

3-19-1994 Maya on Washoe Pines Camp (side A)

*We're looking through all these pages of brochures and things that were sent off after the very first year of Washoe Pines Camp. And I guess what I'd like to know is how did you guys get the idea for the camp and when did you buy Washoe Pines Ranch? And was this an idea that you'd had for a long time or did you just develop it out of the purchase of Washoe Pines? And what was Foresta's role in the camp? And talk about some of the first people who were involved after that very first year.*

Well, the buying of the land was clearly the impetus for doing the camp. It wasn't as though we dreamed of having a camp, which would have been the farthest from my mind. But we had you and Eric, and you were how old in 62?

7

Uh huh, and Eric was 9. And we had had this property here at Orchard House since the Spring of 46, when we bought it. And it included the acreage that was behind Washoe Pines. What we have here at Orchard House is approximately 20 acres of apple orchard, and then it goes up the hill three quarters of a mile, in the pine country. It also then went across behind Washoe Pines. And Washoe Pines was a dude ranch that had approximately 20 acres, much more heavily wooded, not with an apple orchard on it, but with a corral and a swimming pool, and all these little cabins that were brought in for the maintenance of a dude ranch.

*And what was the history of that?*

Well, when we first came and had Orchard House, Washoe Pines was a divorce ranch. And it was one of the really early ones that had been going a long time. In fact, the swimming pool is supposed to be the first swimming pool of any of the divorce ranches.

*And what's a divorce ranch? (laughs) For the ignorant among us.*

Yes, I don't know what year the liberalized law was enacted that made it possible to have easy divorces in Nevada, but I think it was sometime in the 1930s. Because it was Judge Guild who had really initiated the law and was proud of it. What it did was to provide a haven for people who wanted to get divorces, especially from those states that had quite rigid laws about divorce, like New York and Maryland. In New York, for instance, they required proof of infidelity, and that meant that if a couple wanted to get an amicable divorce one of them had to prove that the other had been unfaithful, and therefore set a private eye on them. It was just, for many reasons, not something that many people wanted to do. Especially if it was not an unhappy divorce. But, at any rate, what Nevada did was to provide a chance for people to come out here and spend six weeks, and thereby establish their residency- make them residents of Nevada – and then be able to get a Nevada divorce. Because all you had to do was to be a resident of Nevada and the cause for divorce was just incompatibility, or something like that.

*Like a no-fault?*

Yeah. But they were very clear about the fact that you did have to remain in Nevada. You had to be here every night, and you couldn't leave the state for any reason. There were places in the city where people stayed, some in the hotels, but then some in just homes the way they do in Desert of the Heart, Jean Rule's book where they just stay in a little boarding house. But then you have to have somebody who will testify that you have been here every day, and so that was always the landlord, or in the case of divorce ranches, it was the person who ran the ranch. And they went to court with you and testified that you had been here every day for the last six weeks. And then the judge would ask you if you "intended to continue to make this your residency?", and they always said "yes", even though they had the ticket for their return trip to New York in their pockets. And in Washoe Valley, there were a number of particularly notable divorce ranches, and they were mainly up here in the north, There was one out at Sutcliff at Pyramid Lake, that was just a kind of a home run by a couple whose name eludes me at the moment.

Then there was Washoe Pines. And in Washoe Pines, and, in Washoe Valley also, there was the Flying ME. The Flying ME was sort of for high rollers who liked to drink, and it was there that Claire Booth Luce got her divorce, and it was a reminiscence of that that she portrayed in the play *The Women*.

But Washo Pines catered more to people who had children, and usually it was the woman with her – in the family – and the children who came out for the six weeks. Although the ranch was run the year round, it was not really at its peak the year round. The high season was summer and late spring, and into the autumn. But, the common wisdom was that people don't get divorces when the season of celebrations is coming up, when Thanksgiving's coming up, and Christmas. Then they put it off to see what spring will bring And then if things are rotten still in spring, then they come. So that early summer and through the summer was the high season. But the next-door neighbors, who ran Washoe Pines Ranch when we moved here, had just bought it from the woman who had sold Orchard House, this property to the Lathrops next door. She'd divided her property up, and then sold this off just as land to the Lathrops, who owned the land just north. But the clientele of the dude ranch was basically affluent, Eastern women with kids. And we noted over all our period of living next door to them that very often they fell in love with the country. And even some of them married the wranglers and set up ranches of their own – bough ranches of their pwn. Or, while we were going to school at Stanford, and then when we were living in Long Beach, they would often want to rent our house. And we did that with a number of people who were getting divorces.

*Just for a few months?*

Yes, and a lot of the time, it was catastrophic because they would fall in love with it in the summer, and then they;d move into it in the autumn, and then when the pipes started freezing and the road was full of snow, they would bail out. And sometimes didn't tell us, so that the pipes stayed frozen and we have a number of those unfortunate experiences.

But we also had good ones in relation to the people next door. And what they did with the ranch was to have horses.

And the woman who sold us the ranch told me what her routine was, that she would meet somebody at the airport who was coming, and then she would make herself just think about that person the next 24 hours. She'd bring her down, they'd get introduced to their cabin – there were all these sort of pre-fab cabins that had been brought in after the war – and she would come and spend a little time with her before dinner and bring her over to where the guests were having their cocktails, and introduce her. And then she would keep touching in with her throughout that whole first 24 hours. Her own schedule involved meeting with the rest of the staff she had, which were a couple of young women who cleaned the cabins and a wrangler and some kid who would help clean up, and a cook. They would meet in the kitchen, like at 5:30 in the morning, really early and go over what the possibilities for that day were: a rodeo in Fallon, something happening up in Reno, maybe something at the Lake. And they'd come to a decision about what they thought should be the event, so that they wouldn't always have to wrangle (laughs) about which of these sort of things they wanted to do.

