some big old boulders rolling down this open side hill. He rolled down past us and the last time I saw him he went into a strip of jack pine. But it wasn't the bottom of the hill. It was kind of a break in the hill and then the mountain dropped down some more. So he shot him and knocked him down. "Well," I said, "that finishes your hunt."
- So we sat down and had a smoke and then we went down to skin out this bear. We got down to where I last saw him. He had just rolled a little ways in the timber and he was hung up in some jack pine there and he got stopped. There was quite a bit of blood but the bear wasn't there. I said, "He hung up here for a while. He is bleeding pretty good." So we just went through this timber and right on where it broke down again he was at the edge of it and there he laid. So we walked up to him. I got up closer to the bear, I backed up. I had a Manlicker that had the wood work that runs out to the end of the barrel, that's what I had for a gun to protect myself, and I only had two shells in it. You know, I had some more in my saddle pocket but I thought hell that is all I will need because I wasn't going to shoot the bear. I just had it for an emergency. It didn't do me no good. So when I walked up to the bear he was laying there with his eyes shut and I backed the hell away from him and I told this old hunter, "That bear ain't dead". And he said "How can you tell?" I said "He



has got his eyes shut. Them buggers don't die with their eyes shut." So we walked back to him a little closer and I said, "Shoot him." And he had a 350 Magnum and so I said, "Shoot him again." "God," he said, "If I shoot him, I will blow a hole in him that you could throw a dog through." So he said, "You shoot him with that little P-shooter that you have got there." So he stands there talking with the damn bear laying there not paying no attention to him. I said to him, "I was going to shoot the bear in the head. Are you are going to have this rug mounted with a head mount or are you just going to have a rug?" He said, "I think I will have him mounted with his mouth open." "Well," I said, "I won't bust the skull up. I won't shoot him in the head. I will shoot him behind the shoulder."

I stepped to one side where I was going to get a shot right up next to his front leg. Goddamn, he jumped up and he come at me. I had this gun and I had a shell in it and he grabbed this gun in his mouth, and it's hardwood and that bugger sunk his teeth in that hardwood that goes out to the end of the barrel and we had a tug-of-war. If it had been a slick barrel then I could have I pulled the barrel through his mouth and put it on his head if I'd had too but he wouldn't let go of that gun. But when he did let go and that is when he made the bite at my face and that is when I put my hand up. He got these three fingers down across here. That much was hung up in his teeth and that is when he hauled off and he hit me but he didn't claw me. He just hit me with the palm of his mitt and he pushed all the hide off, my forehead. Of course this knocked me down and I fell backwards down this hill and I lost my gun when I hit the goddamn ground. So I got stopped. I was grabbing for earth, you know. Finally I got a hold and I got stopped. I didn't roll over too much. I more or less was sliding and he come down after me and he run over me after I got stopped. He went I would say maybe 20 feet or more below me before he got rough locked and stopped. I said I better find my gun and the goddamn blood was running in both of my eyes from this pushing all the hide off my forehead. So I wiped the blood away on my shirt and everything else and I started back up the hill and I found my gun. It is funny the goddamn thing didn't go off when I fell with it. So he was standing down below me not too far and I give him a shot with this gun and he flinched so I give him the other shot. I only had the two shells and I seen him flinch again and it never knocked him down. Christ then the hunter hollered. He was about 500 yards up the side of the mountain. He was getting the hell out of there! And he had a 350 Magnum in his hand and he said, "Did you Kill him!" I said, "You better come down and kill him before he eats me up." So he come on down and then he had to shoot the bugger again to kill him. I never said anything to him—but running away when he had a gun in his hand, and a bear will take after a fellow, and he had a chance to get in there and blow him in the open. Why I think he should have come and helped me out. But I didn't say nothing. I didn't blame him. That was quite a deal there with him.



Judd Groat. Picture taken by the Edmonton Journal. Judd was in Edmonton attending his father's (Thomas Anderson Groat) funeral when the Edmonton Journal wanted to do a write-up about the bear attack. 1949.

Murphy

Did you break bones in your hand when he bit on your hand?

Groat

No. You can see the tooth mark on that one finger there and he just bit down through there but he didn't break no bones. But he hit me on the hand kind of more than dug off with his mouth but he didn't take any fingers.



- Murphy** Well, it was a pretty determined bear.
- Groat** Yes. I know a lot of guys that have been chewed up by bears.
- Murphy** When you were guiding hunters then, what were the hunters mostly after? Were they sheep and goat?
- Groat** Sheep mostly. Sheep was the number one trophy in this country. A lot of fellows prefer bear, but at one time you were allowed five trophies and a black bear and a grizzly on one tag. Now they are mostly just hunting sheep as the number one. Everybody is trying for the grand slam.
- Stevenson** And mostly Americans, Judd?
- Groat** Mostly, yes.
- Murphy** You probably knew the country pretty good then?
- Groat** Like the back of your hand.
- Murphy** Would you scout for game in the summer time, before the season, to get ready or did you have a pretty good idea of where they would be?
- Groat** No, I had a pretty good idea of where they would be. We never bothered doing anything like that. We went right into where they should be, and where you had luck before. I knew where the rams were, you know.



Judd Groat with a goat he guided an American hunter for. 1945.

- Stevenson** And Judd not as many wolves then as today.
- Groat** No, there wasn't. Hell you can hear them right from here in the winter time out running on the hills. They're gonna take over!
- Murphy** Why would there be so many wolves now and not so many wolves in earlier days, say in the 1920s? What was the difference?
- Groat** Well, I will tell you what I think. When the wolves was kind of full, the trappers trapped them. But it was a lot of hard work skinning them, so when they dropped the price of wolves, the trappers said I wouldn't



bother skinning the buggers for what all we get out of them. But I wouldn't say that was all the cause, and probably they grew up in places, like where there was lots of country between here and Grande Prairie that people don't hunt in. I know they are down in this low country like down the Berland and on Hay River and along Athabasca Valley. There are lots of wolves in there but lots of game, too. But they got no particular area, wherever there's hunting: that is where they grow up. And they cover a lot of country do a lot of travelling. I knew a trapper there at Susie Creek. His name was Danny Wanyandie. A young fellow at that time he told me this story. I would say he was 25 years old, and he had some pack dogs that he used to use on his trapline rather than a toboggan. So he had four dogs at his cabin, and he said one morning about daylight (daylight don't come too early in the winter time) he said his dogs was barking and very rarely did they bark. So he knew there was something out there. He went out and he said there was five wolves running down past the flat, just out in front of his cabin. They were lopping along and I guess these dogs were barking at them. So they lopped on down the valley and there was about four inches of snow. He said they were heading down to Susie Creek and there is a big bald hill, oh there's quite a series of bald hills there and it was good going and there was lots of deer in there, in poplar country. He said that for that many deer around them wolves wouldn't be long finding a deer and they will stop to eat and I will get a shot at them. So he took his gun and he took after them afoot. And he said they only had maybe 20 minutes start on him. From the time that he got his moccasins laced up and took out after them and he said he followed them until noon and in that course of time they killed five deer and they never stopped to eat. If they just happened to see a deer why they would take after them and kill them and run away and left them. He said that they never eat one of them but he said they killed five when he quit following them and he said he followed them until noon. He never got a shot at them and never got any.

