Voices of the Past

Rose Koops - Beaver Dick’s Daughter

By Rose Koops

August 4, 1970

Tape #12

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Devon Robb       November   2004

Brigham Young University – Idaho
(The transcriber apologizes for the following interview. Most parts of the tape are inaudible and Rose Koops is very hard to understand)

Harold Forbush- Here after follows the interview with Rose Koops on the 4th of August 1970 as they go from Jackson, apparently, to Moose, Wyoming the headquarters of Grand Teton National Park.

??-When … came in he was near Mosquito Creek which is right next to Teton Pass but he’s kind of a mystery man. They don’t know what really happened to him or where he went to. His name was John Pierce. Beaver Dick in his diary mentions running into him over in Teton Basin but whether he was over here very much we don’t know. Old Jackson is the only one you remember?

RC- I remember him because he had thick hair that was so long.

??-The following excerpts are from a tape made on the 4th of August by Paul Noles of KSGT radio in Jackson. The early part of the tape is made in a car driving from Moose, Wyoming, where the party ate breakfast, to Jenny Lake. Rose Lee Coops is in the car and answers many questions. Harry Brown is driving. In addition to myself, Paul Noles being in the car. Bob Lomar a seasonal naturalist of Grand Teton National Park is along. After the trip to the Jenny Lake Amphitheatre, Ed Lloyd, President of the Teton County Historical Society introduces Mr. Chapman of Grand Teton National Park. Now we will go back to the tape. The first to speak is Mr. Lomar.

BL- The place that we are going to now is the Jenny Lake Amphitheatre, Rose.

RC- The what?

BL- The Jenny Lake Amphitheatre. We give campfire talks there at night to the people that come to the park. We like to tell them a little about the history of the park, you know. We have two main pictures, Beaver Dick’s first family and Beaver Dick’s second family that we use in our campfire talks. And a lot of people a lot of times have a lot of questions about the lake, where your father lived and so on. For example, we just crossed the Snake River there. When you came to the valley in the old days, how did you get across the river?

RC- On a horses back, like that.

BL- Forded it huh?

RC- I forded that river mostly through the snow.

BL- Is that right?

RC- Yep, I had a girl last winter, her folks were up visiting me and Earl said, “Do you have them ride a horse?” I said, “A little.” I said that I have ridden a horse ever since I
was six weeks old and she said, “No.” I was six weeks old when they came on the under
pass.

BL- How could you ride a horse six weeks old?
RC- In poppa’s board using the horn for a saddle.

BL- It would be kind of tricky fording that river sometimes when it’s pretty deep there.

RC- I owned my own gun and my own horse when I was eight years old. I won my gun
shooting and won money enough to buy my horse and saddle.

BL- Was it your father that taught you how to shoot?
RC- Oh yeah. And now I couldn’t hit the saddle …???

BL- Probably an old muzzle loader, wasn’t it, in those days that you had.
RC- No.
BL- No?
RC- … one of them Crag twenty-twos, you know those used to be shot charts. And where
the shell was in I bet that it wasn’t that thick if you remember. You remember the bow?

BL- Well they still use twenty-twos.
RC- Yeah but not…
BL- I don’t remember.

PN- Old single shot.

BL- What did you shoot in? Did you shoot in a fair?
RC- No. When we get up there I will show you. They used to have them little milk cans,
you know, and they would hang them on the rope and string them by the handle and
swing it and then we shot at it. It started a dollar a shot and then five for ten.

BL- What would you get if you won?
RC- All the money that was up.
BL- How many would shoot at a time?
RC- Oh, whoever wanted to shoot against me.
BL- More than a lot? Four or five?

RC- We shot only one but…

BL- You were about 10 years old?

RC- Eight.

BL- And you won enough to pay for a gun.

RC- I bought my horse, saddle and a gun.

BL- If you had a horse then you probably had to take care of it then.

RC- No, Dad done that.

BL- He did that for you?

RC- Yeah, he took care of the horses.

BL- Was that up by Jackson store that they did that or…?

RC- No, it was a lot farther.