*And then they would give them a choice?*

Well, it would be a limited choice, and they'd figure out who was available to drive the cars, and what they ought to be doing about the horses and all. They would have as many as 25 people, including kids. They said the place had supported around 35. When we had it, there were 35 – actually up to 60 that we were feeding, but many of those were from around here and weren't living on the ranch. So we were actually supporting, with the water system, about 35-45 with counselors. It seems like a lot (laughs).

But I guess the point of the dude ranch, and the time we spent here when it was a dude ranch, observing it and all, simply led us to an idea about what you might use the ranch for, when we did buy it.

*And the two famous ones I've heard of divorced here were Gypsy Rose Lee and Mitch Miller.*

Oh, actually it was Mitch Miller's wife who stayed at the Ranch. He stayed across the valley someplace.

*But the men didn't have to stay did they?*

No. It was somebody that Mitch Miller was going to marry. And it wasn't his wife, Mitch Miller's wife, it was somebody else's wife. Just one of them had to get the divorce, so that presumably, there could have been a father with children, or just a father. And there were occasionally men who stayed there, who were getting divorces, but they seldom brought their children. But the Mitch Miller one was – he was going to marry one of the divorcées, and it was a fairly strict rule that the person that they were going to marry, did not stay at the ranch, at the same place. But, he could come over in the daytime. And he

came over and scattered his music and bouncing balls around. Yes (laughs) I had forgotten about Mitch Miller. John Markland (?), the writer, got two divorces there at Washoe Pines. And I met a woman in New York once, a youngish woman, who was a Sarnoff, who was connected with NBC or CBS, and she said the happiest summer of her life had been spent at Washoe Pines. She was ten, and she just thinks back on it as this wonderful time of horseback riding, and swimming and being (laughs) outdoors, and it was really a surprise. And then I encountered not too many years ago, a woman named Ann Roberts whose mother was Mrs. Nelson Rockefeller. And she came out to get her divorce, just as we were buying the ranch. And all the newspapers hounded us for days because they had heard she had come to Nevada, and they wanted to interview her, and they knew that the place she would have come was Washoe Pines. But we had stopped serving it as a divorce ranch then, and she went instead to Verdi. The same couple who ran the divorce ranch at Pyramid Lake then, had moved from Pyramid Lake to Verdi. And Mrs. Rockefeller was there then, and for Ann, it was the most miserable summer of her life. Her kids – Mrs. Rockefeller’s kids – were grown and married and all – took turns coming out and staying with their mother during the time she got her divorce.

*So Ann was grown up?*

Uh huh, and she’d spent something like two of the six weeks with her mother (laughs) at what she thought was a terrible place.

*Yeah, there’s a picture in Don Dondero’s book of Mrs. Rockefeller, I don’t know if Ann’s with her or not, on horseback. It was just like a paparazzi shot, to find her and take her picture. But you never ran it as a divorce ranch did you? I mean, it was stopped before you took over, right?*

No. Right right. The woman who sold it to us had come from the East herself to get a divorce and she had gotten it at Washoe Pines. And then she bought the ranch from somebody else who was selling it, and she ran it for four or five years, and she ran it very well. One of the anxieties we always had was that people would be careless at the divorce ranch – that they would smoke and start fires. She was always very careful about fires and very thoughtful, and very nice about welcoming us to use their swimming pool if we wanted. And she had two girls who just loved the country, and one of them would just take her horse and ride up the canyons, and knew all this country behind. And so that while she was still in high school, she ran the ranch really for them. Then when they needed to go to college, she needed the money and put it up for sale. And she was just about to divide it. One day, Dick said, looking out over Washoe Pines, “how are we going to feel when there are four little ranches over there in your sight between here and...?”(laughs)

*Was that about the time that divorce laws were liberalized?*

Well in the East, yes, yes. And the divorce business was slowing up.. It hadn’t stopped, but it was slowing up. But it was still enough so that a Mrs. Rockefeller would come here. That must mean that New York laws were still in business.

*And how much was it?*

It was \$100,000. It was in 61. And that was for 20 acres, plus the buildings and the pool. And the horses! (laughs) And as you say in your second grade account here, we have two dogs and two cats and two pools and thirteen horses. (laughs)

*An didn't it also come with some people?*

Oh and lots of trucks and things. And cars with Washoe Pines – station wagons that they met the dudes with.

*And that was all part of the deal, huh?*

Yes, and what else? Oh, with people! Actually, the wrangler, who was with Betty, the woman who sold it to us, stayed on and was a thorn in our sides for one season. (laughs)

*What was his name?*

Lyle something.

*Why was he a thorn in your side?*

Well, he just knew everything about how it ought to be done. And Dick was a horseman also, and he thought he knew, and did, really, know better how to deal. Lyle was a very strict disciplinarian with the horse, and used to bug Dick and the counselors who were involved with the horses. And he also was a picky eater, an he ate at Washoe Pines (laughs) and complained about it. And there was nothing worse than that. He lived there. And the first year of camp, I cooked. Then Peg Wheat cooked the second. Oh she may have been there the first year too.

*Well, I remember that Niki (Houghton) and I used to raid her raiding shelf.*

Well I must have felt like I cooked.

*How did you decide on a camp and who were the people involved in that first year?*

Well, just deciding on the camp was – here was this property, and Betty had told me how she ran the dude ranch, expecting us to go on with the dude ranch. But we really didn't want to run a dude ranch, and weren't really equipped to run a dude ranch. But it struck us that the people who had come here from the Eastern Seaboard did fall in love with the country, and that there were features of the kind of thing that they did for them during their six weeks, like taking them out to rodeos, and to the mountains, and to the lakes, and all of those things that would fit into a camp situation.

