

Gathering Our Voice

Interview with BUD WEEKS and DEB WEEKS WALTER

Date: March 27, 2008

Interviewer: Mike Berry

There seemed to be another person who made faint comments in background but no mention is made of this person – it may have been Mike?

Transcription by Diane McKenzie

Mike Berry: I'm Mike Berry and I'm here on the 27th of March at the Weeks' residence, Bud Weeks' home, and we're going to be interviewing Bud Weeks and a little bit later we'll be interviewing Deb Weeks [Walter], Bud's daughter. And if we don't have any questions we'll go ahead and begin.

MB: There's about a page of questions, Bud.

Bud Weeks: Okay

MB: ...and I'll ask the questions and then you can feel free to speak as long as you want and if you think of anything later you can add to it as we go. And do you have any questions before we get started?

BW: No.

MB: OK. The first set of questions involves the background – your background – and the first question is: Have you lived in North Central Washington for a long time? And how long did you or family live around the Squilchuck ski area?

BW: Yeah. I was born in Wenatchee and then my folks moved up to Squilchuck in 1925, and I spent my whole childhood there until I got married. And then I worked at the Park for twenty-five years. and so I lived up there quite a few years altogether. And, ah, let's see.

Deb Walter: Retired in seventy-nine.

BW: Yeah, I retired in seventy eight. Went to work in nineteen fifty six in the State Park, retired in seventy-eight and then moved down here.

MB: And I might add it that where we're at right now is just a couple miles down the hill from Squilchuck, too.

BW: Yeah, right.

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MB: Next question is, are you a skier? And what do you remember about your early days of skiing in this area? How and where did you learn to ski? How long have you been a skier? And, what types of skiing have you done?

BW: [clears throat] Well, actually I've skied practically all my life, as long as I was – as soon as I was big enough to ski. We made – we made our own skis, and used pieces of inner tube to hold them in the straps and, ah, we always skied up in the – my dad's hay field. Which a lot of other people used to come up and ski out there in the early days, too. And, then as the skis progressed why they made better skis and - and better bindings and stuff, you know, and, of course, when I was at the Park, I skied all the time there. And I skied up Mission Ridge ever since I left the Park and sometimes while I was at the Park I skied at Mission Ridge a lot. And, so actually I've, I've skied all my life.

BW: And I kind of learned myself how to ski because I was never exposed to where I could take lessons you know. But, my kids all skied so I kind of learned from them how to make the turns and whatnot when they were taking lessons and, of course, we all skied together, too, took trips together to ski areas and so I finally got to where I could ski pretty good [xxxx].

BW: When a person first started out – the equipment we had, you couldn't make turns, you know. You just skied up and down the hill and that's why jumping was so in then – you know, Leavenworth had a big jump. We'd build jumps and do jumps and what not and then along in - right after the War was over with, why they had a lot of surplus skis from the Army, see. And they had decent bindings on them where you could turn - make turns with them, so that's when people started to make turns. And then they improved the bindings and they've improved the skis and shape skis and everything since then, so it's much easier to ski now than it was in the early days, see.

MB: So you probably started skiing in maybe the late twenties, early thirties?

BW: Yeah, Yeah Around nineteen-thirty I'd say, yeah. And this year I gave it up, so I skied through eighty-four. And this year I gave it up. I didn't want to get hurt. (Laughs)

5:18

(another person speaking softly) We revised those questions. And I didn't realize we had any of those packets with the old ones, I mean they're fine But those are the more recent ones so go ahead just. Those are better. They're more specific to Squilchuck – we changed them

MB: Next couple of questions, and this is sort of similar to the first ones: What is your earliest recollection of skiing at Squilchuck? And did you learn to ski at Squilchuck?

BW: Yes I did. I skied there before the Park and before the ski area during the ski area and I did an awful lot of skiing at Squilchuck.

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MB: Okay. Do you know why Squilchuck was chosen for a ski area and you know whose idea it was and who were the movers and shakers behind getting the Squilchuck Ski Area started.

6:24

BW: Well Frank Cumbo, he was a teacher out at Wenatchee Valley College, and he was also the coach of the ski team that they had at Wenatchee Valley College, and he get talking my dad into letting them ski up there, see. And so the first - first part he had a toboggan with a, a motor on it that made - fixed up a tow and they used that for a while - it would only haul a couple of people up. And finally they brought a jeep up, and they jacked it up and run the rope around the wheel of the jeep, and that would pull a few more up the hill. And so that's how it started, you know. But they had to walk into the area from where the residence is here, see.

BW: So then, in nineteen-forty-eight the Ski Club why they got together and talked my dad into letting them set up a tow which had been up at - the rope tow had been up at Lake Wenatchee, they had a small area up there but it didn't work out. So they moved the first rope tow from Lake Wenatchee to Squilchuck, and they set it up on the hill, and then they got a surplus, ah, generator so they could ski at night. And they got a - bought this army surplus building and they put that up there and, of course, they put a couple pit toilets up there, and so they skied from - like that - from nineteen-forty-eight until the Park bought the property in nineteen-fifty-four.

BW: And then the Park - before that they had to walk in from our place all the time, you know, but then they could ski back down when they got through. But anyway, then the Park built a road in there. And, of course, they just used a field as a parking lot, which was pretty good as long it was froze up, but then in the spring when it thawed out we had a mud hole you know. (chuckles) So we used that for a few years, and then finally the Parks - well the Parks built the ski lodge in nineteen-fifty-four. And then they built the parking lot and paved it and everything. And, of course, I - they brought me a dump truck and a snow plow and I had to keep it plowed out. Sanded the road. We got - made a deal with the county to get sand down here. And so we... I - lots of days on skis days I'd get up at daylight, go up there and plow everything out and sand it before the public got up there, you know.