- Murphy** The park wardens used to hunt wolves too, didn't they, in the earlier times?
- Groat** At one time they used to ask them to shoot wolves. But do you mean in Jasper Park?
- Murphy** Yes.
- Groat** Yes, one time, but then they decided to let the wolves stay with the theory that "They would only take the sick and the poor that was weak". But they just took the first one they saw.
- Murphy** You were saying the outfitters in the park had to winter the horses, when they went into Willow Creek because of the elk. Were there lots of elk then or were they just starting to come back?
- Groat** Well, it was just Henry House Flats that they referred to, and everybody ran their horses between there and the Rocky River. Elk didn't winter there but they stayed there year round. But you take them back in the 1930s, God, there were hundreds of elk. At that time, we had a hunting party from the States and they wanted elk but we had to go to where the Cardinal River run into the Brazeau—that is the only place that you could hunt between the Cardinal and the Brazeau. But there were so many elk there they were like hunting cattle with bells on. You hear one bugle and go over and see them. Well, hell, he isn't big enough. They would sit there and hear another and go over and look at him. No this one is not big enough and they were four and five points, you know. But they are not there today. Like even around Jasper, there is nothing compared to what there used to be. But these elk migrated from here clean up above Fort Nelson. There is a place called Toad River that is 120 miles north of Fort Nelson, and I have got a daughter that lives up there. She is married to a consultant for an oil company and there are lots of elk there now they're killing them and



there is lots of hunters hunting them. One time there wasn't even an elk track in that country. But I think where them elk started here in Jasper Park they shipped in 200 head, I believe. Two hundred head of elk that they shipped into Jasper and they turned them loose there.

Stevenson That would be in the 1920s, I think was it?

Groat Something like that. That is where them elk come from around here. There were no elk here.

[Tape 2, Side A]

Groat That was the first elk I ever seen, and a lot of people looked at it because they had never seen an elk, but them big herds is all gone now.

Stevenson Judd when you were talking with Moberly's, did they ever mention much of any talks about bison, buffalo?

Groat There were lots of buffalo skulls scattered out through the North Country here. Somebody was talking about that just the other day, about down at the mouth of Mumm Creek, just up between here and Rock Lake. There was kind of a mountain cliff there, with open bald hills back behind it. The Indians in the early days used to run them buffalo, and they would stampede and go over this bank. Then they would go along and pick up what was killed and crippled. But he said that is why they hunted there. I have heard that several times about that spot there and I couldn't visualize the buffalo being that far and in that big a herd scattered out through there. But you take this hill here at Solomon Creek or any hills up around north of Rock Lake, you can see the old buffalo trails yet, where they have been traveling on the side of the mountain there. And you see skulls. It wasn't too long before I found a skull just over at the foot of that big hill where the old buffalo trails are. This was in soft ground and the horns were still on it. The shells were still on the horns, and I give it to a fellow at Hinton. He was a friend of mine and he wanted it. I said, "You can have that. I sure as hell got no use for it. There would be no skull but you know you would have to get a skull." "No" he said "just the way it is. I will hang it up in front of my place that I've been in buffalo country". But there is one across the Smoky that we found there one time at Cavass Flats and that was an old skull. And you find skulls all through the mountains.

Stevenson Do you recall some of the big forest fires back when you were say growing up here? Big fires that you can remember?

Groat Well, not around here. Like them fires was long before my time. Now you take up the Solomon Valley, I remember when I was a kid that there had been some big timber in this country, at one time. When the trees burned off at the roots and they fell over like windfall, them logs were still sound when I first remember them. There were some logs that were so big you couldn't ride over them and if one of them fell across the trail, You couldn't cross it with a pack string. They would have to jump it. I mean they were that big of timber. Jesus, they were huge timber and there was a lot of it in that Solomon Valley. At one time, I know at Solomon Valley there that they were so thick along the trail that they had to cut a trail through there and the ranger or the outfitters or whoever would just make a set of bars. You could bar that trail, and you had your horses like in a fence and the logs were so big that those horses wouldn't go in there or jump out of there. But there has been some big fires here and a lot of big timber. But that big timber never come back. I seen a burn down there on the Simonette. Do you know where the Simonette River is?



One of the Buffalo Skulls that Judd found

- Murphy** Yes.
- Groat** Well, we went down the Simonette with an oil company. I was down there about four or five days travel and I seen a big burn through there and the logs were still sound. But that was big timber. I tell you if you come to one of those logs you couldn't jump it. You know, you had to either jump it or go around it. And we went down through there with a pack outfit and there was nothing but fire weeds and windfall in there, but there had been some big timber in that outfit. That is north of Deep Valley Creek, they call it. It is west of Deep Valley Creek where it runs into Simonette. But you don't see that kind of timber any more. I haven't seen any anyway. Like I say the Solomon Valley would be the same way, you don't see timber stands like that anymore.
- Murphy** When was the fire around Brule? Was that 1936?
- Groat** A fire around here?
- Murphy** Yes.
- Groat** Yes, they had one here in 1945 or 1946 but that has already been logged off. The Brule Lumber Company logged it off.
- Murphy** What fire was it that burned off part of the head of the Black Cat?
- Groat** That was it—in 1946. It is too bad it burned that landmark there.
- Murphy** Yes, it is.
- Groat** God that was a natural picture of a cat. It is a funny thing up in that burn there and over across the river here, where they cut that timber off up here, it was all solid spruce. There wasn't any poplar in there at all. After they logged it off and they didn't clear cut it either - They just took merchantable timber off it—timber that they could cut and skidded with horses. So they didn't clear cut it. They just took the choice trees and



stuff like that. But after that fire went through it didn't come back into spruce. It come back willows and poplar. And they are so thick up there now that you can't ride a saddle horse. Before that there was no willows or poplars in that stand of spruce. Like where the Black Cat Mountain is there. Nothing but trees! A Jack rabbit can't get through there.

Murphy Yes, that looks pretty thick in there.

Groat The same with over across the river, where they clear cut that Camp 1. That was solid spruce and damn few poplar on it. But after they clear cut it, nothing come back but poplar and willows. And there were muskegs in there and that you couldn't ride a horse through. It would bog your horse down. But the muskegs are all dry now. You could drive a car through there.

Murphy But it did make some changes. Were you here during the war?

Groat Yes, the second one.

Murphy Did you hear of any of the Japanese fire balloons that came over?

Groat Yes, they were in Brule here. There were Germans that was here and the Japanese, too. The Japanese was here.