*And you were educators?*

Well, right, yes. (laughs) And we envisioned an ecology camp. I mean, Dick knew about all of the ecological areas, and recognized that this was a particularly choice spot where you had about five ecological zones within an hour or two's distance, that we could exploit the fact that this was a new science that was developing, and that affluent, intelligent Eastern Seaboard people would appreciate the notion of sending their kids to a camp that was ecologically oriented. But it was a new word, it was a word that not everyone – it wasn't in the parlance that it is now. So, we started by doing a little advertising. We put one ad in the Wall Street Journal, but that was all we could afford. One day. (laughs) That didn't bring us anything. But then we reached out to people that we knew, that Dick and I both knew, and advertised that way.

*Did you have any models of camps?*

No. No. And we also wanted to appeal to opinion makers. To journalists and to Congress people and so forth. And we actually were successful in making those connections. I'm not sure it was all that influential, but nonetheless, we did connect with Congressmen, Jim Scheuer and that newsman. The year before had been Foresta's first year. I hadn't realized they were so close together until we started looking at these pictures and files and books. Dick had been doing a number of environmental jobs for the state parks and of course down in the Antarctic, and then decided that he'd like to start a little organization that would be a non-profit and would have some ability to be an NGO at the United Nations.

So we organized this little organization called Foresta Institute., and its first annual report covered 1960-61. We didn't have the building that it now has. We had just a little building up the hill, (the old kitchen that was part of this house). It was in 1961 that we bought the property next door and translated that into a camp. And so that has more of a unified time period than I have realized. And logical. And it was a few years later that we actually outgrew the building here and built the building over at the far part of the ranch. It came out of having the National Science Foundation. There was really no place for the kids who were working at night to work.

In the meantime we got started with the camp on this property, and had a boy's camp first, about four or five campers. Nancy Raven and her kids and some from the East. We had the girls camp with you and Niki and then three from the East Coast. Annie, Parm and someone else, friends of friends. Annie's (Knox) family kind of spread the word. We advertised in Sunset or somewhere like that and connected with some of the camp groups in California and gone to one of their meetings, and sort of gave us some clues as to (laughs) how you would run a camp. And starting recruiting some staff. The first year, there were two wranglers, Clint and Sam.

*Clint and Sam – they were real cowboys too.*

Montana or something weren't they from? Basically there was instruction in ecology and field trips and then horseback rides. We had all these horses and all this horse equipment!

*Was Nancy Raven here to teach music and art?*

Art, yes. And then music was just something we did at night. Campfires. Yes that's what she came for. And her children that were pals of yours.

And Peg Wheat started out to cook. And I have this real revulsion about the cooking, because one of the things that I found was the most irritating was to have complaints about the food, and then also be ordered, and find myself doing all these things. Just providing it for that many people complaining. I was used to being hostess when people are kindly about what you provide, and I wasn't used to being a cook that was ordered. But the first year, we didn't have chores to speak of. We rapidly got chores connected with the food and graduated, over the years, to more and more chores (laughs).

*Washoe Pines Work Camp!*

Yes, well one of the things I remember finally deciding was that we could not let the garbage all be taken to the dump, I looked and saw who it was being taken by – it was being taken by a Washoe Indian crew, John Nevers' nephews and their kids. And here we would produce all this trash and it was the Indians who were having to take it to the dump and (laughs).

*Which, in fact, became one of the more popular chores (laughs).*

We then right, we made it into a chore and it became part of the ecology class. I said, "We're going to not have this something that is done by just the Indians, and it's got to be part of the ecology, just as cleaning the toilets.

*Yeah, as I recall, the chores were divided in KP and these were mostly before breakfast, or right after breakfast? KP, Motor Pool, cleaning the Pool, Corral, which meant shoveling horseshit, and Plant Maintenance.*

Gee, oh to have that crew of people to do that now! (laughs)

*Tell us about John Nevers.*

John Nevers was a Washoe who... **(END of side A)**

**Beginning Side B** (If this is correct, we missed the John Nevers story. This is about the Laxalts. Perhaps it's another "side B.")

(re: Bob Laxalt at Washoe Pines Camp)

*And he read out of Sweet Promised Land?*

Yes, he read the part that had to do with going to his father's, trekking up into Little Valley and making camp up there.

That was as I recall one of the first overnights – we did them every week. At least one night, and then they'd lengthen in time, you know, to two or three nights, I think the first overnight was across Washoe Lake.

*What's now Washoe Lake State Park, and I guess at the time, it was private land, right?*

Yes, belonging to the whole Whitehead, Heidenreich (Franktown neighbor ranchers) combined outfit. Yeah.

*And then at Little Valley we would run trap lines, also over there.*

And what actually happened, about the use of the property, was that that first year was such a successful notion at any rate that the people up at DRI at the University, who had been asked to do some kind of a summer program. At any rate, they wanted us to apply for that money that was available for high ability high school boys and girls to learn one or another science.

And it was a result of Sputnik that the United States began to feel that we were being outdistanced by the Soviet in science and that we better shape up. And one of the ways they used to advance our scientific knowledge was to try to get students into the sciences in college, who might not otherwise get there. So that the NSF focused on kids out of poor communities, or out of rural communities, where they might not have a focus on going to college, where it might not have occurred to them. So the students needed to be, I think, Sophomores and Juniors, and to have come from one or another of those communities, and to be bright. And so the second year that we ran Washoe Pines Camp, we also ran a National Science Foundation program

*Who was boys only.*

It was boys only for quite a long while. And it was then a five-week camp. The first year we had Washoe Pines, it was six weeks of boys and six weeks of girls. And it was too long! (laughs) And so the next year, we did five weeks of National Science Foundation program, which was a much more high powered academic ecology – but with field work projects. And then we would do the more laid back horseback riding camp of Washoe Pines, private camp, the second five weeks.