BW: And then Lea Brown - a guy by the name of Lea Brown - took over the tows at that time, and he added a couple more tows. and he put a Poma-lift in but he didn't put it in right and it never worked out too good. But anyway the Ski Club and a lot of volunteers they come out and helped clear the hill and cut the trees. And then, ah, some guy - I can't remember his name - he donated a dozer, and they built a jump there. And we had a... we had - we had a big jump every year and that place was packed and the parking lot was full and there was parking down the road and everywhere else, (chuckles) you know. And then, of course, we had a lot ski races for the kids, you know. And the high school had a ski team, the junior college had a ski team and, of course, the junior college they had the exchange students that came from Norway, you know, and they was great jumpers, you know. So they could jump, oh - on that hill up there they could jump probably about 150 feet. And so they used that for years. And then, of course, we had a junior racing team which Deb was on and our other two kids was on the racing team. And they'd take

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them around different areas to ski, and we had a lot of races there at Squilchuck, too. And ah, that was kind of the basic of it.

11:28

MB: Do you remember what the year of the – when they started the toboggan – when the very first skiing – when was that?

BW: We never allowed the toboggans in the ski area, because

MB: Oh is that right?

BW: Because they were too dangerous.

MB: Oh I mean the lift- the lift you were talking about with the rope tow.

BW: Oh, the little toboggan. That was ah, lets see about (pause) I'd say about forty-five, forty-six, or something like that, yeah. Because they didn't put the first rope tow in until forty eight and it was a few years before that.

DW: After the war?

BW: Yeah. Okay. Anyway.

MB: I was always curious - a question about where that hut was - before the lodge. Do you know where that was?

BW: Yeah. Just as you go up to the road there, where the parking lot is. Right at the top of the parking lot, back against the bank there, that's where they had the hut.

MB: Okay

BW: And that's basically that's where they wanted to put the lodge. It you know

DW: At the base of the jumps?

BW: Well they wanted they wanted to –they wanted - where the lodge is now they wanted to keep that where they could ski on it, see. And we had a guy here in Wenatchee who was an architect. He drew up drawings and everything for a new lodge, you know, but the guys in the Park overruled it. They changed the place of it and everything else. That's how that went – happened you know. (Chuckles)

MB: That's great. Okay. Moving on. Did people come from very far to ski at Squilchuck or was it mostly a local hill.

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13:33

BW: Ah, of course, when we had a tournament, you know, we had a race for the kids they come from Seattle and Idaho and Oregon because that was the PNSA – you know that was a racing organization. [note: Pacific Northwest Ski Association] And they come from all over North Central Washington and it didn't matter how small a race was they came, you know, because they had kids. And then of course when they had the big jump it was the same – it was all of North Central Washington that come in here and competed, see, because we all had ski teams and jumpers. And of course in Seattle, there was guy by the name of Ulland [note: Olav Ulland], which was a great skier – ah jumper. And he always come to our things. And there was another man by the name of Peterson – he was a fisherman. He fished in the summertime and he ski jumped all winter. And he was quite a character. But he was good, you know – both of them were real good jumpers.

MB: Now the PNSA – would that have been as early as the early fifties?

BW: Ah, yeah. Because our kids all skied under that. They had – they had to join that and have a PNSA card in order to enter the races, see. And we had – we had to pay an entry fee for all the races, you know, for expenses and stuff. But it was a great program for the kids. They all enjoyed it, and we – we took turns at taking them to different tournaments and what not, you know.

15:21

MB: Okay. Next question Did you ski there before the rope tow was put in and did the rope tow operate pretty smoothly or did you have trouble getting the getting – getting tractor up the hill and did you have mechanical problems?

BW: No, of course when the first tow that went had a V-8 motor in it, see. It was a gas motor. But it always worked pretty good. You always had certain problem, you now, but then later why they got electricity up there and so they converted it all to electric motors and so that worked a lot better. But the only trouble at first there – the ropes weren't as good. See they had the hemp rope and they – they would break and they would have to re-splice and when they got old you'd have to re-splice them you know. But then they come out with a polyester rope and that wore a lot better and they got a lot more use out of that and didn't have to splice it just as many times. But, you know, you always have problems with machinery, you know, it can break down and it can run smoothly, you know. Then, of course, after they got electricity they didn't have to use the generator to light the hill with either, see.

BW: And they - they skied every Saturday and Sunday and every holiday and they skied two – two nights a week. My kids did them all. They never missed a day hardly. The other kids was always kind of jealous of them because when they got through skiing they could just ski home, see. The other kids was kind of jealous and sometimes they'd tell their folks to pick them up down at Bud's place, (laughs) so they could ski down through the fields. (laughs)

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MB: Now way back before the rope tow or any of that, it seems like you told a story about your dad towing people with the tractor up the hill from the house.

BW: No, that was after my dad died. I was the one who did that.

MB: Okay, that was you.

BW: Yeah that was me. We was living in the house but we - that was before the Parks bought it, see. Yeah, so I towed them from the up for a while. Otherwise they had to walk up.

MB: And that would be just...

BW: That was only a couple years.

MB: ...local people?

BW: Yeah.

MB: So how would you do that?

BW: Well I got some old tow rope and - and tied it on behind the tractor and they just grabbed on to the rope. I could haul about eight or ten people up there. (Laughs) But it wasn't too profitable. I did it a couple of years cause I wasn't doing anything else.

DW: Did you charge them?

BW: Yeah. Two-bits a piece.

(Laughter)

MB: For each ride up the hill?

BW: Yeah, yeah. For each ride up the hill. Each person.

MB: So they would park down where the house is

BW: Yeah, yeah, kind of down below there – the county kind of kept it plowed out there where they could park - and park down there. But there wasn't a whole lot of people right to begin with, you know. Until it really, really got going – then after, you know, they really got the place going with more tows why then the KPQ radio stations sponsored the ski school. And at one time we had 600 kids in the ski school. And my kids all took lessons for – you took lessons for ten - about ten years didn't you Deb?

