

Interview with Helen Woolf at her home in Waterton Lakes National Park.
1 June, 1995. Interviewer: Leslie Robertson.

Time: Side A - 45 mins.
Side B - 40 mins

Topic of Interview

Reminiscences of people, places and events in Waterton from 1927 to 1995. Includes: the 1964 Flood; the first Dancehall; Tourism; Early families in Waterton.

Tape

Footage

Subject

- | | |
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| 002 | Introduction |
| 005 | Waterton Park
- 1927 moved to Park and attended school.
- lifestyle - row boat in Emerald Bay / saw first moose there. |
| 027 | Parents: Delance and Theresa Strate
- Theresa from Virginia, Delance from Spring City, Utah.
- Theresa's family (mother and siblings) settled in a dugout near Etna.
- Delance and his family settled in Hill Spring - he was age 6.
- Parents met in WLNP - she was waitressing on the Gertrude (paddlesteamer) - he was visiting to fish.
- Married in 1911 - had 8 children - all raised in Waterton. |
| 045 | Delance's Stories
- knew Kootenai Brown - inspected their fish haul - let them off if over the limit.
- Delance shaved Kootenai Brown before his burial. |
| 056 | - Cabins at Oil City - cut wood there - "Jack of all trades"
- butcher, mailman, later a labourer with the Government. |
| 065 | Winters
- roads - severe drifting - no ploughs, walking to school, father shovelled drifts in Spring.
- very severe Winters until about 25 years ago. |
| 075 | Employment - Mother
- The Gertrude - dancing, served meals
- mother only grade 8 education -
- worked in homes cooking and cleaning
- Laundry services for the Mart Kenny Band - daughters helped, also cooked their meals for one season. |
| 092 | Domestic Life
- scrub boards, made soap, home-made clothes, meals from scratch (8 loaves bread / 3-4 days) |

- hauling water from Cameron Creek in galvanized pails.
- running water after Helen was married.
- homework with coal-oil lamps.

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Question: What changes do you see here?

Wildlife: Bears - used to be more when garbage was left out in tubs behind the house - feeding
 - used to run away when humans around - no streetlights.
 - now more aggressive.

Buildings: More development.

Campgrounds: used to be many more trees in Townsite Campground.

Cameron Creek: before diversion ran straight out to the lake.

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1964 Flood

- Helen working at Parks Administration office - water rising slowly.
- car next door tipped over - boulders beside the Creek moved.
- behind house (Cameron Falls Drive) built up yard 10 feet - laid concrete on creek bed.
- Houses in the Campground - silted.
- Woolf residence - water so fast swept past them.

Trees in Campground taken down to build the Campground - already starting to die off.

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Question: Earliest Memory?

- Moving to the house her father built on Evergreen Avenue.
- Picnics - home made ice cream - Cameron Lake and Red Rock Canyon in Model T Ford.

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Dairy - Wellman's had a creamery - brought milk into the Park.

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Meat - Delance a butcher - bought meat from packing houses - Alberta Beef.

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Good life.

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Question: Special Places?

- Alderson and Bertha - hiking.

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Dances - Mart Kenny Orchestra every night - start at midnight Sundays.

- Helen and sister working at Waterton Chalets - (Bayshore site now) - Sunday very busy - always energy to go the Midnight Frolic.
- learned to dance when the orchestra held practices in the afternoon.
- first Dancehall - Pillar and hard-wood floor with a balcony above.
- fox trot, waltzes.

- 257 Helen's older brother delivered papers - Lethbridge Herald
-Newspapers arrived at Waterton Hotel on the Greyhound- also sold on the street
(early 40's)
- 275 Tourists ?
- 1940's mostly American - now more Canadians.
- locals baby-sat for tourists - Americans payed 3 times more than Canadians.
NOW - wouldn't let her daughter go to a strangers hotel room.
- security - never used to lock doors - house or car.
- 296 Families in Waterton - Carlsons, McLean (RCMP), Delaney, Bakers, Annands.
- 322 Wardens
- Wardens came for 5 years, sometimes 10.
- Frank Camp - Chief Warden - large family; Tremblay; Jack Pittaway - 3 sons,
Bert became a Warden.
- 350 Stewart; Gairns; Gregory; Rodgers; Morrow; Summerhouses.
Andy Ford - RCMP - winter in the barracks - Summer in cottage.
- 389 Police Duties ?
- patrol Highways from Waterton to Cardston - Wardens worked closely with
Police.
Anecdote: Andy Ford confiscating beer and whisky - pouring liquor down the sink.
- 413 Baker; Hybeck; Giddie; Morris.
- 428 Living in the Park
- Carlson and McLean both had places on the Lake (Summer) - most residents
Wintered on Evergreen Ave.
- Pittaway - present WNHA Admin. used as a dance hall 1930's.
- Presley - first school house 1927.
- Foster Watty -lived there and built it.
- Kemmis - Kilmorey Lodge site (Mrs. Kemmis built Kilmorey Lodge)
- Postal Services
- Harwood - Steve; Father Pop Harwood had the mail house on Fountain Ave.
- 495 - Mail from Pincher Creek and Cardston.
- Strate fetched the mail from Hillspring / Cardston.
- 503 Churches - Religion
- Anglican Church the first in Waterton.
- Followed by the United and the Latter-day Saints.
- Many "mixed" families in Waterton (LDS and other).

