

Sawtooth Interpretive & Historical Association  
Oral History Project  
Craig and Betty Rember, 1988  
Edited transcript  
Transcribed by Susan Kim, 2024

**Craig:** See I always lived in Hailey, I was raised in Hailey. And then my folks would always come over there and salmon fish.

So, you'd come up for fishing or hunting?

**Craig:** Generally, for salmon fishing.

And you got hooked?

**Craig:** Huh?

And you got hooked.

**Craig:** Well, what really started that more than anything else was, I was working at the Triumph Mine and at that particular time I was working in a shop, and I had a boss that was getting ready to leave. He didn't know it, but he was afraid he was going to be pushed out, you know. And he made it pretty hard to get along and I, my doctor told me get out of there and rest up my stomach. He said you're going to have an ulcer. So, I come over here and you didn't have any way to make a living, so I started...

Were you married then?

**Betty:** Oh, yeah.

**Craig:** So, I started uh guiding fishermen. That was in the '50s, early '50s. That was before I bought this place.

**Betty:** Yeah, '52.

**Craig:** Back when I first come into this country was, I was just a kid and we used to come on every Sunday, or every summer for about two weeks. My grandmother, she had run camp, and our folks would leave us there with her and then two weeks later they'd come pick us up.

So, you have to learn to guide on your own. Guide yourself.

**Craig:** Oh yeah, well was no problem there. We'd build a raft and fish in Alturas all day long, after camp was cleaned up. She was the original environmentalist in this country because you didn't leave anything in camp that was out of place or dirty or anything it was just...

What is your grandmother's name and um what kind of camp did she run?

**Betty:** It was just a relatives...

**Craig:** She just gathered up a bunch of relatives and kids and grandkids, most of all grandkids and bring us over there. And our friends. And our folks would bring us over and set us down and leave us for two weeks then they'd come and get us.

**Betty:** Her name was Betty Rember, too.

Oh.

**Craig:** She was a great outdoor woman. Loved to fish, camp, make...She wasn't, didn't care about the hunting camps so much, but she loved to camp. And then I kind of, well we used to come over and honky tonk in Stanley then, from all the time

from the '30s on. But we'd work, I worked at the Triumph mine from, starting in there about '36 and worked there for...

**Betty:** Out of Hailey.

Did you work in any mines around this area?

**Craig:** Not on this side of the mountain. Only up here in the...

**Betty:** Fourth of July.

**Craig:** Yeah, Fourth of July. I just went up there and worked three shifts for a guy that was leaving. He had a contract and he had to go to Salt Lake, and I worked three shifts up there for him.

What did you do to make a living?

**Craig:** Over here?

Hm mmm.

**Craig:** Yeah, I just come here in the summer times, and I worked at guiding, guiding all the time and trapping in the fall. And then, in the summertime... all the roads that were built here, I worked on almost every road from the Galena down this way when I started to improve the roads. I guess I didn't miss any of... yeah one little section the other side of Stanley. But the rest of it was, all the Valley, I worked on almost all those roads. Because I worked as a heavy-duty welder most of the time.

When did you get into trapping?

**Craig:** When I was a kid. I started it just when I first found my first trap.

What kind of animals?

**Craig:** Well, when you're trapping to make a living out of it, you got to set a trap for everything that's legal and got a fur on it. And that way, why anything you pick up on your regular route, why helps pay expenses. But my big income was martin, mink, and beaver. Beaver especially after they opened up beaver trapping around, somewhere around '56, I think it was. And there was beaver in every canyon and every, all along the river. In fact, I took 130 beaver, 131 or two beaver there in about 3 weeks. Then I quit trapping I just had to start taking care of fur. That was the big year because there was an overabundance of them, and they were doing a lot of damage, a lot of complaints about them. So, and the caretaker trappers, that work for the state, were just not covering enough country and they opened it wide open.

How much per pelt?

**Craig:** At that time, I think I averaged \$17 apiece. That was average, for the big and small. Something close to that.

Betty, what were you up to while Craig was trapping and guiding?

**Betty:** There wasn't any nurses in the Valley, except Susie Vaughn and she had a restaurant down in the Valley, and she said when I came in the Valley, she said now it's up to you Betty. And I said oh no I don't want to. Because people would let Susie take care of them, and then as soon as they got well, they didn't have a good word to say about her. Cuz she was pretty rough old gal. She had a heart as big as a mountain, but she was...

**Craig:** But she never charged anybody for anything.

**Betty:** No, she never charged anybody, and I said I won't do it that way, Susie. And she said, well you know that's the way I serve my Jesus. Anybody that'd hear say

that would step back because she would swear like a trooper you know. She was a good little gal. But one summer we were, we always got up at about 3 in the morning...