Stevenson Judd, what Peter is talking about would be these incendiary fires. They were balloons that would come over and land and then set a forest fire.

Groat Oh?

Stevenson You don't recall those ever getting this far?

Murphy I understand that Bill Smith found a few between here and Muskeg. You didn't hear of them then?

Groat Yeah there was a few here but they were prisoners of war. These prisoners of war, these Japanese that were farming in BC and they put them in these camps. I guess they kind of know where they were at but they worked for the Brule Lumber Company here. And they had some German troops here which was an air force outfit and mostly the guys were pilots and stuff, and they were with the German camps. There were some smart guys among them too and some good fellows. Yes, they worked here pretty steady.

Murphy When did the Brule sawmill start?

Groat In 1940 or 1941 that Bill Robinson was his name. He had a camp up here and took lumber out of here and then he sold out to McDougall. Larry McDougall used to have a big outfit down there at Winfield. Well, they got this timber up here and they expanded up and had a sawmill up at Hay River. But they logged here quite a while. But they were finishing up here when that pulpmill started in 1956.

Stevenson They had a big planer mill here too, did they not?

Groat Yes, they had a planer here.

Murphy How did they haul their lumber? Were they able to truck it by then?

Groat Yes, they trucked it in.



- Murphy** Did they cut it rough in the bush and then haul it here to the planer?
- Groat** Yes. No, no it was sawed up in the bush. Yes, they had a sawmill at the camp and cut everything dimensional, like started cutting 2x4s, 4x4s, 2x10s, 2x12s and 2x8s. They had a re-saw here, right alongside of the planer. I worked every winter there for about seven winters running the re-saw, cutting that timber down.
- Murphy** Where was there market? Were they just selling into Edmonton or was it the States?
- Groat** Shipped it all over, wherever they got orders from.
- Murphy** What we were asking before is during the second world war one of the things the Japanese did in Japan was send over gas-filled balloons and under the balloons there was a device that was an incendiary device for starting fires. And their idea was to send them over on the westerly winds and drop these on the forests and the wheat fields and burn us out. I understand that there were some of those balloons found between here and the Muskeg but it was very secret.
- Groat** I never heard of them.
- Murphy** You didn't hear?
- Groat** I never heard of them. I didn't know they had such a thing.
- Murphy** Well, I don't think they were very successful.
- Groat** Well you take over around Fort Nelson and up on the Toad River the BC government encourages those outfitters to burn off the hills in the spring. They had some that they dropped from planes. I forget what they called them, but they dropped one and burned off all hills that was next to the rocks and where the fire would burn itself out before it burned the rocks. There was no vegetation up there. But that is why the elk is in there because after these burns the trees that didn't burn completely up this spring, the next year they were dry enough that they just burned like paper. But I think it is a hell of a good idea.
- Murphy** You never did that here?
- Groat** No, not to my knowledge any way.
- Stevenson** But you mention Willow Creek in some of those areas, Judd. There is lots of willow and bog birch in the bottom. Do you see more now than what you used to?
- Groat** What do you mean?
- Stevenson** The willows right in the meadow areas that once had grass where you could pasture your horses. Now so much of that country has filled in.
- Groat** Yes, that is true enough. Yes, lots of them flats. They had a landing strip there. It used to belong to old Bill Moberly and he was one of them natives that come from up there at Jasper, and it was a natural field and they used to put up hay there. So when he passed away and he left it to the kids, but the poplars were starting to come. They were small. A man could have went in there and thrashed them down if he had the



riggin. Then the mines started up there. US Steel come up there doing some exploration work around them coal mines.

Stevenson So this is Grande Cache is it?

Groat Yes, and they made a landing field out of this fellow's hay field. They gave that kid \$300 for his field so they could land their planes on it. The last time I was down through there, there was poplar that probably the whole flat is gone. Only what was maintained like down the main road and the little landing strip alongside of it and the rest is all grown into poplar. That used to be an open meadow.

Stevenson And did they burn that meadow in the spring, do you know?

Groat No, they didn't use to.

Stevenson But they used to mow it and cut hay off it?

Groat They used to cut hay off it.

Stevenson So they would keep the poplars off?

Groat Yes.

Stevenson And then that is right at Grande Cache, is it? Do you know exactly where that spot is?

Groat What?

Stevenson Where that airfield is? Is it still there?

Groat That airfield?

Stevenson Yes.

Groat Yes, I think they use it.

Stevenson That is a good reference. That is good to know, Judd.

Groat Yes, it is a natural field and like old Bill Moberly didn't clear nothing on it. He just went ahead and cut the wild hay off it. He used to keep the cows off it, but then they'd hay and let the cows on it in the winter time. That was all field right to the mountains, clean to the River. I remember that trip I made through there in 1928. I was down through there, and you could see this big field and there was nothing on it so we camped there for a while and there was nothing, but pure flats but now it is all grown into poplar.

Stevenson In your activities Judd, did you ever work for Forestry as a lookout or do any of that kind of work?

Groat Did I ever?

Stevenson Yes.

Groat No, I never did.

Stevenson Did you do any trail work for them clearing trails, or did you just do it because you used the trail maybe?



- Groat** Well, that Forestry job didn't pay very much in them days. I remember them guys weren't given any horse allowance or nothing. That went with your job. I seen a lot of creeks and one thing or another named after a lot of the old time Forest Rangers around the Muskeg River, after it was kind of settled up a little bit, you know. But they got the names of different outfits like old Hendrickson Creek. That was named after old Fred Hendrickson and there was a Rowe Creek. That was named after Percy Rowe. He was a ranger out there and then Lone Teepee Creek. Back in the 1920s, there was a fellow who was a guide, packer, cowboy, trapper and he worked for the Forestry as a ranger. He went to Grande Prairie for supplies. He was somewhere across the Smoky and he met this girl and he went back the following year and he married her and brought her back out on his area so he made camp at Lone Teepee Creek. There was damn good fishing in the creek and lots of horse feed, so he set up a teepee there, and that was for him and his bride and he was the only one there. That is why they called it Lone Teepee Creek because that is where old Crawford Mason made his head base. He had his old teepee pitched up there where the fishing was good. He worked for the Forestry and he come into Entrance once a month to get his supplies and turn around and go back to Teepee Creek.
- Murphy** Did you know some of the other rangers, like Bill Smith?
- Groat** Yes, I knew Bill Smith well. He was on the Little Berland. He was quite an old Bill. He got a bunch of wolves. He got 17 or something like that.
- Murphy** Wow! How about John Currat because everybody knew John?
- Groat** Yes, Rocky Mountain John. I knew him.
- Murphy** Why was he called Rocky Mountain?
- Groat** I don't know why he got the name Rocky Mountain John but that is what everybody called him.
- Murphy** He had quite a string of horses. It seemed like he had difficulty selling any. He didn't want to part with any of them.
- Groat** He had an old sorrel team that he thought a lot of. But he had that area at Moberly Creek and I remember one year he got the award for the most efficient Forest Ranger for the work that he done in his area. He built a pasture there on Moberly Creek, so he could hang onto his horses. He had that old cabin - Rocky Mountain John. I seen him do a foolish thing one time at Eagles Nest. I thought old John would know better than that. He had this sorrel team and he used them as well as other horses on his area. He was going to picket them and they didn't want to stay there. They wanted to come back to Rock Lake or back down on Moberly Creek so he found a couple of shedded moose horns and decided he would put a toggle on them. They would hang up some place like a toggle on a wolf trap or something. He would turn them out, and the old horse got feeding around there and moved along and saw this horn roll over and got scared and took off. That bloody moose horns went flying. Old Rocky Mountain John said, "I will never do that again!"
- Murphy** And Gordon Watt, you would have known him?
- Groat** Yes. I guess Gordon was Chief Ranger there for a little while?
- Murphy** Yes. In the late 1940s I think.