BL- Up on the River?

RC- Yeah.

HB- Did you use that gun also to hunt squirrels and things like that with?

BL- What kind of game was the easiest to catch here in the valley in those days, to shoot?

RC- Little game or big game?

BL- Well big game, the elk?

RC- I never seen an elk. There wasn’t any deer up…

BL- I keep reading historical accounts and they keep telling about how they would go for days sometimes and don’t see any big game. Was that the way it was? Do you remember?

RC- No, You could shot game right from you desk old gentlemen…
BL- You used to come over here with your father when he guided hunters in here didn’t you.

RC- Oh, yeah.

BL- Did you have to do a lot of chores on those hunting trips?

RC- No, I was too lazy.

BL- He let you get away with it huh?

RC- Oh sure, I was the baby. You know how the baby is and the oldest when … I was the youngest spoiled one.

BL- You had an old brother and an older sister?

RC-…

BL- Did your older brother have any family?

RC- No.

BL- He died about World War One about 1918, didn’t he?

RC- Yeah.

BL- Did he get killed in the war?

RC- No.

BL- Influenza or something like that, he was sick.

RC- He died when my mom and dad when to pick up after him.

BL- Oh, after he came back.

RC- Yeah, after he came back.

HB- What road did you live on in Salmon?

RC- Streets 45. And you know that’s why I don’t like this … we had a river down … I don’t like water anymore.

BL- You don’t like water.

HB- Even kind of hate to drink it, huh.
RC- Yeah, it makes me …

BL- There is one article that says that Theodore Roosevelt saw you and your father by Two Ocean Lake. Do you remember him?

RC- I don’t remember Teddy Roosevelt at all. We had Dr. J.P. Penrose every year and his bunch.

BL- He was the one that took on of those pictures that we have. Wasn’t he a senator?

RC- Yeah.

BL- What kind of game did he like to catch?

RC- Oh, they were hunting elk horns all season.

HB- Did you see many moose in those days Rose?

RC- I just remember one…

BL- See any buffalo in the valley in those days?

RC- No.

BL- No buffalo.

RC- Never heard of one…

BL- How about grizzly bear, do you remember any grizzly bear here in the valley?

RC- Yeah…

BL- I’d imagine in those days you could travel across here for days and not see anybody else, couldn’t you?

RC- I never once been to Europe. It’s a whole new country to me.

BL- You were up north further huh?

RC- Yeah.

BL- Were you at Jenny’s Lake? You hadn’t been to Jenny’s Lake though.

BL- Did your father ever go up these canyons to hunt or just stay down here in the valley?
RC- Oh no, he was all over basin range… Now you see how beautiful that is…

BL- Do you remember were there more trees in the valleys when you were here than there are now?

RC- More green than dead.

BL- More green, but they were growing about the same place.

RC- Oh yeah.

HB- Rose said that Bitch Creek over on the other side got its name from her dad who had a bitch dog and it choked to death on a …foot. That’s how Bitch Creek got its name.

BL- I’ll be dog gone. It’s stuck with that name ever since.

RC- Unless somebody changed it.

HB- No it hasn’t changed. It’s still over there, you know.

BL- Rose said that her dad didn’t have a cabin over here. They always camped in a teepee.

RC- And we all lived and what we had breakfast in.

BL- About how late in the year was it that you decided to leave for the winter to get out of here before the snow?

RC- Oh about the middle of September.

BL- Do you go out by Cullen Pass was it?

RC- Uh hum.

BL- They call that the horse thief trail. Did you ever hear or see of any horse thieves?

RC- Did see not one in them days.

BL- That’s under water now, that trail that leads to Cullen’s Pass is under water now.

RC- It is?

BL- Yeah because of the dam.

BL- Do you remember any Indian parties coming in here from Mead?
HB- Did your father ever tell you how he happened to meet your mother?

RC- Yes. My mother was given to my father the night she was born. They were camped between…my one mother and them, that’s were she was born. My dad …from Salt Lake… Well, it was in the fall this cold, and we’d build fires all night to keep my mother and her baby from freezing so my granddad said when that girl grows up she’s your wife…

RC- Get out of the way. You better more when I say so. See that! You see how he moved. He knew it was better than to fool around.

