

Voices of the Past

A History about Beaver Dick

By Vera Baldwin

October 21, 1970

Tape # 12

Oral interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Devon Robb October 2004

Brigham Young University – Idaho

Harold Forbush- The Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society located on North Center Rexburg, Idaho is pleased to place on a C-90 cassette a live tape recording which was done originally on reel to reel tape and now it is been referred to as the Beaver Dick or Richard Lee family tape and now is being transferred on to the cassette this the 23rd day April 1984.

HF- Oral History of the Upper Snake River Valley. It's a rare privilege when one can participate in live history. However, on the evening of August 3, 1970 with Jerry Glen, it was my privilege to sit at a table around which were seated for a luncheon meal or dinner meal Rose Coops, the only surviving offspring of Richard Beaver Dick Leigh. Famous as a guide and trapper and white settler in Eastern Idaho in the Upper Snake River area. The Teton County Historical Society at Jackson Hole, Wyoming with the ... of commerce and other interested civic groups had invited Rose Coops together with other descendents of Beaver Dick, this being grandchildren and great grandchildren of this noted trapper and scout, were invited to come to Jackson and to be catered to, to be honored, and to be recognized as the family, the decedents of this very noted holy hunter and trapper of the region. Following dinner, a meeting was held at which Rose Coops, who is in her early 80's, as I recall, was the guest of honor and many of us ... with her. Later on this tape I have copied an interview done by the forest service in Jackson and those affiliated with the Grand Teton National Park, at Moose, Wyoming, including the Superintendent of the Park and on this tape and during the interview with Rose, some very interesting comments were made. May I suggest a few historical and personal items here? Richard Beaver Dick Leigh perhaps came into this Upper Snake River Valley as early as 1847-48. Brigham Young undoubtedly knew him and tradition has that it was he who affixed the name Beaver Dick on this man owing to two large beaver like teeth. Also the name may have come from the fact that Richard Leigh, and the last name is spelled L-E-I-G-H, was a very noted and successful trapper, trapper of the beaver, which so abundantly existed and thrived in the Upper Snake River Valley. There was so much live water, tributaries of Teton River, the north fork of the Snake and the tributaries of the south fork of the Snake existed and these waters abounded with these animals. This man apparently was skilled in the skinning of and the preparation preserving of the pelt for the fur companies and so one cannot know which of these nicknames were, and how they came to be given to this Englishman who had come to America perhaps in 1830 to '32 or '33. Beaver Dick as he was commonly known had married an Indian squaw early and fathered several children. These children unfortunately and their mother contracted small pox about 1876 or '77 and it was at this time that all of them died. West of Rexburg at the present site of Beaver Dick Park on the banks of the Snake River and here they were buried. Later on Beaver Dick went to the reservation at Fort Hall, or in the area, and took to wife a fourteen year old girl named Sue. She having been brought into the world through the aid and assistance years before. Apparently, Beaver Dick as a trader had discovered the mother to Sue, mother and father and ... in the fall of the year and provided settle and warmth and comfort and such service that at her birth, the mother and father stated that when she obtained the proper age he would own or have claim upon her. Sue subsequently bore him three children, Emma, Bill, and Rose. From Emma who married a Mister Thomson in the early period of the settlement of Wilford, six children were born of this marriage. The son died without issue and Rose has not born children. Hereafter follows the

interview with Rose Coops on the 4th of August 1970 as they drove from Jackson apparently to Moose, Wyoming, the headquarters of Grand Teton National Park.

Harold Forbush- The foregoing was copied by Harold Forbush on the 12th day of October 1970 at Rexburg, 68 East 1st South.

HF- It's my opportunity this evening it being the 21st of October 1970, ... to my office Mrs. Vera Baldwin who will discuss with me and chat with me concerning the life or at least a little of the life of her very noted Grandfather Beaver Dick and his wife and then something of the parents of Mrs. Baldwin. I might mention that she and I will be attending the board meeting of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society later on this evening. Mrs. Baldwin, would kindly state your full name, meaning your maiden name, and the date and place of your birth and where you now live.