*For younger kids 8 to ?*

Younger kids. Well we kept vibrating, deciding that 8 was too young. It was 9-14, then 15. Then we decided 15 was too old (laughs).

*What about your effort to be an integrated camp? What was your thinking about that? How did you reach out to people from minority communities?*



Oh yes. Well, I really wanted to have it integrated. The first year, we didn't. But then I reached out to Emily Greil, across the lake, who was a friend, whose kids had gone to Putney, and I knew that Putney was integrated. And so I asked her how they did that. And so for the first year or two that we had Black kids, they came from Harlem.

It was through some kind of ecumenical church-based program in Harlem and – I can't remember what it was – but they found the kids who were to come, and they came. But it was such a far distance, and it was so obviously too far for them out of their ken, that it was hard on them. And we were just not really at all equipped to deal with the kids who were wanting to mark up the trees (laughs), write on the teepees. But every year we kept reconsidering how we could do it, and how we could do it better, and people were always wanting to give up on it. (laughs)

*I'm sure you never were one of those people!*

No, I wasn't I said, "You know, if there's something about us that makes it so that we can't teach them ecology, then let's close up the camp." Admit defeat. But we began to get acquainted then with some of the people from – Oh I know, the first one was Joan Baez, who was from the West Coast, And she had a youngster that she had encountered in Chicago, and had sort of adopted. What was his name?

*Charlie McGee*

Charlie McGee! Yes, And a group of Quakers over in the San Francisco area knew him and a young Chinese girl.

*Frances Yee.*

Frances Yee. And the two of them came out together. What year was that ?

*I don't know. Probably '64.*

'65 maybe.

Well, there's also Madison Sovane(?) He was from New York. I think he's in the 65 pictures. And Linda and Johnny (from?) Highland. There was one year where there were three. Snd Johnny just lay on the couch in the living room with his cap down over his head and slept (laughs) for practically the first two weeks. And we didn't know what to do about it.

*There was a story I want you to tell about someone writing a bad word on the teepee.*

Oh, dear, yes. I remember it very well. We had a camper from Carson City whose parents wanted him to have our camp, but his mother would come in her great big car to get his laundry every week. And one of the times that she came, the kids were off – her son and

the rest of the kids—and she went up to get his laundry and in the process saw that on the teepee, the word “fuck” had been written in one or two places.

*In Chapstick.*

In Chapstick! (laughs) And she was indignant and then wrote a letter, or maybe she just talked to Marie Mayer. Marie Mayer at any rate, went up the hill, tried to get up there before she arrived. But didn't succeed, but by the time we got together she had erased the word.

*How many Chapsticks did it take to erase it? (haha)*

Yes, I wonder, how do you erase Chapstick? But at any rate, she had these words about how this must have been done by Johnny, the one from Harlem. That one rotten apple could wreck the whole camp, and thought that he should be sent home. And this really then caused an international incident, and the staff had to be brought all together and we had to try to figure out what we were going to do about this. Snd people were feeling well, maybe – Johnny hadn't been – you know, was just as I said, laid out on the couch most of the time, and was not really prepared for this academic ecology camp. But before we decided what to do about it, Mr. Conkey, the Sgt. Major of Washoe Pines, took all the boys up the hill, and gave them a kind of Sgt. Major treatment, and said he expected to have whoever did it, confess. And he gave them until the next day.

And the next day, this kid from Carson City, whose mother had been so alarmed, came to him and told him he had done it. Wow! Then all the counselors wanted to send that kid home and really give it to the parents! But that kid came and talked to me, and he was terrified. He went to parochial school and his parents were very strict with him, and he was just terrified about what would happen to him if they found out – if we told them. And so I brooded all night long that next night about what we ought to do because I wanted them the parents, to know that it wasn't Johnny, but I also didn't want to rat on Mike, the Carson City kid. And so I wrote a letter to the mother and father saying, “I understand that you've been alarmed and that you think that one rotten apple is going to wreck the whole camp, and I can just assure you that at Washoe Pines, we are not alarmed by language (chuckle) like this, nor do we feel that one rotten apple is going to spoil the whole group. What I need to tell you is that the person who did the writing came forward openly, honestly and acknowledged that he'd done it. An that person was not the Black youngster from Harlem, but was rather a white youngster.” I just wanted them to know that, but I didn't say anything that would lead them to expect it was their son, and I don't to this day, know that they ever heard that. But then in the morning, I showed the letter addressed to his mother and father to Mike, and let him read it. And he, needless to say (laughs), was relieved. But I, for one, thought it was a really goo solution. I thought it was so impossible that this little protected family from Carson City should go into a tizz about “fuck” on the teepee. I did say that we were really frieved that he had marked up the property of the loal Washoe tribe, who lent the teepee to us, and that we were going to have to do something to replace that teepee (laughs). Yes that was an interesting incident.