- Groat** Yes, he was Chief Ranger there for a while. I know just before he ran the store business anyhow. I guess that was the last job he had before he went into the store business.
- Murphy** Yes, I think he took the store over in 1951.
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** Then about Harold Cornell? We hear his name but I don't know anything about him.
- Groat** I think he's from over on the other side there in the Brazeau, Cornell. I am pretty sure he was over there in the Brazeau Reserve.
- Murphy** Did you have anything to do with Eric Huestis, who was Director of Forestry but he was at Coalspur for a bit?
- Groat** What was that again?
- Stevenson** From Edmonton, you know, in most of his career.
- Groat** No, I didn't.
- Murphy** How about Donald Buck?
- Groat** Yes, he was in there.
- Murphy** Donald Buck was Superintendent.
- Groat** Yes, he looked after the Forest Reserve in Edson. He was the Chief Ranger there.
- Murphy** Did he get out this way at all?
- Groat** Yes, I knew him up here is where I met him. He was a good fellow. Buck had a lot of friends.
- Murphy** Yes. I wanted to ask you a little more about the Athabasca Ranch. Did you work there for a while?
- Groat** I worked there lots.
- Murphy** Did you work there while Stan Clark had it or it must have been afterwards?
- Groat** No, after he sold out I went to work there. When Stan run it as a dude ranch, just previous to when he sold out, he had a regular dude ranch where people would go day riding or they could take pack trips or whatever, but it was strictly all horseback riding. Every Sunday, he used to put on a rodeo to entertain these guests so that was about the time I was bronc riding a little bit and riding bareback, so we went down every Sunday and ride these horses out for \$2 a piece. You can make good money that way.
- Murphy** Sure, that is good money.
- Groat** I rode 12 horses one day. I made \$24. I thought that was big money in the 1930s. I got so sore and stiff I could hardly walk the next day but that was good money at \$2 a head.
- Murphy** Were they just naturally wild or did you have the bucking rig on them?
- Groat** He had his own stock there that he raised them. He used a lot of horses, Stan.



Stevenson And when did he sell? Did we record that Peter? When did Clark sell the ranch?

Groat I beg your pardon?

Stevenson Do you know when Clark sold the Athabasca Ranch?

Groat When he sold it?

Stevenson Yes, when?

Groat Around the early part of the 1930s or maybe 1934 or somewhere in about that time.

Murphy Do you know where he went from here?

Groat Well, he homesteaded a quarter of land over at Entrance and he went to Ashcroft and he bought a car load of horses and brought them back here and he was going back into business. But not as a dude rancher but guiding hunting parties, and he done that for a while and he bought that store.

Murphy Oh, he did?

Groat And Watt bought it from Stan Clark. Yes, Stan bought that store there.

Murphy He must have bought it from Woodley then?

Groat No, Tom Monaghan. You see Woodleys was never on that side of the river. Woodleys had their store over on the north side and they used to call that Entrance, Dyke at one time on the railroad. That station was known as Dyke and on the other side was Entrance. So Monaghan took that store over from Woodley on the north side. Then when the railroad quit coming through there in 1928, why he built a store over at Entrance and he run it for a long time and Stan Clark bought it and Gordon Watt bought it.

Stevenson And that is where you sold your fur? He was a fur buyer as well?

Groat A lot of them. We did a lot of business there.

Murphy Did you sell your fur to him or did you go to other buyers?

Groat I sold to Gordon Watt some, but he done all right. He would give you a fare deal. I remember one time we had some lynx. Red Creighton was trapping between here [Brule] and where my trapline was on Mumm Creek. He had 20 some odd marten, so he was going to ship to the fur auction in Edmonton. He said to me, and I had some lynx - I had five lynx and 16 martens, but Red had 22 martens and he shipped his to the fur auction sale in Edmonton. That sale was either in December or January. Gordon Watt was buying fur, too, though. So marten was a pretty good price. The lynx wasn't up too well, but Gordon Watt gave me \$50 a hide straight through for my marten—\$800 for 16 marten. But for these lynx he said, "I don't know about them kits." I had a couple of yearlings, they was small, It wasn't really big mature lynx, you know. But he said, "I don't think I can give you too much for them." Like he knew fur pretty good and I didn't know the price of fur. So he said, "I will give you so much for them kits. I don't think I will get that back." So any way after he got his returns back after he sold them, he was right—he didn't get what he expected for the lynx kits. But he fared out a little better than \$50 a piece on the marten. But when Red got his return from the auction sale they graded his fur. He got \$37 for this one and traded back and forth and by hell he never got



\$50 for one of them, and I got Gordon to give me \$50 straight through for them and Gordon made money on them. So he told me, "I fared out good enough on the marten." I said, "I will split that difference with you on them two lynx or whatever. You gave me a pretty good price I thought." But I didn't tell him that Red didn't get that \$50 a piece for his though.

Stevenson And Judd do you remember what year that was, if you could, or even close to it?

Groat That Gordon Watt was buying fur?

Stevenson No, on that particular time when you had that comparison in fur?

Groat You see Red Creighton trapped in there. I forget what year it was. I don't remember the year. If I had trapped just one winter, I would have remembered it, but we had trapped every goddamn winter.

Stevenson Was it during the war though?

Murphy It would have had to be after because Watt bought the store in 1951.

Groat Yes, he had the store quite a while. It was after the lumber company closed here, and they folded up here in 1956, so it was later than 1956.

Stevenson That is fine.

Groat Because Red got some tin off some of the old buildings that was off the old sawmill down on the Hay River, and he got some timber off there too. It would be after 1956.

Stevenson That is good. There was another Red. Red Haytor.

Groat Who?

Stevenson Red Haytor. Am I using the right name?

Groat Yes, I knew him but he was way up the Muskeg. He was a wild old bugger. He has got a brother I believe that lives in Edmonton.

Stevenson He used to be a Councilor, Ron Haytor.