VB- Well I was born as Vera Mary Thomson Baldwin. I was born August 4th 1918 at Firth, Idaho. And I live at Teton City out here East of Rexburg.

HF- And you are married too?

VB- John Baldwin and he used to live at Firth.

HF- I see. Now would you kindly state the name of your father, your father's full name and what knowledge you have of his background, as you would like.

VB- Well my father has a famous name too. His full name was Kid Carson Thomson. He was named after the famous Kid Carson and I don't know too much about his background, although he was telling stories of how he drove a team and did some, freighting. And tells of having Jesse James overtaken when he was young fellow and as I understand Dad was born in Missouri but that's all I know about Dad.

HF- Now he met your mother here in the Upper Snake River Valley?

VB- Yes.

HF- And this must have occurred prior to the end of the century.

VB- Yes. Well he was married to my mother when granddad died and that was in 1899, so he must have married her about 1896 or 1897, along there. I really don't know. My mother's full name was Inge Lee Thomson and she was born in ... which is just by the edge of the Teton River.

HF- And that would be in Fremont County.

VB- Yes, Fremont County east of St. Anthony in the Wilford area.

HF- In the Wilford area?

VB- And she went to school in Wilford and she knew many people there and many people remember her.

HF- Now she was born about the time of the settlement?

VB- She was born in 1880.

HF- In 1880.

VB- February the 10th, 1880.

HF- Do you know as to whether in her case, there was a midwife present?

VB- No I don't. I have never heard that.

HF- Or a doctor, probably not a doctor but...

VB- There could have been a midwife, but I don't know. You know Indians are quite uncommunicative, should we put it that way? We don't like to tell about these personal things.

HF- So they are hush, hush about things.

VB- Yes, that's a no-no.

HF- I see it's just one of those things you don't talk about.

VB- Yes, so I just don't know. I never heard about that. Never did hear that discussed.

HF- Now in her case was there an opportunity to visit back and forth with some of her relatives or did she have relatives from the reservation, your mother?

VB- Yes, we had many cousins and uncles and things like that, but as I understand it though anyone that is Indian, everyone is their cousin or their uncle or their aunt. So I don't know who was who, whether they really were or if it was just that way of saying these things.

HF- Now would you explain any particular old family characteristic that seemed to have been handed down through your mother, that is kind of family tradition. Did she have any characteristics which may have suggested a talent; you know a talent or some ability that kind of seemed to be handed down through the family?

VB- I know what you mean there, the only thing that I can think of is she was like granddad, Beaver Dick, she liked to hunt and fish and she sort of passed that on to us. We

loved the outdoors. We are children of nature, every one of us and we would all prefer the great outdoors than being cooped up in a city and we all loved to fish and hunt.

HF- Of course that is quite typical now. I think every city dweller, they want to get away from it, the hubbub and the tension of the city and so on and they love nature, they really do. Now your mother as I understand it was quite dexterous at riding horses and breaking horses.

VB- Oh yes she was and she was quite in her years and was still rode a horse and blanket. I remember when I was just a youngster coming home from school, seeing a horse tied up to a bunch of willows, and it was just tied to the rope and of course it would run and the willow would bend and they would get to the end and it would really pull it but didn't hurt it. It would kind of throw the horse and she would leave it there until it got tired in trashing around and then it would her come up to her and she would work with it, gentle it.

HF- Now would farmers, white settlers, entrust their animals with her for this very purpose, of breaking them?

VB- Not that I know of. I never did know of anybody doing that, they may have, but I don't know.

HF- Where would she get these animals?

VB- They were hers.

HF- I see.

VB- They were hers, or maybe she would trade for it because she always had a team and saddled horse and cows too and chickens.

HF- Now did she maintain a resident pretty much there in ...?