END Side B

### 3-25-94 Maya on Washoe Pines Camp #2

*Kit: We're talking with Maya Miller this morning about Washoe Pines Camp. It's March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1994. We're looking over the Foresta, 30 Years of Pioneering Ecology book that Kit wrote a couple of years ago. I'm wondering what it reminded you of in terms of the camp.*

Maya: Well, I decided to really re-read it. I had read it in 92, when you sent it off to the Rio Conference. But really hadn't looked at it since. And it's an awfully good round-up of what Foresta did and meant, and the projects that were contained in it, including Washoe Pines. One correction I'd just make is that Washoe Pines was not really a Foresta project to begin with. It was a number of years before it became actually a project of Foresta's. It was started as a business, and when I began to think about what it was and how it came about, I realized it was a land-use issue. We bought the 20 acres over there, and then we had to do something with it. And we had a lot of ingredients out of our past, especially out of Dick's past, and his Foresta activities. So that it played into Foresta all right, and played along with it, but it actually was organized as a business, and went on that way, until the tax laws made it so that we needed to make it a project, like the SSTP (Summer Science Training Program, gov't funded).

*And did it ever turn a profit?*

Oh, no, no (chuckles). It really was heavily subsidized at the beginning and to the end. And that was one of the things that made it possible to have it be a project of Foresta, was that it had clearly never made money, and therefore was never seen as a true business.

*You kind of talk about it off-hand, you sort of accidentally started this camp, yet I know that in addition to the two five-week sessions you had in the summer, there was a lot of work that went on the rest of the summer and through the winter to organize it and advertise for campers. Could you talk about that schedule and what it took from the time that you finished one camp until the end of the next camp?*

Well, yes. There was all this clean-up of the physical plant, and the ongoing maintenance of that depending on what was happening at Foresta. But then, there was also the bookkeeping, which was mine, and that went on, especially in January, when you had to make your reports to the IRS with all the payroll that was involved. Because it really involved quite a batch of individuals. Not very much money, but lots of individuals, and therefore, lots of bookkeeping. And then there was the promotion that had to be done, And we did that in a variety of ways, but mostly by answering inquiries, and that's something that I did.

I also did a sort of a booklet that went out around Christmastime because soon we learned that the Eastern Seaboard people, who were the clientele we were after, make their summer plans for their kids when they're all home at Christmas vacation, and everyone is reminded of how grisly it is to have them 24-hours a day at home, and they therefore begin to think about what kinds of camps they ought to be sending them to. So, this booklet of pictures and all was supposed to remind them of that.

*And you'd send it out in December?*

Late November and December.

In the Spring, it's just really getting the place ready. When it got up to May and June, it was just getting the place cleaned up and grubbed out, and all the mice and creatures that had been in the linen room, for instance (chuckles), the whole little shack where we kept the blankets and sleeping bags and then next door to that, the shelving room where all the No 10 cans of food had to be hoisted up and put. One of the things I realize is that as it came to May and June and all of this work on the ground before the kids arrived had to be done, my memories of that are so negative, that I think that that was the beginning of hay-fever time. So I felt rotten. And to have to do all this physical work in dusty places, was sort of a dusty nightmare to me, thinking back! (laughs) So June's were never joyous for me.

*And then there must have been the hiring of counselors.*

Well that was done by Dick and the people they were in touch with. A lot of people came over from Davis, and as we began to get alumni, they came from the East and Midwest. And one of the things that Dick asked me after we were getting divorced, one time he said, "But didn't you like all those times, aren't you glad we did all those Washoe Pines times?" (laughs) And you know, the obvious answer is, "Yes." But I think the true answer is, "I'm not sure." I'm not sure that is the way I would have wanted to spend my summers (chuckles). And so that then also led me to realize that in retrospect, that has a lot to do with you and Eric. And what it meant to you. Because the thing that was obvious – you were 7 when it started in '62 and Eric, 9, and these were perfect years for having you in a camp like this. The clientele were really organized around your ages. And so what did it mean to you? How many years were you engaged in it?

*I was involved for at least 10 years, from 7-14 I was a camper, then at 16 went on the Expedition to Peru that we did. And after that, I was a counselor.*

Lewis and Clark Expedition.

*No, I didn't do that. (Eric did). I did the Appalachia Trek. But also, from the start, before the camp, I was a scullery wench. I mean, I was working in the kitchen and mopping the floors, and doing all that grubbing you were talking about, in the cabins. And getting paid for it, too, and that was always a nice thing to have a job. So certainly the camp really filled up my summers. I don't remember ever really doing much else in the summer, except for camp.*

You went to Norway one year.

*One year with Niki Houghton and her family. Mostly I remember looking forward to camp and seeing my friends from other places, or getting to know new people. So to me, this was where it was happening, and I didn't want to be anywhere else. (laughs)*

Yeah, yeah. And obviously that held over into your desire to keep the place.

*Oh, yeah. I think, all of those memories and the potential of the place played into that.*

Well, that is so interesting. I think, the whole thing about the relationship of place to activities. I mean, think about his road and the fact that here was a big hunk of place situated in a particular spot. I mean, obviously people have dreamt about – like (Bob) Weise, that's one extension of it -- having an exclusive golf course and a mansion.

*Making a lot of money.*

A batch of mansions around it and making a lot of money off of it. Yeah. In the approved S and L style (Savings and Loan). (chuckles) And then other have built other mansions (laughs) just for themselves, you know. But as you look at it now, it doesn't command a lot of loyalty from the places. The people that have built the mansions, now have them for sale. The places where the people have hung on are the Cliffs.

*The dairy ranch.*

And the Evans also have been there a long time now, with their horse ranch. A feeling of the place suited to the activity. I can remember Cy Ryan coming out and saying, "I'd like to find out from you what that spread is all about. What goes on there?" And taking time to walk around the whole place, when Foresta and Washoe Pines and all, and trying to explain (laughs) how we used the spread, as he said.