Groat That is the guy. Well, this Slim Haytor up here he was quite a guy but he trapped on the Little Berland at the mouth of Fox Creek there. He got kind of squirrely out there. He was going to shoot up on a neighbor out there, he had some horses running down there. But Ed—I forget his last name now but he was married anyway. I forget his name. Him and Haytor they were going to exchange shots there one time.

Murphy Going back to the Athabasca Ranch for a moment. When Stan Clark was running his dude ranch, how did he bring his dudes in? Did they come up over the bridge at Entrance and then head back from there?

Groat Yes, that is right. They used to, but after the pulpmill come in, they built the road right straight across and the road borders their land, so that is the route they use there now.

Murphy But before they would have been a long way in then?



- Groat** Yes, you would go down at the pulpmill and go down that way or you would go down past the Athabasca Hotel and turn off there.
- Murphy** We were over there this morning. We were admiring the log buildings. Do you know who built the buildings and when those went up?
- Groat** Pardon?
- Murphy** The log houses at the Athabasca Ranch?
- Groat** I don't know who built them. They had some contractor that built them but most of the labour was local labourers that they hired. It was somebody who had a contract. I understand when they put them buildings up, they put them buildings up for \$20,000. Like these houses here [in Brule], when they built these houses, they built them for \$750, I think. This was all fir timber that was shipped in from BC. It wasn't that much. I forget now.
- Murphy** That sounds about right.
- Stevenson** And what year did they build those buildings at the ranch?
- Groat** These particular houses along this row here were built in 1922.
- Stevenson** At Brule?
- Groat** Yes, the rest of the houses, towards the hill, like the main part of town was original Brule houses, or the Blue Diamond Coal Company.
- Stevenson** And the ranch buildings were built when, Judd? Do you know?
- Groat** What?
- Stevenson** When they were built? You mentioned the contractor coming in and building the ranch.
- Groat** That would be about 1934.
- Murphy** So Stan Clark arranged to have them put in?
- Groat** No. Stan Clark didn't have it. But there was a guy that lived down there and his name was Chess Smith. He had a quarter of land down there. So after they bought Stan out, and Stan had quite a bit of land there because he had a partner, and Smith was his name. That's that brand that he has got was "CS". Everybody would think that the initials stood for Stan Clark, but it wasn't so, originally, it was Clark and Smith, and it had the C and the S inside the C, for Clark and Smith, so that was Clark and Smith's brand, but after Jimmy left and then moved, why he still kept the same brand but that was his initials (Stan Clark).
- Murphy** What were you doing at the ranch when you were working there? What kind of an operation were they running? Did they have cattle?
- Groat** No, they just built to live themselves and bring their friends. I don't think they ever charged anybody for staying there. It was just friends and relatives and they were pretty wealthy and they didn't have to go out and make a living. They had the money.



- Murphy** Was Stan raising cattle, too?
- Groat** Stan used to run cattle, yes. He had cattle there.
- Murphy** How would he market them? He would have to ship them on the railway I suppose?
- Groat** He didn't raise actually that many. It wasn't one hundred head or anything. He maybe run 20 head of cows or something like that.
- Stevenson** And do you know what kind he had by chance?
- Groat** Hereford mostly but he never had any big bunch. Like I say, he had about 15 or 20 head and I imagine he would eat the beef himself, you know, that he raised.
- Stevenson** And do you know where Stan Clark ended up? You mentioned he had a quarter here at Entrance.
- Groat** Yes, well, he started off freighting, again taking out summer parties and stuff. He took out some hunters but then he gave that up and he sold that quarter of land to Watt the fellow who had the store. And there was a quarter section that went with that store that Tom Monaghan had homesteaded. In them days, you could get a homestead west of Obed, but long since they have cut it out. You can't get a homestead any more.
- Murphy** And then did Clark move away when he sold out?
- Groat** He stuck around the country. I don't know where he actually went to. I wouldn't know.
- Murphy** Did he marry? Did he have family?
- Groat** Yes, he was married but he had no family. Old Stan died. By God, he did. Well, he went up to Rock Lake and he built a cabin. He bought a trapline which I eventually got. Old Huff was a fellow that trapped in there for years and years and Stan wanted to get a foot hold in there so he bought this trapline from old Huff and he built a cabin. It was a modern house and he got a permit to build a barn and a pasture, and he was going to outfit out of there and he was in that operation when he died. It was Tommy McCreedy got the outfit from him and Mrs. Clark had a sale and sold his horses and pack saddles and all his riggin and so that is how I got this trapline.
- Murphy** That is the one up on Mumm Creek?
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** You have seen a lot of changes in this country since you were a kid.
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** What do you think of the pulpmill coming in? Has it been a good thing?
- Groat** It has been nothing to me but it sure give a lot of work.
- (Tape 2, Side B)*
- Stevenson** There are a lot of big coal mines here now as well.



- Groat** Yes, they hire a lot of men.
- Murphy** You were talking about sawmills too for a bit. There was a sawmill up on your trapline area, wasn't there? Was there one on Mumm Creek?
- Groat** Yes, that was McDougall. They were sub-contractors. A fellow by the name of Haley had a camp right where I got my cabin now, or where John got the cabin now and up above it at Mumm Creek, Archie Radcliff had a sawmill, and they contracted under the Brule Lumber company. That is where they went ahead and logged it and Brule Lumber Company bought their lumber from them so they had the privilege of cutting it down and selling them back their own timber. Everybody seemed to be happy and they were all making money.
- Murphy** Was that a winter time operation?
- Groat** That was year round. There was no muskeg or nothing there.
- Stevenson** Did they bring that down Solomon Creek road?
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** Was that them that built a bridge over the Hay then?
- Groat** Yes, they built that bridge over the Hay.
- Murphy** And then who were the outfit just up the Solomon? Was it Mile 14 or at that corner?
- Groat** It was Mile 12. Vinson's have got it now but there was another old trapper that went in there. My dad used to have that trapline, and he sold it to Otto Petersen. Otto got a miscellaneous lease there and he bought some of these houses from the Brule Lumber Company. So the Brule Lumber Company bought some of these houses, and they were two-room houses and they loaded them on trucks and skids and took them up to the Hay River for married families to live in. So when they folded up and they quit logging there, they had these houses there and old Otto bought some of them houses (around four or five) and he moved them down there and he was going to cater to a dude ranch. He couldn't make it a hunting camp legally but that is what he done. He rented these cabins to hunters in the fall. At that time the season opened the 1st of November, and it was kind of cold camping out, so he had no problem renting those cabins.
- So when he died, Gordon Watt had a daughter. She is still living, I think. This old trapper had willed his place to Marjie (Watt) and Watt hauled some of them houses down to Entrance and had an auction sale and sold his horses off. There were about 20 some odd head of horses.
- But Fred Brewster years ago—it was back in the 1930s some time or early part of the 1930s—when he come down, they had to move his horses out of Jasper, he came back down to Brule here and got a permit from the Athabasca Forest Service to winter his horses here. He used to winter up around the Solomon up there. So he had a hired man here, so he talked old Fred into building a cabin up there so that he could go up there and camp and check on the horses and had a place to stay. Well, Fred couldn't get a permit to build that house so he threw in with the Forestry that he would build a cabin and leave the door open for the rangers to use because they had no cabin. The first cabin was at Rock Lake and it was too far. There was an overnight stop at Solomon and that is how he got a permit to build that cabin with the privilege of using that cabin for staying there instead of pitching a tent and camping out. It still took them two days to get up there,



but they had a place to stay at this cabin. So that is how he built that cabin. In later years he applied and got a miscellaneous permit to build a corral and one thing and another. I think he had four or five acres when old Otto Petersen moved in there. So old Otto wanted to build some pastures, but they hung onto that and recently they kind of expanded a bit. I guess they are building a dude ranch or something up there or packing station but they got a cabin built up there. He got tourists up there now.