VB- No, after my mother and father were married, I don't know exactly where they first lived after they were married. Some say they lived in a small cabin up there close to ... near where she was born, but I was born at Firth as I said and all the Indians were given so much property on the reservation and my mother lived there and that's way I remember all these things. She had 60 acres there, 60 acres of farming ground and then farther up in the hills, what is called Garden Creek, each of us had 160 acres of grazing ground, each of us.

HF- Each of you children?

VB- Yes, we each had 160 acres of grazing ground and 20 acres of farming ground, each of us. That was allotted to us.

HF- I see, now this was after your parents had separated and your mother was alone there with you. Your father was gone elsewhere.

VB- He would be working here and there. He would just work at odd jobs. I have an idea he would be called an itinerate laborer now.

HF- Well now let's see, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

VB- Let's see, I had four brothers and one sister.

HF- Beside yourself, making the total of the six in the family. You were the youngest?

VB- I am the youngest girl.

HF- You're the youngest girl. Now we have come acquainted of course with Carson. Is he younger?

VB- He is two years younger.

HF- Now through some of the old brothers and sisters you have nieces and nephews.

VB- Carson has several children, and my sister has seven children and I have another brother in Blackfoot that has eight children and then I have the one brother that passed away and he has one boy. He is teaching at Green River and he is the one that got his Master of Science degree on his thesis on Beaver Dick.

HF- That would be his great grand father wouldn't it?

VB- Yes.

HF- Well now, as I understand it then, you and your old brothers and sisters including Carson I suppose have had the experience living on the reservation.

VB- Oh yes, we were born on the reservation.

HF- You were born on the reservation.

VB- Now let's see, I am not sure where Neil was born, Bill wasn't born on the reservation. Bill was born in South Dakota, I believe, and then I have a brother that's passed away too, he was much younger than Bill. I don't know where he was born because he's older.

HF- We're still talking about the six children. Emma, that was your mother's name, gave birth to the six children and they survived.

VB- Yes.

HF- Now let's see, there were four boys and two girls. Now do you remember any of your grandmother's other children, in other words your mother's brothers and sisters. Did she have brothers and sisters?

VB- Well there is Aunt Rose, you know Aunt Rose. Of course, I remember Aunt Rose, who wouldn't?

HF- You've known her for years?

VB- Yes, I can't remember when I didn't know Aunt Rose. There was also Uncle Bill, you know, my mother's brother.

HF- Do you remember him?

VB- Well I have heard so much about him and I have seen him, they tell me, and I vaguely remember him but believe it or not my recollection is perfect, I don't know but I remember he was a tall fellow and he was just as full of the dickens as Aunt Rose. He was always teasing us.

HF- Now in describing your Aunt Rose, does she resemble and does she have similar characteristics in personality wise to that of your mother?

VB- Not personality, physical yes, but not personality. My mother was quiet. My mother was rather quiet, she would speak if she was spoken too but she was rather uncommunicative. Like you asked me if grandmother had had a midwife, you know, when my mother was born. My mother never talked about those things. It just wasn't done. But Aunt Rose is different but of course Aunt Rose is ten years younger than my mother. So Aunt Rose wouldn't remember a lot of these things either.

HF- Now your Aunt Rose, on the other hand her personality, she was quite outgoing, a lot of talk, and quite a sense of humor.

VB- Oh yes, a real character. That's the way we describe that girl.

HF- Is that right? Now she isn't too tall is she?

VB- Yes, Aunt Rose must be about, of course Aunt Rose has become a little stoop you know but not much, she is quite a lady. I have an idea Aunt Rose must have been about 5' 7" or 8".

HF- Would that be somewhat tall for your people of the Indian people?

VB- Well, oh no not necessarily. No, but evidently granddad was quite a good sized man but my grandmother was just a little person. She was about 5' 2," Susan my grandmother.

HF- Now was her full name Susan, they would always refer to her as Sue?

VB- Susan and even if they do refer to her as Sue its not spelled S-I-O-U-X, you know.

HF- I understand, it's strictly the Christian spelling of Sue, S-U-E and Susan, S-U-S-A-N. Now she, her last name was?