*Kit?: And it's an ongoing, good question, you know, because I often think well a lot of people would look at the way we use these pastures and say, "What a waste of land, you're not even pasturing horses on it." And on the other hand, what's wrong with leaving them empty, you know? That's how they were before we came, that's how the Indians left them. And you know we do a certain amount of caretaking, but really it's left to the hawks and the squirrels and so forth. So, is it better to build a golf course there and make use of it for people – or for old White men to walk around on and hit around a little ball. But one thing's for sure. You see when people come by here – almost invariably you see a lot of people slow down and look at it and notice. And you also get that from people you know who know this place. But people appreciate that you have left wide open space, that you have left it like it is and haven't duded it up, you know. So that it's something that's becoming more of a rarity, especially than the time when you all ran the camp! And I think most people kind of respect that.*

It's made up of both the land that you live on and the location of it. And for the environmental, ecological activities, it really seemed like a perfect spot for combining those four ecological areas we talk about: the desert, the mountains, the meadow and the

high granitic country. Part of what I kept analyzing – what I was trying to analyze since we talked last week, was why it was I have this kind of negative reaction about it. Because it seems – and in light of reading this – it seems so bitchy (chuckle) to have that reaction in you, so sort of mean-spirited and self-centered, when all these wonderful people and all these marvelous things were happening. All these pictures of Muñoz, Bill Franklin, and Wuzzie.

### *Wuzzie and the Black kids*

So I realized that – when I began to think, well, what did I really like about it? I mean, there are these things that I didn't like about it. I didn't like the grubbing, and I didn't like being the one that was over here doing the bookkeeping while all the action was either over there or out in the field. And I didn't like the horses! And that's where I found I differed from Nancy, when I talked with her this morning, asking her this question: "What did it mean to her?" Oh, it meant to her this wonderful summer activity that would bring all these interesting people to her. She could hardly believe that there were so many interesting people that came to this spot, this remote spot. And it also, in her recollection, the wonderful times were the really quiet times like out in the desert field trip when these kids from the cities would come down off their city high, and really relate to the things that Peggy was showing them, Or the times, sometimes in the mountains, in the hills right above us. But she really felt that both she and her boys felt it was the high point of their growing up, was the summers that they had spent. I wonder how many they spent? Maybe 5 or 6?

*Well, Nancy was here for a number of years, and probably Greg and Gary fewer.*

Well, Nancy picked it up after, I mean she ran it during 74, for instance.

*When you were funning for office, and then after Conkey left, she ran it.*

I was running for office. And Dick wasn't around. And then gave it over to Marla.

But we get that from really a lot of people. I mean a lot of people do come by here and say, "that was he high point of my life!" (laughs) or like that camper from New York, "I looked all around New York and couldn't find anyplace where I wanted to be buried, so I told my wife I want to be buried in Little Valley!" (laughs) So for a lot of people, it was sort of a magic moment, whether they spent one summer or whether they came back over and over again. Mary Kehrer who was here last week, hadn't been here in 11 years. And still it's like this golden place in her heart.

*But did you feel that negative sense while it was happening? And after every summer, did you feel a real relief like, "Oh, thank God, it's over!" (laughs)*

Oh Yes. But some personal regret, always, at seeing them go, because you got to really being fond of the people who were here. But the last day was always (laughs) a terrible nightmare when you had to say goodbye to absolutely everybody.

*Cheerfully, and then get them on their plane.*

Uh huh, get them connected with their parents who were coming by, and be lovely with them. (laughs)

*Well, what were your highlights (you described Nancy's) when you think back?*

Well, I like the ecological idea of it. I liked it in the abstract. Just as I like Foresta, the idea of Foresta. And then the thing that Dick did with Foresta, which was always creative and imaginative, and world-minded. I really liked that. Innovative, non-corporate. I think that you would call it sustainable today, if you were talking about the use of the land for those purposes. Foresta was created before 62. I think it was before we bought the (Washoe Pines) land, and we had just a little office up here. And when Patsy's brother, Julian McCauley, came, he helped us with the legal part of setting it up. But the purpose of it was to kind of institutionalize the things that Dick was doing. He had done a survey of places in the state that he thought would make good parks, a state parks survey. And he gave it to the government, and nobody paid any attention to it, and hired somebody at a big price to do it afterward, you know, this being in the files.

And then also he had gone during the international geophysical year, through the Antarctic, and the year later also down through Argentina. And what he noticed on the Argentina part, and on the South American part, was that they longed to have a title attached to you. They couldn't just call you Dick Miller, and think that what you were doing was valuable at all. And it was those two things, those two influences particularly, I think, that made us think about having an organization. Depersonalized it a bit, and made it possible to do all these things under the rubric of Foresta. But it was always very flexible and open to the kinds of things that he saw when he went to these IUCN meetings and all. (International Union for the Conservation of Nature).

Now let me think about what other things I liked. I liked the connections with progressive East. I liked the fact that we were drawing from the East, not only for myself but for you all to get acquainted with people from the rest of the country. I had gone to high school in St. Louis and had roommates from the East Coast and the Mid-west, and all, and really valued that and the world too. You know, the world at large. The drawing in. I thought one of the most imaginative things Dick did was to make sure every year that there was for SSTEP, a staff member from the international community. One year, Cherovsky (sp?) from Czechoslovakia, and another year, Carlos Muñoz, from Chile. And I thought that to deliberately make sure that you didn't have your staff all local was a really valuable piece. It's the same thing, you know, the connections with Putney. So that it didn't seem unusual to you to think about going to school someplace other than Carson High.

And I think it was the kind of camp that people from a lot of different walks of life really were drawn to. Not a typical canoeing and archery camp, that drew from your local community or the nearest city. The people who came really felt that value and wanted to come back and back. And so we always got that feeling from people, that it was a special

camp, from people who had been to other camps. And partly, I think, that had to do with what was expected of you, was not just that you get up and go to these various sports activities, but that you actually put in some brain power and learn something, and related to your fellow campers and to the environment, and to the place in a certain way.