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DW: Um hm. Same guys that are up at Mission Ridge.

BW: Yeah, some of the instructors

DW: Bob Church....

19:25

BW: We had some good instructors and of course they all taught up at Mission Ridge later. But they turned out some good skiers. Course then the college teams trained up there and PNSA kids trained up there. And then we had - Bill [Penaligan] he was a teacher at Wenatchee Valley College, and he run a teaching class up there from the college - they'd bring them up twice a week and he taught them and he was real good. He took kids that had never been on skis before and by the end of his lessons they were all parallel skiing, you know, that's how good he got it across. And actually he taught John Kelleher how to ski really, you know. So that's where he really learned to ski.

20:29

MB: Great. Let's see, next question. We've kind of talked about some of this already, but early on how was the ski area itself maintained? Did people start an organization to manage the area early on or was it more casual? And can you describe some of the different tasks that that people took on - on in order to keep the place operating?

BW: Well, ah, it was kind of run by the Ski Club, you know, we had a Ski Club that really got things going and they did a lot of volunteer help. And, and I don't remember just who did run it there for one or two years - I think it was the College that kind run the tow for a couple years. And then the they - we had a concessionaire, Lea Brown was the concessionaire that run it from then on, and he put the extra tows in and spent the money in getting the power up there and stuff like that. And so that was about the way it run. Then, of course, when Mission Ridge went in well why then it kind of - it kind of tapered off up there you know - most people went to Mission Ridge skiing.

DW: Who was Harold and Laurel?

BW: They worked for the Browns.

DW: Yeah. What were their names, what was their last name.

BW: I have trouble remembering names.

DW: She always ran the snack bar.

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BW: Yeah.

DW: With Lea Brown's wife, Marge. And then Harold ran one of the lifts and Lea would run the other when it was just the two chairs. And then they would hire some college kid – there was always someone different on the bunny hill.

MB: So there were some paid employees?

DW: Um hm.

BW: Yeah...

DW: But they were the same ones for years.

BW: And then Lea - the ones that wanted to do ski patrol – why he let them ride for nothing, you know. Of course Lea Brown he - he was real good. He taught first aid so he was real good at taking care of people, you know. And so we always had him there in case someone got hurt. And they went through the drills of the ski patrol and how to do it and what not, you know. Of course, we had a telephone to call the ambulance if we had to.

MB: I think that's one of our questions. What kind of accidents did you guys have up there? Did you have any accidents, broken bone...?

BW: Oh, yeah.

(laughter)

BW: Well this is the way I looked at it. The kids that took lessons every year very seldom got hurt because they knew how to control the skis and ski right. But the ones that got hurt would come up there and they'd rent a pair of skis and they'd never been on before in their life. Well, they come down the hill too fast and they just didn't have the know-how to get themselves out of trouble, see. Our kids never – well, Deb had somebody run into her one time in a race, but and then – she sprained her knee or something...

DW: Most of them were lower leg breaks because the boots weren't...

BW: Well, and then the bindings at first they wouldn't release either, you know. They were solid bindings and that – so we had some broken legs and then we had some broken femurs and broken arms and a few things like that. So there were a few. But it was usually the ones who really didn't know how to ski, you know, they didn't like...

DW: Burnt arm pits.

(Laughter)

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BW: Well yeah. (laughs) What was it - one of the commissioners that was a mountain climber – what was his name? He climbed mountains all the time he was...

MB: Whitaker?

BW: ...he was State Park Commissioner.

MB: Jim Whitaker

BW: And he was at a meeting one time. And he says, well he says, you can always tell the guys that ride the rope tow because, he says, because they got all the hair under their arms burned.

(Laughter)

MB: Never thought of that

BW: Yeah. There was the kids that'd get - would take their jackets, you know, and they'd put leather up through here, you know, and of course you had to use big mittens too to keep from burning your hand. And that leather would protect their ski jackets. Anyway, that's how that went.

25:22

MB: Now with the accidents, did you guys worry about the liability...

BW: Nah.

MB:...did they sue you? (laughs)

BW: Nobody sued anybody then. (laughter) They couldn't afford to, you know. You know when I was growing up my folks never even had insurance on their car, because nobody sued anybody, you know, they didn't. Things were different then, you know, they never thought about suing anyone. Of course, Lea Brown had liability insurance you know in case somebody did get hurt. He had to have that – that was a state law that they had to have liability insurance.

DW: They had safety gates at the top.

BW: Yeah, we had safety gates at the top.

DW: If people didn't let go...–

BW: Yeah.

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DW: ... that was the real hazard – if they didn't let go then the safety gate ... so somebody always had to walk up and plug the gate in, but it kept anybody from going through the [boulder...]

BW: Yeah

DW: ... which could have really caused some facial injuries. (laughs)

MB: [Probably hurt in the bay?]

BW: Well once in a while when they splice a rope, you know, why it would have a twist to it, see, that's when they had trouble, you know. Sometimes they would get some people parka twisted up in the rope, see, and so then they have to cut in two and re-splice it again to keep it where it didn't have a twist to it, you know. That was some of the problems they had.

26:50

MB: Great. Let's see. Next question. Was the ski area logged to open up space for skiing?

BW: Huh?

MB: Was the area up where the skiing was done, was that logged off to open up...?

BW: Yeah, yeah.

MB: And who did that?

BW: Me. (laughs)

MB: Yeah?