VB- We would say Tadpole but it was Pangibami or something like that and Beaver Dick called her the daughter of a Chief but whether or not she was the daughter of a Chief, I don't know.

HF- Is this, which tribal group would this be?

VB- Bannock.

HF- The Bannock. Now those on the reservation are more or less two or three tribal ancestral groups, aren't they?

VB- The Shoshone, the Bannock. Jenny was a Shoshone, that's Beaver Dick's first wife.

HF- I see, she was a Shoshone?

VB- Yes.

HF- Do you know as to whether there was any, acquaintance between possibly Jenny and your grandmother Sue's people?

VB- There could have been, but as far as we know, we don't know. But no doubt they did know of each other, because most Indians did.

HF- Now I understand from you Mrs. Baldwin, one of your relatives is presently engaged in a quite a lengthy book on the history and the life of your grandfather.

VB- Well that's Edith. That's my sister-in-law. That is the mother of Bill, Billy. You know the one that teaches school.

HF- In Wyoming.

VB- Yes. That was my brother Bill, of course, he teaches history that's name after his dad. His name is William Lee, but they all call him Billy. Edith is writing his sisters because her and my brother have spent about 30 years tracking down little bits and pieces of information as you have to do you know when you are going to do research.

HF- Continued on side two of this tape.

HF- Continuing the interview made with Vera May Thompson Baldwin, the granddaughter of Richard Beaver Dick Leigh.

Vera Baldwin- And she said it's just amazing how these bits and pieces and that they have gathered over the years have fallen together now. And it's all authentic you know and there's a lot of things that just blows up what we have been thinking about Beaver Dick, you know. There's more to it than we ever thought.

HF- Now in talking about him and of course we realize that he must have possessed a number of outstanding abilities, for example as a hunter. I have chatted with, oh let's see, with Mrs. Agnes Just Reid and you know her and she had been a friend of the family, has she not?

VB- Yes.

HF- And I believe from her I had the strong impression that your grandfather was a real marksman with a gun.

VB- Well Agnes never knew granddad, you know.

HF- No, but I mean through family traditions.

VB- Well I've heard that but I don't know. He must have been because he always got his game.

HF- I think she has mentioned to me or somebody has an example or two of his marksmanship. Would you have any to share? Any hand me down example of this?

VB- No I don't. I just don't.

HF- Now with reference to his being a guide, or other outstanding hunters for example, Teddy Roosevelt we know was out here and employed him as his guide.

VB- Well and he also, you know Governor Langford; let's see that was in Wyoming wasn't it?

HF- It could be.

VB- Governor Langford of Wyoming he guided him evidently because he had written a letter to him. I have a copy of it.

HF- Of the letter?

VB- Yes. This letter laid around for twenty-eight years at Mammoth Hot Springs in their archives.

HF- Would you like to share it?

VB- Well, this is one my sister-in-law is going to put in her book and these are all copyrighted.

HF- I see. I see. Well anyways this is reference to letter by the Governor.

VB- It's M.P. Langford and it's the Governor. I think it must have been the Governor of Wyoming, because he was writing to him and telling him about his state of health. He hadn't been feeling too well and he refers to himself as 'your old guide Beaver Dick.'

HF- I see. Well that's very interesting. Now in the legend as I understand it, Beaver Dick had a very careful relationship with a man from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

VB- Was that Doctor Penrose?

HF- Doctor Penrose.

VB- Yes.

HF- And I imagine that would be letters contained in this book that is forthcoming between them.

VB- My mother had letters that Doctor Penrose had written and when I was just a little girl I saw those letters but you know they didn't mean anything to me. They were just letters and I went away to school and when I was gone our old home burned down and all these letters with it.

HF- Is that right?

VB- Yes and my sister-in-law, just about every letter I get from her, she just demeans that fact. She said mother Thomson wanted to give me those letters and those pictures and I said oh you keep them. She says oh she wished they had taken them. Well I read those letters but I was just a little shade or you know just something to read but I can remember that Doctor Boyce Penrose and names like that.