That was also one of the conflicts – was this matter of having it be academic work and trying to work in the wcholarship kids that we were insisting – that I was insisting – we needed to have. Because I kept thinking “who needs to understand this message that we have that has something to do with why you preserve the West? Why do you preserve some open space and preserve some piece of natural Americana?” I mean that was sort of the mission of Foresta and Washoe Pines. And we deliberately reached out to opinion makers for our Washoe Pines people. And the SSTP (Summer Science Training Program), by its make-up, reached out to sort of the best and brightest in the rural communities and city communities around the country.

But then I also felt that we absolutely had to connect with the Black community, because of the whole ferment of the Civil Rights Movement, and to the Native Americans. And that was often not good for the academic part. I mean Conkey and Dick often just felt that it wasn't going to work. That the kids we got didn't have the attention span it took.

*You know, I just don't remember it ever being that big a deal, and of course I wasn't in a position to..*

Well, it was in staff meetings after camp was over. Almost every year, Bill Franklin, Conkey, not so much Dick, but he was you know, listening in. But they just – it really bothered them that they didn't have this academic thing.

*But I don't think it was as though all the other kids did, you know.*

Well, no. But enough of them had so that..but one of the things that happened over the course of that is that they modified the program. They didn't have an hour's lecture at 9:00 in the morning. Which only happened like one year or two.

*Those were really boring! (laughs) I was one of the slackers, for sure. I remember that at like 9 or 10 having to listen to this really deep lecture along with a bunch of older kids, on ecology. But that also reflected changing times in academia and education. Marla has a lot to say about this because through the 70s, there were a lot of changes coming to education. And the whole thing of inter-disciplinary education came to the fore, and hands-on teaching of ecology.*

Uh huh, well you get that in this (brochure?). Through the folk-lore and the Tinker Truck and the way she handled her interns. And Marla was responsible for writing some of those early curricula, but I think it was happening at Washoe Pines from the start. There were the academic lectures, but then of course we went out for the field studies and collected plants, and then the art with Nancy. We collected grasses and did the grass art



and the silhouette things with them and there was always kind of an interweaving, I think. And then of course, with the Indians being involved. That, too, was part of it.

*Now there were certain movements happening simultaneous to Washoe Pines. We talked about the Black Panthers and that they came and did their Chairman Mao chants for Evening Program one night at Washoe Pines. But the Civil Rights Movement was ongoing. And then the Women's Movement in the 70s. Maybe you could talk about how those interfaced.*

I think we've already talked about the Civil Rights Movement. But I was just beginning to be really interested in why the Women's Movement resonated so with me. And part of it had to do with my work with the League of Women Voters, and testifying before Congress, and seeing how many of those men that were so sanctimonious, were \_\_\_\_ . and realizing that they weren't all that great. And that women therefore could take that place. Having somebody like Nancy Gomes be willing to sort of turn my head around and looking at those people. But then the part that Washoe Pines (laughs) played in that I think had to do with the fact that in many ways, I was doing a very traditional women's role in being sort of the back-up, and smoother outer, and under-girder and nurturer.

*And clean-up!*

And cleaner. And all those thing that don't have a title. And I really – Betty Friedan, you know, up there. She says that those are all the women who responded to her questionnaire about what are you doing now? And are you excited, and is it wonderful to have this fine education they all had? The women that were like her. They really didn't – they weren't thrilled by the education, because what they were doing now was taking care of their 7 year old kids and being a transportation system, and cleaning and fixing up the house. And it didn't have any fulfillment to them, and the Fminimine Mystique really dealt with those women. And the Women's Movement got another extra jab forward by reason of the Vietnam – the Peace Movement. Because even in the Peace Movement, where women were so much a part, they were often the ones that kept the office clean and ...

*Not the spokespeople.*

But, certainly something by the 70s was really clearly resonating in me, and it was really that turn of the century. 68 brought me understandings of poverty and the relationship of race to poverty, and then I began, through the Welfare Rights Organization, to understand the relationship between being a woman to being poor. I've been trying to figure these things out in terms of time. That's why I was asking you about the Ichthyosaur, because the autumn of Charles Camp's living here, and when this young man was having such a glorious time, eye to eye with the ichthyosaur, it's just my memory of the lowest point in my life, short of my divorce! (laughs) And what it was was that they were doing all this fascinating work with bones that looked like nothing.

*Which you're very nice in this picture, looking as though you're interested.*

Oh yes, I'm just looking, but really! (laughs) But with some imagination which I have, I could imagine somebody's really getting into that, and then just that. Doing these incredibly meticulous wonderful drawings of it. And then this young man learning how to do it, I guess (who?) And all of them had to be fed every day (laughs) And they lived someplace over in the cabins.

*Did they eat over here?*

No, they ate at Washoe Pines Lodge. We never ate with them. Going over to that kitchen, which never is really clean (laughs).

*Or warm!*

Or warm. I remember it being cold and miserable making those meals (the autumn of 1963 earlier) and then having these really fun conversations over dinner. But always having to make sure that you all got yourselves over there. We'd have very good conversations. Charles Camp was a wonderful conversationalist, and he recounted all kinds of things about the Year of the Oath at Berkeley. And then they would stay on after dinner to play Scrabble (laughs).