BL- Aren’t those flowers pretty this year.

RC- Oh boy, yes. Even the wild wokets ain’t they?

BL- Well we call them fire weed. Those right back there.

RC- Them red ones?

BL- Uh hum.

RC- I thought them was a wild wocket.

BL- Now a lot of common names are different in different places.

RC- We went down there and looked at the lake yesterday…

HB- It’s a popular place.

RC- Yeah it looks like it. It wasn’t like this when I seen it last. No, not last. It used to be last. There was nothing here.

(Inaudible)

BL-…with out doing a lot of work. I wish I’d been in that situation. Didn’t your mother get after you and make you work even though your father let go?

RC- My brother and my dad, when they said move, that’s what they meant. It wasn’t like kids nowadays. And we could set up time when we register ‘til 10, 11, 12 o’clock but then when we …daddy would say, “Time to go to bed.”

BL- What kind of ways did they used to punish you in those days, you know nowadays they paddle a kid?

RC- …the willow.
Ed Lloyd- It’s great to be able present the daughter of Beaver Dick Lee. It’s a testimonial to what high regards the people held Beaver Dick Lee and that our most beautiful spots in the valley are named for he or his family, namely Jenny and Lee Lake. She came here the 8th of six weeks on a papoose board on her mother’s back, on the horn of the saddle she rode. And I won’t say how old she is, but she is in her late 80’s. That’s close enough, and a very remarkable woman. We also have her grandson or the grandson of Beaver Dick I should say and his wife. Carson would you please stand up and Miranda? And we have the great grandson of Beaver Dick and his wife Dwayne Thomson. Some of the others unfortunately have had to go back but we have had a delightful time yesterday and I know we are going to have a delightful time today. And Rose, there is a group of people who are working hard to preserve some of this beauty that you enjoyed as a child and they are doing a good job and it’s with a great deal of pleasure that I am going to present the superintendent of the park to you, Howard Chapman.

Howard Chapman- Mrs. Coops, those of you that have gathered here this morning, I think for a very momentous occasion. A few remarks that I would like to make in relation to the event that we have here this morning and that is the work that the historical society has done in the Jackson Hole area because what we have in Grant Teton National Park is an area of magnificent beauty and these are the things that people as they pass through here are constantly aware of but as we look about the country today we find that there is something else that people need. And this something else is a tie to tradition, a tie to history because man has to have a feeling in his heart for the things of beauty and he has to have something that ties to tradition and to history. The historical society here in Jackson Hole is certainly doing a magnificent job in helping preserve the history of Jackson Hole and what we are talking about today and the event today, yesterday and tomorrow is really the living testimonial, a person who can take us by the hand and we can feel with that person those things that happened here so many years ago. And so it is that I think the historical society and what they have done in arranging this opportunity for Mrs. Coops to come here is a wonderful testimony to the importance of history as well as the importance of natural beauty that surrounds us. So it is with a great deal of pleasure that I can give to you Mrs. Coops a memento of this visit to Grand Teton
National Park. One of our Rancher Naturalist Mr. Shellonburger has made this with his own hands. It’s a pendent of the Cathedral group and on it, it is inscribed regard to your visit here today and so it is with a great deal of pleasure that I can pass this on to you to wear and if you allow me I will put it around your neck.

RC- Do I have to take my hat off?

HC- Just for a second.

HC- Thank you.

RC- And thank you all. I will put my hat back on. I don’t know who’s hat it is?

HC- This belongs to one of most outstanding members Harry Brown and he is really happy he can say now, that will go on the wall. He will never touch it again. I’m sure. Would you like to say hello to these people?

RC- I have had a wonderful time. Everybody has been so sweet to us and I would like to thank you all.

HC- We just can’t say how much we have enjoyed you coming. We appreciate you.

(Inaudible)

(In Interview changes from Rose Koops to Vera Baldwin)