BW: Yeah. I did a lot of it and, of course, a lot of volunteers come up and helped, you know – the Ski Club volunteers. And Lea Brown did a lot of it too, you know. He furnished the tractor and he furnished a couple hired men and he - in the fall he come up with his mower and he'd mow the hill and get the grass and brush down and stuff you know. But the biggest when we cleared the hill for that Poma-lift, course the Poma-lift didn't work out. We took an awful lot of logs off of there then. And me and the Park guys we cut them up into firewood for the camp grounds, you know. But we took a lot of trees out of there and all of them - just about all of them have grown back up. That's what nature does when you leave it alone. You don't have to plant trees, they'll do it for you. (laughs)

MB: Let's see. Next question is did the local schools sent students up to Squilchuck to ski?

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BW: Just to the ski school. They furnished buses and they brought them up through the ski school. For their lessons.

MB: Was that on weekends or

BW: Ah, no they You remember how long ski school was? It was about six weeks or something like that – six or seven weeks long was the ski school

DW: Well, we started the first week of January...

BW: Yeah. Yeah. Right after Christmas

DW: ...after the Christmas holidays.

BW: Yeah.

DW: But you signed up through the schools.

BW: Yeah

DW: The paperwork came at school...

BW: Yeah.

DW: And then you brought your little piece of paper home.

BW: Yeah

DW: To your parents. But it was really cheap like \$6.00 for the whole season.

BW: Yeah

DW: And we weren't wealthy at all but we always got to do it.

BW: Well, he didn't charge our - my kids. I did enough. I did enough work with them on the side for nothing that, (laughs) you know. I was always there to give him a hand when he needed it. I helped him with Ski Patrol and cleaning the lodge and stuff like that, so he just didn't charge my kids for riding the tow, and I don't think ski school charged us either. Of course, we didn't have much money then. When I went to work for the Parks and made two-hundred and thirty-eight dollars a month – that's all I got. Course, I got the house furnished and you know the lights and the telephone and stuff like that. That was a big item.

DW: But there wasn't a telephone until I was in third grade...

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BW: Yeah.

DW: ... and then it was like one of those crank things. So like eight and two – so that would be sixty-one before we had a phone up there.

30:11

MB: Wow. Well, let's see we talked about accidents; we talked about liability. Did you yourself ever compete in any of the jumping or ski races up there?

BW: Nah. I used to ride down the outrun all the time on the ski hill, boy, by the time you got to the bottom you was going plenty fast.

DW: On the jump hill?

BW: Yeah, the jump hill. I did it, you know, - now the Hampton boys who live up Hampton Road there – one of them was a great jumper, even was on the Olympic team one year. And so they, they had their own jump up there, you know, – they built it themselves. And I used to come off of that and yeah....

DW: Hampton Road

BW: Yeah. You had to jump about forty – see you got to land on the steep part, you know – the outrun and you had to jump about forty feet in order to get over the snow and land on the steep part, you know, so that's about how far I jumped just – I just barely made the outrun. But I went off just on my regular skis a few times up there. And then sometimes we used take – ride our skis to the grade school down here – we had a two room grade school and we built a jump down here and we'd jump at recess. And (laughs) through the noon hour and what not, you know.

DW: That's where the fire station is, isn't it?

BW: Huh?

DW: Wasn't your school where the fire station is?

BW: No, it's that brick building down there where the old Wenatchee Heights Road goes up.

DW: Oh, okay.

BW: That's you know where [Gutzwallner] lived? That's where the school was, yeah.

DW: Just below the Grange Hall there.

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BW: It was a two – two room school and four grades in each room. (pause) And we'd ride our sled down the road part of the time too.

MB: So you'd ride down here.

BW: Yeah then we'd have to walk home pulling the sled. Boy, when I got home I was starving to death.(laughs)

MB: It would be a good ride

BW: Yeah. Well, they never sanded the roads then, you know. So, and there wasn't much traffic on the road in the early days And so we never even met a car going down the road, so.

DW: Well, they were the last house. There was an old hermit that lived up at the Scota Vista but that was the only person above us.

BW: He was a Scotchman.

DW: Yeah

BW: And tighter than – he hated - he hated to spend a nickel. He come down and have my dad cut his haircut on Sunday but he wouldn't pay him until Monday. (laughs) My dad cut all of our hair. Cause these was in the depression days, you know, boy things were tough then. It was hard to get a dollar in those - those days.

MB: Yeah. I was just curious – how did the.... We haven't talked too much about the jumping at Squilchuck. How did the jump at Squilchuck compare to the Leavenworth jump? Was it, was it much smaller...?

BW: Yeah. It was much smaller. Yeah.

MB: It was.

BW: Yeah, see...

MB: So that was a good one to learn on?

BW: ... they couldn't - I think about a hundred and, maybe a hundred and fifty feet was about as far as they jumped up there. And Leavenworth they jumped well over two hundred feet, see.

DW: Well wasn't the big jump up here comparable to like the Number 2 jump up at Leavenworth?

BW: Yeah, yeah, it was. Yeah.

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DW: That's kind of what I ...

BW: Yeah that's kind of a comparison – the B jump at the Leavenworth.

DW: But it was...(undecipherable)

BW: Did you ever come off that jump?

DW: I did once. And then – I did the little one

BW: Ron used to jump off of that.

DW: But just going down the outrun is kind of a thrill with, you know, like the dip...

BW: But you see the racing team in the high school – well I forgot to mention the high school had a racing team too - but the racing team at the high school and the college is what they call four way, see. They had slalom, downhill, jumping and cross country, see. So a lot of the kids competed in those and their combined score told who won. The University of Washington did send over a team and Washington State sent a team over, and Moscow, Idaho, they always sent a team over for the – for the college and tournaments – so kind of representing the whole North Central Washington.

34:58

MB: What years were those races held?

BW: It was in the fifties.

MB: Fifties?

BW: Yeah. Mostly in the fifties, yeah. And my kids just got big enough to be on this team in high school why they quit it, see, so they didn't get to race in high school, but they did – they raced in the PSNA so it was just about as good.