*Well, was it just assumed that you were going to be cooking for all these people (who stayed around after camp)? Was it ever really discussed? Did you think about hiring a cook to handle the extra...?*

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. No. No. No, there was no discussion of it, and I'm sure I volunteered, you know, because much of it all, of that position in life was also self-imposed by virtue of your feeling that it was part of being a good person to want to the make bread and the best dinner you could! (laughs) But it's so funny that it's that kind of recollection. I'm sure there were just glorious autumns full of fun things we did! (laughs) But it helps me to also understand something about the reason that way out here in this remote part of the world, I should have kicked into the Women's Movement with some resentment. (?)

*Uh huh, with vigor. Well, it seems to me that all those different revolutions essentially came to Camp, one after the other, you know.*

Do you remember the Women's Movement coming?

*Well, I do in the sense that Nancy Raven and Marla started running the Camp. And it was, I think, a really significant difference in their ways.*

Now we're in the 70s?

*Yeah, oh yeah, we're not talking about the 60s. This wasn't until the mid-70s.*

Well, the Women's Movement really came in the early 70s. 1971 was the March on the Las Vegas Strip, and that's when Gloria Steinem came out.

*I remember when Marty and Marla came to camp, and so there were a lot of strong women always associated with the Camp. and it was the time of the Hippies. And their butting heads with Conkey and Franklin. I don't know if it was a coup (laughs) or what happened, that Nancy became Director, and Marla, and began changing the style of the camp to reflect other curricula that were less strictly academic. There was a lot of confrontation.*

Yes, I remember Marty's sitting here in this living room at one of our dinners, like maybe the last night after Camp was over. And sitting out, watching me go wash the dishes after dinner because she was not going to do that! She was waiting for the men to get up and do it. And she was even willing, since no man was doing it, and I was compulsive about it...

*She was willing to watch you do it.*

(laughs) Yeah. And that was such a lesson to me. I really thought that was one of the strongest things I could think of doing. (laughs) But she was certainly one, and \_\_\_\_\_ was certainly a feminist, don't you think?

*Yeah, though she was a lot quieter about it. And I remember a time when a lot of the people who came here were people like Don Carlon and Jake and sort of this Hippie element. And the food became organic and the garden really flourished. And it introduced more of a laid back quality than the military camp style, that was Conkey's style. Which isn't Conkey's style now, but at the time it was.*

END or side A

Side B

*Looking back on some of these mailers that we sent out during the summers. One from 75, where everybody's lined up in front of that bus, and they all have big Afros, or the men all have beards and long hair.*

That was after I was out of it (the Camp). People needed – hippies needed a place to go.

*In a way, Washoe Pines was an ideal place, there were problems associated with that too.*

By that time, Marla was doing it. Nancy ran it in 73, 74 I think. Then Marla.

*So when you look back on Washoe Pines Camp in the scheme of things, it's not one of the big items in your memory that really grabbed you or that really was a joy to wake up in the morning to?*

Well, it doesn't seem to me- it didn't have any crisis quality about its changing my life or being a momentous moment. It was a long period of really very good human interactions and all, but also feeling that I was on the edge. I was always sort of around it, not very much central to it. They'd take field trips and I never went.

*But that was partly personal? You didn't really want to go out on those trips?*

Yes, right, I didn't. I'd done that with Peg Wheat when we first moved to Nevada, and I hated that.

*Peg and her warm milk that she...*

Well (chuckle), also Peg and her never really being sure that she turned up at the intersection of Hwy 50 and 29 out there (laughs). And you'd wait in the hot desert. And my recollection is riding in the back of the truck and having dust and hay fever. I suppose a lot of it has to do really with June. But yes, there was a lot of self-imposed accommodation to what, overall, we decided we wanted to do. And I was certainly a part of that decision. But I think the institution itself was so basically Dick's – the whole Ecology piece was so dominant, that it made it something that I was just kind of a propper-upper.

*Well, it seems to me that your role was the role you've taken in a lot of ways. Not just propping up, or mucking out, or doing the bookkeeping, but sort of providing the human element. I remember you being involved with Evening Programs and really getting some of the interesting people there. And also, you were in charge of the Washoe Zephyr, the Camp newspaper that we put out every week.*

Yeah, I loved that.

*And used your teaching skills to get the kids to write – every single kid had to write something. If you talk to anyone who's been to Washoe Pines, it's always the feeling that it was just as much your camp as Dick's. It was always, Maya and Dick, Maya and Dick. I think people recognize those pieces, because they were the pieces that made it not just an academic place, or a science camp, but a really human interaction, a place where you'd meet and live with and get to know all kinds of people from all walks of life.*

Yeah, well, that was the wonderful part about it.

*And that was really your element, I think.*

And it also fed me, therefore, in a very real way. So that even though it wasn't a crisis effect, it was very nutritional. (chuckles)

*That's what distinguished the Washoe Pines Camp, the kids' camp, from the NSF (National Science Foundation) Camp, the older kids' camp. It was much more of a cultural learning experience than just scientific.*

Yes, yes. That's why we could learn about the Black Panthers and the folk people. It's really interesting to see your account of the beginnings of the Elk Cowboy Poetry Festival.

*Yes, I have Marla's version, don't I?*

Yes, yes, it's good. Foresta was involved.

(next are 2 pages on Maya's early life that seem out of place here. Maybe we're going over what we have to cover. Here, I will skip to the end of the WP section, and brief discussion of what to cover next)

*Then the Women's Lobby. This is sort of Chronological – the Senate, the Women's Lobby, Central America. Should we work on Maya Miller for Senate next time?*

Yes, I think we have to dispatch that!

*I think that will be fun!*

I think that will be fun too. And I think it will be fun to look up the materials. You've got a lot of those files. Well then, let's sign off and we'll see you next week!

END

(original transcript says, "tape goes on, but it sounds like an earlier conversation taped over.")