**Craig:** Betty did.

**Betty:** ...in order to have breakfast at 4, so Craig could take...

**Craig:** Breakfast was at 3:30 and I was on the river at 4:00 in the morning.

**Betty:** Because that's where, that's when he could catch the fish. And we were, had a morning off, and it was 6:00 and we were sitting at the breakfast table enjoying our coffee and somebody drove up and we had the driveway in there at that time and he drove up and he came right up to the doorstep, and I said why don't you drive right on in, sarcastically. And uh he said are you Mrs. Rember? And I said yes. And he said, well there's a lady down at Mormon Bend going to have a baby and they need you right away. I put on a clean blouse and grabbed some... what I thought I would need, and away we went down the river. And I got down there and this woman was in one of those little teardrop tent campers and I said don't you think we can get to Challis? And she said, oh no. And I said, well we're going to try, because it's just as easy to deliver a baby in the back of a car as it is in this place. So, away we went down Challis and I got down there and there was a padlock on the door of the hospital. They had momentarily closed it because of lack of funds. So, I asked the lady next door where Dr Barter was, and she said in, down at the Round Valley Motel. So, we went down to the Round Valley Motel, and he was...

(inaudible)

**Betty:** Oh, he had a big Oldsmobile. We were in an Oldsmobile. And we got down to the Round Valley Motel and Dr Barter was in Salmon. So, I left a message that we were going to have this baby and for him to get back as soon as possible. And I told the husband of the lady that there was a nurse in town that helped Dr Barter with home deliveries, for him to go find her, find her. And, you know, Challis only has one Main Street and all he had to do was go up and ask somebody. Pretty soon she came with her little suitcase, got all ready, we... I was all scrubbed, ready to deliver the baby and Dr Barter walked in the door. And he delivered the baby. And the first thing the lady said was now I get to go home with a baby instead of a salmon. I was a little bit disgusted, but things like that happened. Marie used to say oh all the interesting things happened to you, up here before I got here, but that wasn't true. She's done a lot of interesting things. But then there was always somebody that had a broken arm or something. A lady came in that was pitched over a horse's head and she broke both wrists. And I just put her arms in...

**Craig:** Life Magazine.

**Betty:** Life magazine for splints and sent her on to Sun Valley. I don't know. There was always something to do here. One year, we built trail for the forest service up on the south fork of the Boise.

**Craig:** Two years.

**Betty:** Two years. Craig had a crew of two.

**Craig:** Yeah, it was me and two boys.

**Betty:** And we were 18 miles from the end of the road by horseback. It was an interesting two summers. I baked bread up there. It wouldn't have taken a prize at the county fair, but it ate. We enjoyed it. Those were good times.

**Craig:** That was a good job. But this is the best place in the world to raise two boys, I figured. In the Valley, here. Can't really say, we haven't had any problems with either one of them. Pretty well adults by now, so we know that...

A good job.

**Craig:** They're on their own now. Hit it real hard and I'd hit every place I possibly could and take the cream and then I'd save the rest of it for the next year. And my catches run about the same almost from year to year because that way I had pretty steady income on about the same amount each time. Had a good healthy bunch of fur in the country then.

What do you think about trapping today?

**Craig:** Well, it's still a necessary thing because if you don't let everything get over, out of balance, why then Mother Nature takes over and they got they disease and when a group or a family of certain specie picks up a disease, why it almost wipes them out. And there's also, probably Mother Nature has the most cruel way in the world of thinning the species through starvation and disease. So, I've always been a advocate of fishing and, not so much fishing, but trapping and hunting too to keep the herds within balance. And I think it's a very good idea. But I had this old cabin over here, which was strictly a summer cabin and the first October when the water was shut off and I packed water and had the outside restroom and I'd leave in the mornings I'd have a pretty warm house, and come back in the evenings it was just almost as cold inside as it was outside. I done that for a few years and then I decided I better get me an oil stove in there, so I had that where it was pretty comfortable then where I'd just come in in the evenings and that way I'd...and it was real cold I'd skin fur and stretch it until maybe 2:00 in the morning and then sleep in a little later in the morning until it warmed up a little. Then I'd head out on my lines. But at times I'd run from, well even on the other side of Galena into Bear Valley. And I'd make that round about every third day on all of it.

How would you get around?

**Craig:** Had a Jeep.

No snowmobile, then?

**Craig:** No. No, if it got to where you had to travel that way, you'd better quit because it was uh, your time and your expenses would eat up all your profit and all you were doing was taking your next year's catch. And I figured where, the day I started breaking even, it was time to get out. And if it wasn't a property(?) in every run, well then it was time for me to quit.