MB: When was that when they stopped [being in races]?

BW: Ah, lets see just about the time – what year did Ron - what time did Ron get into high school which was in fifty - fifty

DW: Well, he would have graduated in sixty-six. So...

BW: Well, it was in the fifties, yeah

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DW: Well, no, high school would have been sixty-...

BW: Just before he went into high school.

DW: Yeah, probably sixty-one.

BW: Yeah

DW: Probably about the time John graduated from... John Kelleher probably has a better record of that cause he and his friend Al and those guys were all on the high school ski team.

BW: Yeah.

DW: And it all kind of went down at about the same time. And partly it was because Stevens was such a big hill - it really developed faster so some of the smaller areas, Ardenvoir, Entiat, you know, they were - they had a short season because of the snow. So, you know, it just, you know, like everything else things evolved from being home town to big town so...

MB: When did Mission Ridge open?

BW: Ah.

DW: Sixty-five?

BW: Nineteen-sixty-six wasn't it? Yeah, sixty-six. I think

DW: What year did Ron die?

BW: Nineteen-Sixty- five sixty-six season, I think it was.

MB: That's interesting you mentioned the four-way competitions and cross country skiing. Was there much of a cross country course at Squilchuck?

BW: Well, actually they - they went up Wenatchee Heights and went up what they call Blacks Lake and they, they set up a course up there for the cross country. And, but they run the jumps and the slaloms and down hills here.

MB: Okay, you talked a little bit about getting up early in the morning and plowing and sanding. The next question is, who maintained the road up into the Park for the ski area and the parking area and all that?

BW: Yeah, I did that, yeah.

DW: The official State Park - it was a huge dump truck with a big plow.

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Gathering Our Voice, 2008, Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship, www.gatheringourvoice.org

BW: Yeah. But you know I'd - I'd plow everything out on Friday night and sand the road so I wouldn't have to do it on the weekend. Well, sure enough, it would snow, see, (laughs) and then I'd have to do it all over again, see. But finally I got some help and I had a park aide that helped me with the sanding and - and other things, so. At first I did it all myself. And finally I got some help and it was a little easier to do it. First used to just throw it out the back of the truck you know and then finally the county got some new sanders so they sold me one of their old sanders and we hooked it on the back and so - but you still needed a guy back there to kind of scoop it into the wheel you know - [throw it in the sander.] So that made it a lot easier we didn't have to throw it by hand then, but we threw it by hand for quite a few years there. (laughs)

MB: What that an old Dodge truck?

BW: No it was a GMC.

MB: It was a GMC.

BW: Well first, first I had this truck from [Knoxville Gant] - it was a Ford. That thing broke down about every month - we had to have it in the garage. And finally they got me this GMC which worked pretty well - the Ford was four-wheel drive, the GMC was just positraction but we had chains for in case we had to put them on you know. But it worked pretty good. So we had it [there a lot].

MB: You don't remember what size it was? How many yards it was?

BW: Oh, just your standard dump truck at that time, I don't know. I can't remember exactly how many yards...probably four five yards

MB: [xxxxxx]

BW: I think it's the same thing - the same thing, yeah.

MB: Let's see, you talked a little about this but what types of social events occurred up at the ski hill at Squilchuck?

39:59

BW: Well, ah, [Awanto], well, he had - he had parties, that people could schedule and they tubed on the hill there, see. And he had to, you know, he supervised it. And they went up the rope and held onto it with the tubes, and then he furnished eats inside for the party and all that, so... And then we had Ski Club meetings up there at times too. You know, and that was kind of the main social part.

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Gathering Our Voice, 2008, Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship, www.gatheringourvoice.org

MB: Okay, well these are kind of fun – fun questions. Could you compare the costs of skiing then and now as far as how much did the equipment cost, how much was a ticket, the earliest you can remember and could you work off a daily pass? Meaning, could you trade for a ski ticket?

41.13

BW: Well, like I say, the – when they first started out they charged a dollar a person.

MB: Per day?

BW: Yeah, per day. Yeah. I think they charged about the same for night skiing. And ah, then I think he raised it probably to two bucks later on. And, and skis were fairly cheap then, you know, – you could buy a good pair of skis for probably thirty bucks. And you, and you had to buy the bindings was only less than ten dollars. And now you pay a thousand dollars for a pair of skis now, and you pay three hundred dollars for a set of bindings. (laughs) And, so well that's - that's kind of the comparison, you know. But... You know, they had mostly wooden skis when we started out, and then Head come out – this guy that was an aeronautical engineer – and he built these metal skis. His name was Head – they still build – build the Head ski. And, so everybody was buying them. And they were – you could turn a little easier on them but not a whole lot, you know. But, of course, now they come out with the shape skis, you know, which all you got to do is turn them on edge and they - they almost turn themselves, you know, because, you know, the tip is wide and then they're narrow in the middle and then the - then the back is wider and so when you tip them, you know, it makes them just turn right around. But they're expensive, you know. (laughs)

MB: When did they come out with releasable bindings do you remember?

BW: They were working on it in the fifties there – they had different ones. Before that they had this, you know the old Army skis that they sold down there at the Army surplus. They just had a solid binding you know and then they had a – kind of a cable with a spring on it went around your heel. And, but they wouldn't release. And then they come out with some toe pieces – they released – sometimes they released and sometimes they wouldn't (laughs). But they kept getting better every year, you know. Now why they got real good bindings now and they even got ski brakes now that when you come out of them why the ski brakes go down and your ski doesn't go wild down the hill. But we used to up to Stevens and somebody lose their ski and boy down the hill it come and it's just like a - like a sword coming at you, you know. They were really dangerous. And so then after they got the ski brakes why then the ski would stop, see, when they come off of you.

44.24

MB: I remember a story you told me about making skis at school

BW: Yeah

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MB: Can you tell me about that?