Murphy Was that the Rainbow Ranch, that Petersen fellow?

Groat I guess that is what they called it.

Murphy I remember seeing a sign there on that building that said the Rainbow Ranch.

Groat It could have been. He was kind of a squirrely old bugger.

Murphy And then this side of his operation, there was a logging road when I first came here in, say, 1960. There was a logging road that went up the old forestry trail and then it was up the west fork of the Solomon?

Groat Yes, Garneau was in there.

Murphy Oh, Garneau was there.

Groat Yes, he had a camp up the creek there about three or four miles, and then he had a camp right at the forks of the road where that road come down. But the Shell Oil built that road in there originally as far as Oil Well Creek. They come in here in the early 1940s, and they dug a well there and they built that road into that oil well from Brule up to that oil well. Then the Brule Lumber Company built the road from the oil well out to Hay River. I rough-necked on that well. That was the winter of 1941. We went down 500 feet and she was a dry hole and then they come back and come in with a bigger outfit and drilled it. I forget what outfit come in there but it wasn't the Shell.

Stevenson But still didn't find any oil or gas?

Groat They didn't find nothing there. They didn't find anything along the line. I have had geologists up and down the line there like from various companies that I have packed for. I would take a pack string and go out and do this work before the helicopters took over. It has done away with a hell of a lot of horse work, you know, with these helicopters. That oil well was drilled twice at the Muskeg. They got a big outfit and two or three oil wells got together but it was as deep as they could go. It was a dry hole. But when I talked to different geologists about that when we were going through there, they said that everything was there to make an oil well, like the formation and the stone. I don't know nothing about it. Just like this Mississippi limestone and the Devonian limestone and all this stuff, and they said everything is there to make an oil well but they couldn't understand why they didn't hit it. They said it might have been like an egg shell. They said they probably just missed that, but he said everything is there to make an oil well. Well, he said just take an egg for an example. Instead of hitting the oil they might have drilled alongside of it, you know, where the gas was.

Murphy Were there what you would call wild horses around in your day? When I was here in the early 1960s, there were so-called wild horses down on the McLeod but I think they were just domestic stock.



- Groat** They were not wild. Like Seabolt had a lot of horses here. He owned the Bar-F. They call it the Seabolt Estates now. Old Seabolt bought that land from old Jack Gregg, and Jack homesteaded that back in about 1912 or about that time, but the end of the Steel was at Wolf Creek there, on account of the slack when they were building that big Eddy bridge and he hauled lumber from Wolf Creek up there to build that house at Prairie Creek. So he sold out to Seabolt and Seabolt got raising Percheron horses. There was a good demand for horses everybody farmed with horses. I worked with him a lot up there, breaking work horses for him and putting in his crop. He had some relatives come up there and they homesteaded some land and between the whole bunch of them old Seabolt bought them out and he owned that land outright because it was all proved up with horses and it was all fenced. He ran a lot of cattle in there and that is when they are talking about these wild horses. Now he raised his horses and a lot of them got away, but finally they got to where they expanded and they moved back into what they call that green timber. They stayed in there. When old Seabolt sold out and when you talk about real estate business, he sold that place—and I know that old guy had a section of land—and he sold that place and all the horses along with it and the machinery and everything that he owned for \$17,000.
- Murphy** My Lord! That is astonishing.
- Groat** Imagine! Well down there at Hinton, where the main part of town is there on the hill. That line went up to where the Timberland Hotel is about in there some place where the line runs north and south. And a fellow had that quarter section fenced with four strands of barb wire fence and he wanted to sell it for \$400 and nobody would buy it because there was no water on it. And that is that land clean up to where the Husky Café is. It took in from the Husky Café clean down past about where the line used to cross and come down off the hill there where the Timberland Hotel is and nobody would buy it. Why Christ you can't even build...
- Stevenson** You can't even get a square foot now.
- Groat** But in those days, like I say, you couldn't get a loan from the bank and nobody even thought about it because they didn't have the collateral or security and the bank wanted to be damn sure that you had enough money they would get it back.
- Murphy** Was that in the 1930s at that time?
- Groat** Well, he sold out in the 1940s. So then these horses they grew up. We used to keep the studs pretty well trimmed up and he had the right idea when I was working for him. He used to use his place. I would gather these horses. I looked after his horses for him and broke horses for him. So then he used to give a reward—\$3 bounty on every pair of nuts that you brought him. He said, "I don't care if they are my horses or not. Cut them! I am buying Percheron horses, to raise good horses around here and I don't want them stray around the ranch and it is worth that much to have them cut."
- Stevenson** So he made geldings out of them?
- Groat** So that was me, anytime I needed some beer money I just went out and looked for horses and found a stud and I didn't care if it belonged to Felix Plante, Albert Ceal or Harry King. In the corral, he went and took a pair of nuts down to him and he would give you \$3, and a case of beer was \$2.35, so I was set for Saturday night then and I would go dancing.



- Murphy** Where did you winter your own string? You must have had quite a herd of horses yourself?
- Groat** What's that?
- Murphy** You must have had quite a few horses yourself? Where did you winter them?
- Groat** Well, they run up Solomon and up Mumm Creek and 29 and all the way up on the Hay River valley there.
- Murphy** Did you just turn them loose and then round them up in the spring?
- Groat** Yes.
- Murphy** Did you have to pay a grazing head-tax on them?
- Groat** Yes, they had a head-tax grazing. Some horses that are getting wild down around the McLeod River and some on this north side of the river way down country, George Kelly has a permit to gather wild horses because they wanted to get rid of them and they were worth it. Christ one time wild horse meat was worth \$1 a pound. These were 1000 pound horses, you know.
- Stevenson** Or bigger.
- Groat** Yes. You would get \$1000 for a 1000 pound horse but they sent a lot of the horses down. I guess the SPCA stopped that and said it was cruel to animals to kill them for fox meat.
- Stevenson** Do you remember Joe Passamere when he was the ranger here?
- Groat** Yes, he is still living in Hinton. He was ranger out of Brule here. Joe had the mountain area up around Rock Lake and up in that country there. He lived in Brule here. I remember him and his wife Patricia. They are still at Hinton and their kids are there.
- Stevenson** There was a Fred Newman that started at Rock Lake with Forestry.
- Groat** He started at Rock Lake.
- Stevenson** Yes, out at Edson and later went to Fish and Wildlife.
- Murphy** I am getting to the end of my string here.
- Groat** I didn't know you were going to want to take everything else down but what I told you is the truth, you don't have to send it back to me to repeat because I will tell you the same thing again.
- Murphy** Yes.
- Groat** I mean I am truthful I mean.
- Murphy** I know. I appreciate that.
- Groat** I could be out a year or two on some dates but I got a pretty good memory.
- Murphy** I am impressed.
- Stevenson** It is enjoyable, Judd.