Could you describe how you set the traps?

**Craig:** Well, each one was a little different. The mink set why it was along the river and always try to figure a natural runway. And a good scent. I made my own scent.

How'd you do that?

**Craig:** Well, with fish and meat parts, mostly fish. And a little beaver (inaudible) and a little bit of the natural mink scent. But the... I ended up with a scent that

would catch anything that was on foot. It would... anything from cats to ...well like beaver was a special scent of its own, I used that. But then, muskrats, mink and fox, coyotes, cats, martin would all come to that same scent. And it was a good scent.

Did you experiment to make it?

**Craig:** *Pretty much, yeah pretty much. We used it last year, it was still working good.*

You were telling us how you set the traps a little differently.

**Craig:** *Oh yeah. A beaver trap is, well with beaver the main thing you had to have a drowning set with the type of trap, type of set I made, I used a front foot set. And I'd fix it so my trap would slide down a wire to a heavy weight and I had a catch on it where it got to the bottom it couldn't come up. And then within 2 minutes your beaver was drowned. He wasn't sitting there rolling around, twisting. And that... all I needed to catch beaver was a drowning water and my scent would do the rest of it. I put my scent on the bank wherever I had a place to set the trap. And the drowning water deep enough to drown him and that's all I needed because the scent would take him right to the trap.*

What would release the weight?

**Craig:** *It was on a slide, on a very free sliding slide that was an angle iron that was bent. With a big hole where it would slide down that wire and hook the other end to the trap and when he tried to come up, the angle iron kinked. Kinked the wire and that's, there was no chance of him getting up, back up. And with mink I used something similar, mostly maybe just tie a rock on a trap where you get it out. The drowning sets wherever possible on your water animals. And then for your coyotes and fox, why it's just, it's almost the same thing. You want to first try to find a natural runway, crossing area, like off of this ridge across the road here, the coyotes come down that ridge steady. And so, if you get a good scent set within 50 yards, why they'll pick it up.*

*Job in here of construction. I couldn't make a living in here in the summertime after the guiding stopped. They put a stop to the salmon guiding. I put a stop to it in about 1960. Four, five, somewhere...*

You put a stop in yourself, huh?

**Craig:** *Yeah, yeah. It got to the point where I showed so many people how to fish and where to fish then when, and many times I had to hook that salmon for those people. They couldn't catch one or anything. I'd float a bait down there and just set the hook, why... let him go. And so, then there was so much... there was several of us guys that were fishing this river, had a friend down at Clayton, Stan Young. Was a topnotch fisherman, you know. I never fished only, with him when he had a big crew or sometimes when I needed some help, I'd get him to come with me. But other than that, why if I saw him fishing, I'd get away from him because if there was an easy one there, he had it. I wouldn't want to fish where... and that's what a lot of people used to follow me around figuring I knew where all the fish were. But unless they were well experienced in catching salmon, I'd catch the fish and they'd get mad. So, it ended up that they had the game department come up with a, well I*

guess they passed it as a law, that whoever hooked the fish it shall be his possession and you're only allowed two in possession so that kind of stopped the guiding without cheating. And it was about time to quit anyway. Construction work was coming in here good and I done far better on construction after the salmon population was dwindled because of the, I suppose through the dams and commercial fishing, together, why the salmon population dwindled way down and it just made it harder to uh have a satisfied customer. Because when I was guiding, I'd send them home with a fish or I wouldn't charge them anything. And I never lost any money on it.

**Betty:** You know that Alturas Lake was homesteaded by Mrs. Law, wasn't that her name?

**Craig:** Don't know whether it was Law when it was homesteaded or not but Bradford(?)... yes it was Law, I'm sure.

**Betty:** I came into the country to spend summers after my sister married, or before my sister married, Alden Shaw, and she only lived two years after they were married, and she's buried up on the mesa above the ranch.

Did most of the people that came up here, come from down around Twin and Hailey or did they just kind of migrate in here?

**Betty:** Oh no.

**Craig:** No. Well, up until the '50s, why there was families that were here were old families and there was no new families moved in here. I think I was probably one of the first ones that got this place. This was the first ground that changed hands for a long time. And Marie and Bill Sullivan had the ranch up here and...

**Betty:** Where McNichols was...

**Craig:** No, Merritts, no it was Ted's. Ted had the one where the McNichols is. And Vella, was a daughter, she had the ranch just above the Rocky Mountain here. And Bill Sullivan and Marie, Marie Williams, had the one in between. And they owned that whole river bottom there, most all of it through that whole area. And Saren(?) and Norma had the ranch on the (inaudible). Dave divided that all up with his kids, and kept the home place, which is still up there, and Morgan has that.