HF- And those letters I would imagine were rather priceless possessions to the family, weren't they?

VB- Yes they were.

HF- Kind of hand me downs like an heirloom or some little item of this nature.

VB- And there are people who know that those letters did exist but of course they didn't know that the house burned either, that the house burned down and all those letters and pictures.

HF- Now this was the home that you lived in there on the reservation?

VB- Yes on the Fort Hall reservation, east of Firth. This was called Little Indian.

HF- Now Mrs. Baldwin I understand that the Teton County Historical Society and the Bannock County Historical Society together are going to meet this coming Saturday the 23rd there at the old Fort Hall reservation, I suppose tribal house. And the purpose of this, of course, is to have a little ceremony and little gathering and notation of a headstone for your grandmother. Is this your understanding?

VB- Yes that's what I was told.

HF- And they are anxious, of course, and hopeful that we will have the representation there from our local historical society to be there and Doctor Beal is planning or they have hopes of having him there at this as I understand it. Incidentally, do you remember Doctor Beal of Ricks College?

VB- I have never met him but my mother and Aunt Rose know him and I gave Doctor Beal some pictures that I never did get back and I would certainly like to have them if he still got them. So I will be glad to see him again. See if he has got, well I mean I would be glad to meet him because they had Aunt Rose and my mother up here to St. Anthony or Rexburg somewhere to ride on a float and I even have a little snap shot that shows them on the float. It was a JC Penney float and I had a picture of Aunt Rose and my mother with her.

HF- This would have been...

VB- Quite sometime ago.

HF- I think the 50th anniversary. It could have been the 50th anniversary of the founding of the settlement here. Let's see that would have been in 1933. Does that sound about right?

VB- No, I think it was a little bit, oh it could have been, it could have been yes?

HF- I'm just guessing '33 or '35 alone in that period. 50 years approximately after the founding of Rexburg. I am just guessing of course on that.

VB- Well I don't know if it was that or some 4th of July or 24th of July celebration because it doesn't seem like it was that...

HF- Doctor Beal has suggested in an interview to me that [he] well remembers going up to your home with his wife. This is at Hogholler. This would be...

VB- Doctor Beal, to my place?

HF- To your mother's or Rose's place.

VB- Because I have never met Doctor Beal.

HF- Now you probably haven't but it could have been to Rose, or anyway he would go there and ask questions and his wife would be his [scribe], and take the notes down and dictation in long hand or short hand.

VB- Well that must have been Aunt Rose.

HF- And this was probably in the thirties. It could have been in the twenties but late twenties or all through the thirties and I believe that Aunt Rose was involved in this.

VB- Or my mother or Aunt Rose.

HF- Now did they have a quite close association, your mother and sister?

VB- Oh as long as they were close enough together you know. Yes they did, it wasn't as easy to visit, you know, then. We weren't quite as mobile then you know as we are now. Of course, it rapidly became that way. And then they would visit quite often and got together.

HF- Did Rose ever go back to the reservation?

VB- Oh yes, she lived on the reservation, you see, all the time until she moved out to Salmon when her husband bought a little place out there. He liked the smell out there and then his health was ailing and he didn't like that you know and Salmon is warmer too.

HF- Yes it is.

VB- So he bought that little place out there and they moved out there and of course, after he passed away what was home to Aunt Rose.

HF- But prior to that she pretty much held to the reservation and received benefits, it was provided through the reservation.

VB- No, she didn't receive any benefits except what anyone else would. She worked for her living.

HF- Well some with land.

VB- No, Aunt Rose didn't have the land. I don't know what; she must have sold her land because I don't remember Aunt Rose having her land. Now I never have thought about that. But she must have gotten land too but that brings up something I never have thought of. But she must have sold it, because my sister sold hers. You know you can sell it but her husband leased ground on the reservation. You know where Mount Cuttem is?

HF- No.