534 "Tin Can Alley" - old wagon trail between the Great Northern Dorms and
Townsite - hollow in the trail.
"Lover's Lane" - trail between the Kilmorey Lodge and Park Administration.
588 Anecdote: mail delivery across the Badlands, past the Golf Course - wind driven
snow - let reins go - the horses knew the way.

635 Snowed in - doctors and supplies on snowmobiles.

661 Berry patches- Huckleberries at Cameron Lake - now gone.
- Saskatoons in the Red Rock area.
- berries were often the only fruit for Waterton residents.

685 END SIDE ONE

706 Medicine ?
- Doctor in Cardston (Dr. Stackpool?) - cottage in Waterton - Helen's mother
worked for him in Cardston - road gravelled - now changed most by Belly River.

730 Father - Delance - worked Relief Camps - Chief Mountain Highway.

740 Native Peoples ?
- more visiting the Park recently.
- trips with father through the Kainai Reserve to visit her uncle in Hillspring.

747 Hutterites ?
- Delance went to Waterton Colony - chickens every Fall / Spring.
- bought vegetables.
- In Park - strawberry garden and some rhubarb - very difficult to grow garden in
Park.

769 ? (indecipherable name) brought logs down the lake on barges.

778 Businesses ?
- Pat McLean - from Pincher Creek - dance Hall.
- Ellison - store and service station and pool Hall.

804 Zorn - electrician; Gairns - ; Bell - by Cameron Falls - see Map**

825 Lu Nielson - local character - fishing lady - Helen's brothers would row for her
while she fished.

851 Bayshore site - the "Chalets"; cabins Haggelunds - where tent mounds in Townsite
Cmp.
- "The Flat" - Saskatoons berries - "hitching posts" - kept horses there.

882 Anecdote: were allowed to ride horses from the hitching posts in Town to the Compound at the end of the day - usually cost 25 cents / hour to ride.

888 Cabins - Reeve's Cabins - Cameron Bay.
- Pat Mc Lean - Dance Hall and general store - ice cream and drinks.
- Pittaways - Dance Hall 1930's.
- Foster - built Glacier Park Inc. (next to Waterton Park Admin) also used as a Dancehall.

930 Goat Haunt ?
- boat cruises on the International - served beer in the U.S.

942 What do Parks mean to You ?

Well they were built for the enjoyment of the people in the first place weren't they. To enjoy - hiking and fishing and getting off the prairies to cool off. To have a place like this for the people - to get away from the busy life in the city. - Regulations.

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Naturalists are trying to keep it in its natural state - when people come into these Parks its pretty hard to keep it the same way it was.

- 30-35 years ago - idea for a Highway through the Kishinena - Cameron Lake through British Columbia and into U.S.A. - good fishing lakes - Wall/ Rowe / Lineham.

980 Fire
- 1935 - Bertha Mountain - flames and thick smoke - residents ready to evacuate.

Flood 1964

- winds knocked down many trees Cameron Bay and Red Rock (halfway)
- Bertha - Blowdown - and Beetle infestation - trees were much thicker before.

1012 History - people now think more of it last 10-15 years - visiting Delance Strate.

1017 Community Changed ?
- Yes - not so many children - mostly couples or singles now.

1027 Sewing group - NOW television has taken over entertainment - dances no more - nothing to do at night in Town.

1046 Dance Hall Fire
- arson - anecdote: Policeman lived kitty corner to Hall - at midnight there was an explosion - knew it was set because of the way it burned - use of gas. Sad time for the community.

1069 Beer Parlour

- 1075 Medicine ?
home diagnosis through big red "Dr. Book" - infrequent trips to the doctors.
- 1101 Curiosity about Native peoples and how they used / lived in Waterton.
- 1114 Reflections on the Park
- good life.
- regulations to limit # of residents.
- Townsite out by Blackiston Creek - more protected.
- Government cut-backs - people need work.
- 1156 - Administration used to bring a lot of people in to work - changed now.
- 1164 Diversion Cameron Creek - used to be Maple trees / bushes on the creek bed.
- 1188 Hunter family - Cameron Lake - Helen served there, her brother worked on the
boats.
- fresh chickens - killed and cooked fresh.
Bakers - cabins and a store at Cameron Lake - restaurant - hired Mrs. Hunter to
cook after she was widowed.
- 1226 Fishing - Alderson, Bertha, Wall, Lineham, Crypt.
Anecdote: mother tub full of fish for the Summer.

1260 END OF INTERVIEW