BW: Yeah. There was a guy by the name of ... Ollie Klausner was this guys name. He was a shop teacher. And so, he was interested in skiing and actually he was the one who got the Wenatchee High School going up there – he helped built the tow and... But anyway, he took this - I think it was a six by six thing - and he - he cut it out with a band saw, you know ,so the – so the point would turn up. And he kind of went like that he put some bow in the ski. And then he would cut the – cut the skis out on a band saw. He used mostly ash then, sometimes hickory. And then the school was heated by steam, see, and so he'd put them skis in the steam boiler and he'd boil them till they was flexible and then he'd put them in this form that he'd build and he'd leave them all summer, see, and he'd take them out in the fall and they'd hold their shape, see.

MB: Ready to go?

BW: Yeah.

MB: And what...

BW: Course they didn't have steel edges then, you know. Later on, you know, of course your edges on this wood they would kind of wear to where you couldn't turn too good. And then later on they come out with steel edging and then you - you could turn a lot better because it would bite into the ice and what not. But they put them on there in little sections, see, so every week I spent about a day repairing skis because they'd tear – tear some of them edges off and you'd have to put the new ones on, you know, and epoxy the screws in to keep them from coming out.

MB: So you actually made you own skis?

BW: Yeah.

MB: And that was probably in the late thirties? Or, do you know when that was?

BW: Ah, yeah, it was in the thirties. Yeah that's when I was in high school – in the later thirties, I mean.

MB: Great. Well, let's see, next is, can you can you remember any difference in the snow pack and how that's changed? Has there been a significant difference in the snow pack up at Squilchuck from your childhood to present? And, in then average year how long did the ski season last up there? And do remember any particular big snow years or years where there was no snow? And was there any way that you used to predict how much snow you might have?

BW: Well, my dad always said, he said, there's no two winters alike. So we had some heavy winters and we had some light winters, you know. It just depended. I can't remember exactly what - I think it was nineteen sixty – was it sixty-seven we had so much snow?

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DW: Sixty-eight's the one I remember.

BW: Sixty-eight, yeah.

DW: We had to shut off the upstairs and had this like a huge tunnel into the house.... (continues talking at same time as Bud but not decipherable)

BW: We had seven - there at the Park we had seven feet of settled snow there. At the park.

MB: At the house?

BW: Yeah, at the house. And they had another big one in the - in the seventies too. I can't remember just what exactly year. But then we had years where we didn't have too much - we had one year we didn't get any snow at all.

DW: Yeah. Didn't even - we had to go up to Stevens Pass.

BW: Yes, yeah. Mission Ridge didn't run and we didn't run at all.

MB: Do you remember what year that was?

DW: I was like in sixth grade, so age

BW: I was still at the Park, I remember that, so ...

DW: ...twelve - maybe sixty-four - sixty three - sixty five? I don't know.

BW: We had our water lines buried at three feet and it froze them, because we didn't have no snow to protect them, see. And, so we was digging out the frozen water lines and thawing the out.

DW: Did Mom keep diaries back then?

BW: Yeah, she probably did.

DW: My Mom always kept a diary.

BW: Yeah

DW: If it's important we could look it up..., (laughs)

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BW: Lets see....And I can remember as a kid, some winters every time it snowed it turned to rain. We had nothing but ice. And, of course, my dad cut wood in the wintertime and he had horses see, and so he had to put cork shoes on the horses to keep them from falling down.

MB: He did? So he actually put spiked shoes on the horses?

BW: Yeah. They had – they had these shoes and they were threaded and so you screwed in these corks which was about that long and he shoed them on all four feet. That’s the only way he could get down and get them water, because there was nothing but a glare ice, see, pretty near all winter long. It was so...

DW: Studded the horses. (laughs)

MB: That’s interesting. So you had some pretty warm winters in the twenties and thirties.

BW: Yeah and then we had some heavy winters, you know so.... On an average we - on an average we always got between three and four feet of settled stuff, you know. But that one year we had seven feet of it. And the guy up at Scout Canyon he kept track – of course he measured it every time it snowed, you know, and he said there was a total of fourteen feet that actually fell that year.

MB: And that was sixty-eight, sixty nine?

BW: Sixty – well about sixty-seven, sixty-eight, there, yeah.

50: 27

MB: Interesting. Um, this is a good question. I’m really interested to hear the answer. What prompted the move up to Mission Ridge and could - could you talk about any of the politics involved with the move and how that all happened?

BW: Ahh. Well, skiing was really catching on, you know, and it was getting big time business and so they wanted a place where, you know, more of a challenge and longer ski season. And, of course, the Hamptons - Walt and Wilmer is the ones that got them to look into where Mission Ridge is now, you know. And, of course, they did a snow survey of that basin and then was another guy by the name of Danny Gerringer, which was an engineer, and he wanted them to put it over in Stemilt Basin, see, which is around the hill. So there was some fighting and some politics there between the two places. But, the Hamptons won out and they, of course, they took surveys and figured this - this side of the - where they got Mission Ridge got a little more snow than the other side of it, see. Which both areas were good areas and they got a lot of snow, you know. And, in matter of fact, the kids and I used to go up to the top of Mission Ridge - we’d hike up the ridge to the microwave station – then we’d ski down through the Stemilt Basin, see – boy there’d be some good skiing there. We’d leave one car down at the Park so then we’d ski down from there and come down the hill back of the Park and pick up the car down at Squilchuck, see.

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DW: If you missed that one important left, you'd end up on Wenatchee Heights.

BW: Yeah (laugh)

DW: [It was ever right] This was before cell phones you know. (laughs)

BW: We used to do that two or three times a year.

DW: Oh, yeah. They got to even where they stashed beer up at the top, so that we didn't have to haul it each time. (laughs) Cause it was a long hike to across to where the microwave station.