VB- Right by Fort Hall those big mountains there to the east. That's where they had a place and he was quite a dairy man. He made a good living for Aunt Rose. They weren't millionaires but they were certainly well taken care of.

HF- Now this was her first?

VB- Koops that was her last husband, Koops.

HF- And she spells that K-O-O-P-S.

VB- Yes.

HF- I see. Of course, prior to that she had been married before hadn't she?

VB- Yes.

HF- As I understood, but your Aunt did not have children.

VB- No.

HF- And that would be true with your Uncle Bill.

VB- That's right.

HF- He passed without issue.

VB- Yes.

HF- But he was married wasn't he?

VB- I don't know.

HF- Don't you?

VB- No, I don't know. I have heard he was but it's just talk. We don't know. Nobody knows. I don't know.

HF- There has been some thought that he perhaps died in consequence with the war or something, this isn't so though.

VB- No, no I would say that's not so. I think they could find that out if they dig deep.

HF- Was he in his middle life, middle aged when?

VB- Well I suppose, maybe in the thirties or something like that. That wouldn't be middle life but...

HF- Ah, now did your mother have a tendency to cling to some of the traditions of her family? In say wearing any of the social customs of the tribe. She didn't cling to those particular things?

VB- No, she was strictly a white woman when it came to anything like that.

HF- I suppose it's fair to say that in the former generations a blanket was pretty essential in the customs to use but your mother didn't have any.

VB- No and neither did Aunt Rose and neither did my grandmother.

HF- Your grandmother didn't.

VB- Not that I ever knew of but they dressed like any other person that you meet. They didn't dress like Indians.

HF- Do you have any comment Mrs. Baldwin about your grandmothers becoming the wife to your grandfather and how that came to be.

VB- Well there's a story, and it must be so, that grandfather came along and found this Indian couple and the lady was having trouble giving birth, and that it must be so, I always thought that that couldn't be so because like I said that ... with Indians but of course there can always be a difference, there can always be an that exception. Evidently, this must have been so but he assisted with the birth and it was a little girl as you can see and the parents were so grateful that they gave her to granddad and he was, of course, he was married but that's what they wanted to give her, give the little girl to him, because he would come and get her you know when she was of age and then she would help his wife. That was the idea of it because they were so grateful. But instead of that Jenny died and then a few years later, well Beaver Dick did get back and claimed Sue.

HF- He claimed her as still a tiny girl?

VB- She was sixteen.

HF- At the time he took her as his wife.

VB- Yes, I was going to say that this is in that letter too.

HF- And she was 16?

VB- Yes...

- ...

HF- In an arrangement like this do you know as to whether they followed a marriage ceremony of any nature?

VB- Jenny and Beaver Dick was one of the first civil ceremonies preformed in this territory and also Beaver Dick was married to Sue under the laws of the land.

HF- Under the laws of the land?

VB- Yes.

HF- And in both instances?

VB- Yes.

HF- I see. That's very interesting. And this would have taken place, let's see, maybe at Blackfoot or...

VB- Probably Fremont County. It could have been, yes, it would be Bingham County wouldn't it because didn't Bingham County come clear up here?

HF- Bingham County embraced all of this area and it was Bingham County from '85 to '93. Now if your mother...

VB- They were married in 1879 and...

HF- Something like this weren't they, so it would have been probably during the period prior to the organization of even Bingham County.

VB- In 1879.

HF- When they were married. Does it suggest there on your letter who...?

VB- No, no it doesn't but in some of his other letters I understand that it does refer to when and where, you know.

HF- Now as husband and wife, speaking of your grandfather and grandmother there wasn't very much contact or association with the reservation at that time, during his life. Would you think this would be so?

VB- Well I understand that Indians stopped quite often on their trips from migrations back and forth as the seasons; you know how they would...

HF- Stop at his place.

VB- Yes, they would stop.

HF- Now all during the latter part of his life, your grandfather's life, he maintained a home there at Hogholler.

VB- Yes.