- Groat** But you don't have to change back anything I told you—why you can do what you like with it because it is the truth.
- Murphy** Is there anything that you would like to say that we haven't asked you?
- Groat** I thought you were interested in fires and old time fires. That is what Dennis told me. You were going to line up on old fires. I don't remember many big fires but there was a fire around the Smoky years ago and I will tell you how I found out about it was reading Curly Phillips' book, *Footprints across My Trails*, and he mentioned a fire like on the Smoky River. I remember reading that book. I don't know what part of the Smoky it was on.
- Murphy** We are interested in a whole lot of things. Just about the bush in general. Well maybe we will call it quits, Judd, and say thanks very much for taking the time to do this. It is great.
- Groat** I thought you were interested in fires or something, you know, like old time fires. I don't know of any. These big fires went through here before my time.
- Murphy** Do you remember evidence of bigger fires being around here? For example around that Bar-F seemed to me even when I was here in the 1950s, it was a lot younger forest and pretty open grown. It is closed in more now. I wonder if some of that burned off in the 1946 or 1930s.
- Groat** Yes but they were pretty small fires then. The land had been logged over. They had fire at Camp 2 there and that was where it was logged off. I don't think the pulpmill had anything to do with it, it was just a lightning strike or what it was. That was the only fire that I know of. But they had some a little further up on the Gregg River that raised hell towards Robb and up in that country.
- Stevenson** In 1956 there was a big one too around Gregg Cabin.
- Groat** Yes. But they got lots of big ones now.
- Murphy** Yes, you bet. Well, Judd in all your travels around this country what part did you like best? What were some of your favorite places?
- Groat** Brule. I don't know. There is no place I would rather live that I have been. I had thought years ago about different things at the time you know. I was in the army there and I got a discharge on account of a rupture I had, and they just put me down in a category 'C' if I ever had to go back. So I come back out of that and went up to BC in 1943 and I worked with pack horses from Teslin River over to Norman Wells when we surveyed that Canol pipeline. So when I got through with that then I went to work for the BC government packing for a land surveyor, old Duncan Crann. The Indians traded some land off around Fort St. John for some land a little further back. So we had to go up and survey that block of land that they got from the Indians there on the trade for this other land. This land that the government bought we had to survey there into quarter sections for return men who wanted to go farming on the land that was available. They also had an appraiser there and I knew this guy he used to work for Brewsters at Banff and he was an appraiser for the BC government up there. If you wanted to sell your farm, then appraise it and if the price was right the government bought it and give it to the soldier and they would give you 20 years or so to pay it back. There were so many drawn and I put my name in there, but I had just taken basic training and I had no experience fighting or anything like that. So he said I was legible to draw. And they got so many enquiries about this



land, around Ft St John, and all this land that we surveyed into quarter sections that they got off this reserve. Why, I thought well if I could get this quarter I would sure as hell take it, you know. Well they got so many applications that they had more applications than they had land so they drew numbers of the lots out of a hat and if you drew a blank you were a blank. But then if you were lucky enough you could draw a good quarter or get a poor one. Well I got one there that was a poor one, I got the poorest quarter in the whole outfit. I thought then about settling up in that country so that changed my mind about moving up there.

Murphy So you came back here?

Groat Oh I stuck around a couple years up there and packed for Tommy Wilde, a fellow I packed for, when we went over to Norman Wells. It was the same thing as I had down here. He was given exploration work with these oil companies and I went out with them, for him. We were up around Monkman Pass area up in through there and I seen a lot of country.

Murphy Did you come right through the Monkman Pass down into Parsnip or down into the McGregor?

Groat Yes, I was in there in 1945. In 1945, we went through there and we got down to the McGregor, through this Monkman Pass, for this oil company. Hell, they got highways through that country now.

Murphy Yes. It must have been pretty tough over Monkman Pass into the McGregor for horses? We were in there on foot about 10 years later.

Groat Yes, well there is lots of timber in that country.

Murphy Yes.

Groat But it is all timber. Then I worked when they surveyed the Pine Pass Highway. I worked on that survey with a pack outfit. I didn't go all the way through the Pass, we went up to where, oh there's two lakes back in there. That was as far as I got and I had to go back to the ranch and get another outfit ready for Tommy. When they went through and they were surveying the Heart highway. We started up, there was a creek that an oil well came in there years ago. They called it Commotion Creek and that is up the South Pine and that is where we started from and went up that Heart Highway. Hell, they got two or three routes through there now.

Murphy Judd, thanks very much for doing this.

Groat There is a fellow by the name of Kelly Sutherland.

Stevenson Do you mean like the chuck wagon fellows?

Groat No, but he has the same name. So that is where he got his horse from. He got 40 head from Kelly Sunderman—that was his name Kelly Sunderman - and he brought these horses down from Hythe and Grande Prairie and he come to Brule. My dad knew him. He went to Jasper to see Curly and Curly had to deliver them horses to Mount Robson for this alpine club. So he had quite an outfit old Curly.

Stevenson And Judd when you moved your horses, you mentioned going to Robson. Did those horses come from here or did you have to truck them up there?



Groat Up to the Canal project?

Stevenson No, not there. Not in the north, but say around here in the 1940s, did you have a big truck that you used to move horses with?

Groat Well, no. I trailed them. I never trucked my horses, any place that I went, I trail them. Like when I worked for the oil companies, if there wasn't a horse at Grande Cache, I trailed them.

Stevenson So you went from here with your horses then?

Groat Yes. I had a chance to bid on some different jobs there, too, but I didn't even bid on them jobs because there was outfitters down there.

Stevenson Yes, close to them.

Groat But once you got tied onto an oil company and you got acquainted with them like for Gulf Oil and Standard of Indiana and outfits like that, which I had worked for, if they decided they needed a pack outfit in this area, I got them direct. They didn't look around for anybody else, you know.

Stevenson How many horses would you take on one of those trips?

Groat They can handle about 25 head but there was 120 days and they used to give me \$3 a pack horse a day. That was pretty good money; if you had 25 head, that was \$75 a day.

Stevenson And you would get a cook and wranglers.

Groat They paid the wages.