BW: We was going across there one time and the guys triggered a snow slide, though. But just luckily no body got caught in.

DW: But Ron and I had to up on Fourth of July and pick up a pair of skis poles.

BW: Buried in the

DW: Buried.

BW: But if you've ever seen an avalanche, it happens that quick. I was standing at the top of it when it happened, and I took a movie of it. And that was so fast it was just like whshst and it was over with. That's how fast that snow went, you know.

DW: Well this guy John was – he was a beginner. So my brother-in-law was taking movies of all of us coming down the powder, and you could see he just skied right across the top and it was just like a slice.

BW: Triggered it , yeah

DW: You could see it all, just on the video....

BW: It wasn't really a big one, you know, I think. And my son-in-law, he lost his ski poles and it come up to probably his knees. He was standing down there on the edge. But the rest of us, I know, Sue and I were standing at the top so we was clear away from it. But that's the only one I was ever involved in..

MB?: No one was hurt?

BW: No, no.

MB: Well, here's a great question. Um, what would you like to see in the future at Squilchuck?

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BW: Well, people need a place to tube, you know - our sled's a little too dangerous, you know. Can't use them like we used to, but tubes are fairly xxxx I'd like to see tubing go in there. And I think there's - probably some place for some cross country going on in there. And a lot of people have wanted to use horses in there, too, which I'm kind of in favor of that too. That's about all I can think of. And of course hiking, it's a good place to hike, you know, and people are all into hiking now, you know. They could run some marathons up there, you know, get somebody to organize it, you know. (laughs) I love those kind of things and I'd kind of like to see it go on there. I don't want to see it die, that's for sure. And I don't want to see it sold to the developer.

DW: Yeah, we don't want another Forest Ridge in there.

BW: Yeah. (laughs)

55:27

MB: Well great. And, we're here at the end. Last question - a few questions: is there anything else you'd like to add or comment on that I've not asked you about? Are there any other questions that we should be asking you? And is there anybody else that you can think of that we should be interviewing?

BW: Well, let's see most of the people that were really involved in it - they're all dead. I'm the only one left. (laughs) Yeah - if Lea Brown was here, boy, he could tell you a lot -he was a great guy. And, in to everything, you know. He enjoyed what he was doing. His wife she ran the concession in the lodge.

DW: Well, didn't he work for the Daily World?

BW: Yeah, he worked for the Daily World - he was circulation...

DW: That as his full time job - the Wenatchee World.

BW: ... he was circulation manager for the Daily World.

56:35

BW: Then he delivered papers up the Okanogan country and so he had his fingers in several different things. And he had orchards. (laughs) But there was another guy that - by the name of Walker Pickens - he's the one that talked the state park into making it a Park. He loved skiing too. He was a real nice guy.

MB: Who was he? Because on the chimney at the lodge it says Walker Pickens.

BW: Yeah, they named the lodge after him, yeah.

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MB: Yeah.

BW: Yeah. He had an orchard. He was an orchardist, but he loved skiing and he – he was one of the old timers that always come up there skiing, you know, long before anybody else did – and – because we had more snow. Or it was close, you know. He was – he was a real nice guy.

DW: Tell them about the adventure though cause I remember – I never got to go – but before Mission Ridge went in to play – you know how they have the ridge to river now, it used to be a big thing where they would take – they'd all go hiking up there. All the people from Squilchuck would hike up there and go up and ski where Mission Ridge. Did you do the Stemilt Basin or did you do the Mission Ridge that it was now?

BW: Ah, I think we did both. We went up on a - on a Sno-cat to Stemilt Basin a couple times and skied that. And then we, I think we hiked up and skied down on Mission Ridge there too a few times. There was a trail around up there that you could go up and then come down on.

DW: And that was the big difference in the snow. Because they'd come back and just rave about the snow. Cause Mission Ridge has dry snow where Squilchuck – we were very good at skiing ice.

BW: Yeah.

DW: And we – all of our kids would do really well in the races cause we were – if you can hang onto ice you can hang onto anything, so that was....

BW: Yeah, that was a big difference, you know.

DW: Yeah.

BW: Cause we did have quite a bit of ice down at Squilchuck.

DW: From the temperature difference.

BW: Yeah.

DW: Mission Ridge never gets warm.

BW: Sometimes it gets too darn cold.

(laughs)

MB?: Why make such a big deal out of back country skiing now like it's almost a new thing, but you guys were doing it a long time ago. (laughs)

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DW: Yeah, but I never got to go. Well, by the time I really cared about it then Mission Ridge opened up. But my brother and dad got to go. It was kind of a guy thing.

BW: Yeah

DW: Sexist skiers back then.

(laughs)

BW: Well, I was a good friend of Wilmer Hampton, too. He was - he was the one who was supposed to manage it. But about the time it was about to open he had a heart attack and died. And so his brother, Walt Hampton, run it for quite a few years. Well anyway, Wilmer, when they got the first Thiokol, which is a snow packer, up there, he stopped by and got my wife and I, and we went up and we went clear to the top of Mission Ridge that was farther even than any tows or anything in there, see. And he let me drive the Thiokol and we drove around up there which was kind of nice and a lot of fun.

1:00:02

MB: Was that like a Sno-cat, or...?

BW: Yeah. A Sno-cat, yeah. And then they – they used it to pack the hill, see. They had packers they pulled behind, you know. And now they got three of four of them up there they pack the hill with. Yeah, at Squilchuck, why, used to be when everybody showed up why everybody had to go up tow and pack down once to pack the hill, see – we packed it by hand.

(laughs)

MB: Side-step it down.

BW: Yeah, yeah.

?? Labor intensive.

DW: Just ski through it.