HF- And his three children with him, his wife and his three children and so they weren't wandering around to much. They were pretty much there.

VB- No. They say that Aunt Rose was just eight years old when granddad died.

HF- I see. Now when did your grandmother pass away?

VB- Grandmother passed away in about 1927, I guess.

HF- On the reservation?

VB- Yes, she was on the reservation.

HF- And there she is buried.

VB- Yes.

HF- Is this in a kind of a family plot?

VB- No, its something called a mission down there, you know it was called a mission. I think its Episcopalian church there that she is buried there in the churchyard and my mother is not far from her.

HF- In the same cemetery?

VB- Yes.

HF- According to your understanding was there any particular reasons why your grandmother was not buried with your grandfather?

VB- No, none at all. Except maybe they just didn't want to make the long trip up here but I never heard any reason one way or the other. Never have.

HF- Were your people, have they been converted to Christianity of any forms, do you know?

VB- Oh yes, grandfather belonged to the Church of England but as far as grandmother was concerned I don't know but all Indians, you know, were basically, they believe in a great white father, you know. They believe that higher...

HF- They believe in a Great Spirit.

VB- Yes. I am sure, I was thinking of the good and they call that the great white daughter.

HF- I think so. This is my understanding, they believe in the Great Spirit but I don't know if they try to define or describe any particular characteristics or features to this Great Spirit. But to your knowledge they didn't embrace any form of Christianity which may have been taught to them.

VB- No, not that I know of.

HF- Of course we both understand that real early, three hundred years ago, four hundred years ago almost, the Spanish fathers, of course having the Catholic Church, moved into this whole area into Utah while the resultantly I think was in Utah, the state of Utah in that territory as early as 1776 and had been further south in Santa Fe, of course the Spanish missionaries were all through that area. I wondered possibly if over the years your people on your mother's side had joined, converted to Christianity of some form.

VB- Not that I know of anyway.

HF- Mrs. Baldwin, did you get your earliest schooling on the reservation?

VB- No.

HF- You didn't.

VB- No, I went to grade school at what they called Upper Presto, just out from Firth. That was about four and a half or five miles from home. We even rode horseback or if the weather was too bad we would have to walk because my mother wouldn't let us ride a horse over the slick roads because just like another kid we didn't have the cars to race but we did race the horses and they would pull, so if it was too bad she wouldn't let us ride the horses and of course the horses couldn't buck those drifts either. It was a lot of fun.

HF- Your childhood I take it was a very happy childhood.

VB- Yes.

HF- Very much in the enjoyment of nature.

VB- Yes, we didn't have a lot by standards nowadays. I think we would be considered poorer than church mice even.

HF- You had your own independent home?

VB- You bet we did.

HF- Was it a frame home?

VB- Yes, it was just two rooms but they were big rooms and my mother had a garden, we always thought that it was a ... garden but I guess it wasn't.

HF- You children had to help?

VB- Yes, we had to help weed that, and take care of it and harvest the beans and things in the fall and we had pigs and chickens and turkeys and geese and a cow or two. We took our turns working cows and gathering eggs.

HF- And your mother at this time in affect living alone and your father wasn't there.

VB- I remember my mother cutting hay and racking it and putting it up and all that and trying to keep three lively youngsters out of the way. We were just the same as two families, you know, there was quite a, my sister and two older brothers and then there was two little boys and a girl and between those first three and the last three there was six year gap. So you know it was just like two families and the other three were gone and us three were home, we three youngsters were still home.

HF- I see. Well now your later schooling was obtained where?

VB- Well I went to Riverside, California to a government school, you know the Indian school out there, and graduated there and then I got a scholarship to go college in Oklahoma so I went to a two year college in Muscovy, Oklahoma.

HF- And this was also provided by the, maybe the Indian Bureau?

VB- Well it was a scholarship that was provided by the education program.

HF- But I mean was it the school itself a public college that catered mainly to the Indian groups?