Stevenson Did they?

Groat They hired the cook and they hired the assistant packer and they hired me. They paid me wages, as well as my horses.

Stevenson It is a lot better than being an assistant ranger somewhere there.

Murphy Well, packing a radio and a third horse.

Stevenson That is a good one.

Groat I seen a lot of country with a helicopter. I worked for the Gulf Oil one time. We were at Grande Cache for 34 days and I had 25 head of horses on that job and they never used my horses for 34 days there. He could take two geologists. They would take two passengers besides themselves cause they had to carry gas on these side ramps. We were stationed at Grande Cache. So he would take two over to this location and two over to that location and there were five of us and the party chief used to go on the last trip, so there was room for an extra one so I used to ride up with him. Anyway I used to go up on this last flight. They used to take these geologists out in the morning and pick them up in the evening. I never even checked my horses. I used to ride up on this helicopter. This geologist and I would go up and look the country over, and when we would come back, we would circle around and see where the hell my horses were and if they were getting too far from camp—I always carried a bridle with me - well they were bound to move around in 34 days. But I let



them go some time for two or three days. They would get me up there with a helicopter, and he would set me down and I catch one and I would ride bare back and chase the others back to camp. That was a good summer and I seen a lot of country.

Murphy When you were trailing your horses, would you trail them loose or did you tie them nose and tail?

Groat I never head and tailed a horse in my life.

Murphy You never did?

Groat No. I turned them loose.

Stevenson Did you basket some that were ones that wanted to stop to feed?

Groat Yes, I would stop and feed them. It is a good deal those nose nets they were one of the best things that were ever invented on a pack horse. But I found out that in the country that I worked in at different times, I never used them. The reason I didn't use them was because if you had to stop and fix a pack and if the horses didn't have nose nets on, they would stop and graze around, you know, and wait. But if they had them nose nets on the buggers would tend to wander. Well they can't eat so they just as well be travelling.

Stevenson I have Judd this horse that I watch and it's a big rusty. I just let him follow behind and then what happens is without the nose net, he won't follow behind and you have got to keep him going most of the time. But with the nose net once he gets onto it, I will start off by having the halter shank to the horn or holding it but then once he gets knowing what has to be done then the nose net works.

Groat Yes, that has been a good thing. I mean it keeps the horses from grazing, and not stopping and eating and trotting to catch up.

Stevenson And getting far behind and running up.

Groat I will tell you about another good rig that my Dad, oh he had a couple of deals that I never used and never seen anybody else use them, but he learned this when he was packing for the railroads. One of them is a blind. This blind is made out of a piece of leather about that wide on two sides and this here has got a handle on it and the other part has kind of a lash. You can use it as a whip like to scare a horse, and if you stop to fix a pack, you could stop and hook the horses that way. From the first time I packed them you could take them right here and the rest of the pack horses would keep going and you could fix his pack. If you tied him to a tree he would be whinnying at the other horses. They are gone and he worried and he wouldn't stand still to get repacked. And then when your through we take the blind off and turn them loose and they could see the outfit and they could run. The old man used to carry that on his saddle horn and when he got close enough to the pack horses, he would spank his ass. And the other deal was a BB gun. They were those little cheap guns that cost about \$3, but they would hold about 500 pellets and there was just a lever and it just takes one pellet at a time. Why they wouldn't even shoot through cardboard. These old horses before we had the nets used to stop and eat hay over there. The old man would pop them in the ass with this BB gun. These horses thought they were in a hornet nest and got the hell out of there and back into the herd or some horses fighting up ahead or going up a switchback. You would give him a buzz in the ass, you know. You know them pack horses all knew that, after a while. If you were losing ground - slowing up some horses and other horses getting ahead all you had to do was take out the air rifle, I always had it hanging on the



saddle horn and all you had to do was rattle that BB gun and their ears would perk up and they knew what that shotgun was and they would smarten up.

Stevenson What I've done as far as covering the horse's head is around, particularly a bear skin, when you are trying to put it on a top pack, I will take my jacket off and put it around the horse's head. Because this one I had, boy! That is the one weakness—even to smell a bear on a sheep or a moose or an animal like that there is no problem when you got to kill. But when it was a bear that rusty horse is just a nightmare. And we haven't hunted many bears, but there has been an occasion when I just cover his head with my jacket, and then he is OK but you can feel his skin is just like this. There is something going on back there but I don't know what it is. That blanket works.

Groat That blind worked good, Like I say, you didn't have to hold the outfit up or anything you could walk up and catch them and you slip the blind on them and you could fix his pack any place and they couldn't see because this thing kind of covered both eyes, you know. And laced down and hooks onto the nose holder and then up on top there. You take it off and it had a handle on it and this part that is tied on the nose that was part of the lash. And a horse when you put one of them on them and the pack horse would go down the line and he stood there and never moved. You didn't have to look for a tree. You could fix his pack right out on the flats, you know. I thought that was pretty handy. I never used it but I could see the good point in it anyhow.

Murphy What would you do then? Just tie it up to a tree?

Groat Yes.

Stevenson Or you could get someone to hold it if you had people around. Some of those horses you get them onto a tree and they pull.

Groat Well, there is always two or three guys in the outfit and when you are fixing the pack, why the other guys were kind of keeping the pack horses together, especially if you haven't got a nose net on. Like they wander away like, they can't stop and eat grass.

Stevenson Did you use a saw buck or the old Decker—the metal ones?

Groat I used the saw buck all the time. I had a couple on my pack saddle, but I used the saw buck. Of course they were all handmade the ones that I used. I know what they called the Lichton Van Pattern. If you picked up one of them, it will just bust seven horses out of ten.

Stevenson I know arguing with Dennis Quintilio I had my little basket straps and they are already set. I just lift them on and they fall right onto but they like to tie everything around. That is interesting how you listen to people like yourself who can do it in the dark. You have your own techniques. But Dennis and Cliff use that old tradition. You see I like mine. I have them right on into the woody knots. They just slid on and one on the other side.

Murphy Larry always used a basket too because he wanted ...

Stevenson That's true. Yes and forward and back too.



Groat But I have seen fellows that use little handles on boxes and stuff like that and rope to loop onto the forks of the pack saddle without using the basket rope. That is all right but the packs have got to be pretty well balanced.

Stevenson I had a little scale.

Groat But if you are using a fork tree and if there is one box that is a little bit heavier than the other, you can offset it if you haven't got enough weight to put on it to balance it—why adjust this one up a little higher and they ride, but if you added a basket rope for it to do that. I had a basket rope on one of the pack saddles I had.

Stevenson I have seen Quintilio's every now and then when we are in a hurry they take a rock and stick it in. It doesn't look very good but there is a rock wedging in there. Particularly when you are not that far from camp at the end of a long day. Oh God, are we going to stop? No. Just get another rock. It doesn't look good but it worked.

End of interview



Judd and Darleen Groat - 1985