BW: Like I say, everybody had a lot of fun at Squilchuck. And they turned out some good skiers there. And their ski school - they had a good ski school and they had good instructors. And, so it was good for the community when nobody could afford to go to Steven's Pass, you know. Cost you to drive up there and then the tows were more expensive up there. I think our kids got to go up about once a year (laughs) and ride the chair lifts.

DW: Steve's fun day or whatever it was.

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BW: Yeah, Of course they went there for races too. You know they had

DW: Big Steve was the guy who ran it there and he'd throw dollars – silver dollars out I remember

BW: Yeah.

DW: It was like a big children's fun day...

BW: He'd throw all kinds of change out

DW: Yeah. And every body'd pick it up

BW: They'd go out through the snow. And then they had a race for the kids. That was always a big deal.

DW: One of the fun things about Squilchuck too though is, you know you didn't have ski wear with all the zippers and stuff, and as kids we used to go up there and we found all kinds of money. You know we'd just hike up and down the... (laughs)

BW: ...underneath the tow rope.

DW: That was bonus time for - cause we lived there.

BW: Yeah, we'd find about fifty dollars every year.

DW: Oh, yeah.

BW: Fifty cent pieces, silver dollars, dollar bills.

(laughs)

DW: That was kind of fun.

BW: Yeah.

MB?: (very faint – hard to hear) Besides that it was right in your back yard you probably had an unfair advantage for racing

DW: Well in the summertime we never went to town. I mean, we - Dad had a garden, and I don't know, we went once a week but that was our playground. We had the tree house and we had an old horse Tony that was in that pasture between the – you know. So when I was done skiing I just skied down through the pasture and went home.

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BW: Yeah. And all the rest of the kids was envious of you.

DW: Well, half of them usually would come down because my mom was a good cook. She'd always make big pots of chili and...

BW: And she mended the ski pants if they ripped and everything like that.

DW: Yeah, she had a lot of little orphans that would go down there and get their pants fixed (laughs) so they could go back and go skiing. (laughs)

BW: Yup.

DW: If I didn't want to go skiing in the morning, Dad always came home for lunch so then I could ride up with him. Otherwise I had to walk up. It wasn't as much fun as walking down.

MB: Right. Well that's great. That's some great stories.

BW: I know it made good kids out of my kids, you know. I'm sure it did the other people that skied up there too you know. Because when they skied all day they went to bed at night - they did go carousing around. (laughs) And it kept them in shape and they had fun - you know, it had fun.

1:03:37

DW: Well, like all the Congdon kids I mean you hear, you know, Anne Congdon and Gordon Congdon...

BW: They were doctors.

DB: ...well, there was two Dr. Congdons, and one had all boys and then a little girl and then the other family had all girls and then Gordon was the baby of that family - so it was - there was, what, eight kids of the Congdons. And the Koccocas had like three kids, I mean you could just - all the different families that we grew up that... Kenny Patton - have you interviewed him?

MB: Mm Hm.

DW: And Marl Kane?

MB?: No.

DW: Those were - well they were the two coaches when we were teenagers.

BW: Yeah. Marl doesn't live here any more.

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DW: Yeah. But Kenny was - was a wild one.

BW: Yeah, he was on the high school ski team, too.

DW: Mm hmm.

BW: Yeah, and that - you've looked at those heritage books haven't you that the Daily World put out? They've got the ski teams in there and pictures of them and they got pictures of our kids in there, and so...

MB: Those are the books with all the old newspaper stories and - those are great.

BW: Yeah. They put out two of them I've got both of them. But they got all the ski team pictures in there.

Xxx: Too faint to here - not sure who is speaking [xxx does he have those?]

DW: Yeah, he's got them, yeah

Xxx: (very faint)[xxx I think that's were I saw them - at his office]

BW: Yeah.

DW: What was that guy's name who ran the KPQ Ski School?

BW: Oh, (pause) I have trouble remembering names any more. Ken Addis!

DW: Yeah, Ken Addis. That's what it was. He's been dead a long time ago now.

BW: Yeah, but his boy's still living near by?

DW: And then that guy - the original guy? That owned KPQ?

BW: Oh, Wallace, yeah.

DW: Yeah, James Wallace, the older guy. He was - he really was...

BW: His boy just sold the station down here.

DW: His boy never had anything to do with skiing

BW: Yeah, but they skied.

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DW: Yeah, but...

BW: One of his boys was on the ski team – the high school ski team.

DW: ...but those two guys were the ones that really put Squilchuck into the business world of having, you know, the ski hill and lessons and all that kind of stuff.

BW: Yeah, we went – me and a couple of the other guys – we went around to the warehouses and they'd donate a box of apples and we sold them and then we used the money for the ski team, see.

MB: Interesting

BW: But they all donated – they never even – we'd ask them to donate and they did. And so we raised a little money that way.

MB: For the PNSA?

BW: Yeah, for the PNSA ski team. Yeah, they bought the kids' uniforms for them.

DW: And the Warren Miller ski movies - the ski team would collect tickets or whatever do – do – those Warren Miller movies back then –I mean, you sat in little fold-up chairs in the Pioneer Junior High or whatever and there was– but that was kind of like the big social event. You know there wasn't the competition for.... And TV, Stein Ericksen and those guys made a big ...

Very faint talking in background – I think people are looking at pictures.

BW?: [xxxx this is the ski team]

DW: Well I wasn't twelve yet. I think you had to be twelve to be in the junior... I was due in August or something

background conversation – very faint – again I think talking about pictures [This picture is in the State Park- maps xxx and it was also xxx in the newspaper too xxxs that was really – Lake Chelan – he was a real good xxx]

DW: I got a pixie hat. My hair was in a pony tail and I remember it was a special hat that Lea Brown gave me that had a hole in the back so your pony tail could stick out. (laughs)

MB: Well, do you guys need a break or what?

xx? Ah, we could stand up or something

MB: Are we still recording?

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Yeah.

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