VB- Yes. Vacone was a name of an Indian college and it was maintained by the rich, old rich Oklahoma Indians. So I really fell into something there.

HF- Now that in California would that be the equivalent of High School?

VB- Oh yes. It was High School.

HF- And then back in Oklahoma would be a two year college.

VB- Yes. I went there. But I won a scholarship, they offered the scholarships, you know, and I won a scholarship to go there, otherwise I may not have even...

HF- In what field, maybe in English, Literature, or Language, in what field was the scholarship based on?

VB- Teaching, you know. Just two years.

HF- You were trained then back there more or less as a teacher, instructor.

VB- Yes, yes.

HF- Since graduation have you done some teaching?

VB- No. I came back to Fort Hall and got a job there in an office for awhile but when I came back there weren't many jobs open anyway and teachers were a dime a dozen and I didn't have enough experience, you know, and then I didn't care too much about teaching anyways.

HF- Well then you subsequently married Mr. Baldwin and now you live in Teton City, and you and your husband are the parents of how many children?

VB- Two. One boy and one girl, our girl is Sandra Leigh and she is married to Blair Owens from St. Anthony and they have a little boy Cory Joan and he's about 19 years old now, and right now they are out in Tacoma. Blair is in the army and he is stationed at Fort Lewis.

HF- And your son, is he married?

VB- Yes. Martin was married to the former Beverly Anderson of Thornton and they have a little boy about four and a half months old. His name is Kerry and they live at Newdale.

HF- Well now if we just number it up about Beaver Dick in an essence and your grandmother Leigh would have quite a posterity in numbers. I hope that that would be calculated one day and just for the fun of it. It would be quite a big posterity wouldn't it?

VB- Oh yes, I should say so when you get to thinking about it.

HF- I appreciate you coming here tonight that we might chat with you. Do you have any other comments, any early reflections of conditions as they were when you were growing up during the teens and early twenties in the Upper Snake River Valley, transportation, or how things looked, and how things were? Just any reminisces that you might have.

VB- Well when I was small, mainly the transportation was horse and buggy but it rapidly changed. You know, there were cars around and it just changed rapidly. As I remember we still had to have the team and wagon because we just didn't have the money to get a car and we would drive to town and the horses would be shy and I can remember the horses running off the road being afraid of the car, there were so many cars, and I would just hate to go to town on a buck board. But at the same time...

HF- Now where would you go to town?

VB- A lot of times we'd...

HF- Into Blackfoot?

VB- Yes, but if my mother wanted something quickly she would dispatch one of us on a horse to Firth which would take us about four hours, we could have gotten there faster and back but we wouldn't do it.

HF- This summer my wife and I drove out to the old homestead of the Reid's or Jest Family at Presto and boy that is quite an area out through there. I could imagine 50 years ago or so it could have been kind of wild and weary.

VB- Yes. It's changed. It doesn't look the same now, you know. Did Agnes tell you that we were just across the river from her?

HF- I am not sure whether she did or not but you lived just across the river.

VB- Just across the river.

HF- Where your mother's homestead or allotment land was located?

VB- Yes.

HF- I see. And the river must have been the boundary line for; it had to have been the southeast, or the northeast, southeast boundary line of the reservation.

VB- No you were right it would be the northeast.

HF- Yeah, northeast boundary line of the reservation.

VB- And it's called the Little Indian part of the reservation.

HF- The Little Indian.

VB- Yes, because there's not very many Indians that live up there. There were just a few.

HF- ...I mean Old Fort Hall headquarters would be quite a ways to the south of this wouldn't it.

VB- Yes, you see Blackfoot was fifteen miles away and then Fort Hall is eight or ten miles or fifteen isn't it, from Blackfoot. But old Fort Hall was at Lincoln Creek, originally. But that wasn't there then though, even when my mother was there, that old Fort Hall wasn't there either.

HF- Well thanks again for this interview of sharing with us some of these interesting details and I believe that it's interesting reading, interesting listening.

VB- Oh well thank you for asking me.