**Betty:** But Mr. Shaw came in here from South Dakota. He came in as an engineer for the mine, Fisher Mine.

**Craig:** Aztec.

**Betty:** Was it? I thought it was the Fisher Mine.

**Craig:** They call it the Aztec now.

**Betty:** They do now, but when he came in it was called the Fisher Mine. The Shaws entertained people from all over the world. And then, I have a picture of Senator Borah. But it was taken in 1915. So, Senator Borah and his party did visit the Shaw Ranch, which is...

**Craig:** Was quite a thing in those days to have the Senator Borah visit with you.

**Betty:** Well, he's one of our statesmen, I think, from Idaho. I don't know whether you have ever heard of him or not, but he was, he ranked along with Frank Church.

**Craig:** There was another millionaire that had a lease on the Pettit Lake, up there. And Mary (?) Brooks has that place now. And his name was Jim McDonald. And

he used to come up all the time. Stayed year round a time of two when he and his wife would get to fighting and he'd (stay all the way?). And that was often.

**Betty:** But anyway, it's been interesting to watch the development of the Valley and we are very grateful for the SNRA coming in and stopping the development because if they hadn't, we woulda had A-frames from Ketchum to Stanley.

What did a homesteading or a land grant involve?

**Craig:** (inaudible) had to be surveyed, had to have a cabin on it, and you had to either use it as good pasture ground or irrigated ground. You had to live on it a full year before you could get a patent on it.

**Betty:** Didn't it take 5 years to get the final patent?

**Craig:** I don't know for sure how long it took, because that was before our time. All the homesteading stopped oh in the late '30s.

Isabel Miller tell me that the Clark Miller Ranch was homesteaded in nineteen-five?

**Craig:** Could well have been.

**Betty:** I wouldn't have been surprised.

**Craig:** Because all of the country up there, uh Williams and Shaw and all of them come in in the early, early 1900s. And so, I was just, the Upper Valley, and like I say, there was... it stayed in the families for years and years and years. And it hasn't been up too much lately that they... it has just been more or less lately that all these places have changed hands.

**Betty:** And they really didn't make very much money. They just existed. They didn't... you know there wasn't a lot of money to be made.

**Craig:** No. That's the reason I never tried to stay in here to try to make a living, even after we got the property. After I take what I could make right quick, I'd go find me a winter jobs.

**Betty:** Oh, and when we first came into this country, when Craig was coming over here salmon fishing on, after work, you really counted on blowing a tire about every time you came over cuz the road was so rough. When did they pave this? What year did they pave it?

**Craig:** '55.

**Betty:** See, this was a gravel road before then.

So, over Galena and everything was gravel?

**Betty:** Um hmm.

**Craig:** From Ketchum up.

So, what was the road like in the winter?

**Craig:** Closed after the big storm. All of Galena was.

**Betty:** Everybody went out in the fall and got all their winter's groceries.

When you were driving over in the gravel road there, what was, was Smiley Creek and Beaver Creek and Obsidian, were (inaudible) on the way.

**Craig:** Nothing at Smiley Creek. And Beaver Creek was a bootleg joint for quite a long time. Before the (inaudible) and all it was was a cabin. It wasn't until, I don't remember Smiley Creek coming in there in the '50s or late '50s.

So, all the stories people hear about Stanley being such a wild place and everything, that's really true.

**Betty:** Should have been here in the '30s.

**Craig:** Well...

**Betty:** It was very interesting.

**Craig:** You'd never go to Stanley on a Saturday night that you wouldn't see at least three or four just damn hard fights. I mean until somebody got knocked out. It wouldn't stop. And there was one fella that worked for the Rocky Mountain up here, Bill Hamilton, and he loved to fight, he never won one in his life. He went down every Saturday night and got whipped. But he'd go back. And the CCs, when they were in here, why you'd see 20, 30 fights a night. Because they had a CC camp at Redfish, they had one at Cape Horn, and they had one down on Yankee Fork.

Did they build most of the campgrounds (inaudible)?

**Craig:** They were building campgrounds and trails, yes.

**Betty:** But the different camps would fight each other. Regular gang fights.

It was basically entertainment.

**Betty:** Yeah. They'd come to the dance, back when the Ace of Diamonds dance hall was here. But it was a fun place. I went to my first dance in Stanley when I was 13. My gracious, that was fun. And you'd dance with everybody that asked you, you know. You didn't just dance with the one that brought you.

**Craig:** No, not necessarily.

**Betty:** Oh no, there wasn't any reason for fights half the time. Somebody looked cross-eyed and that's all it took.

**Craig:** In that Ace of Diamonds, after everybody quit dancing, it was just daylight, and there was half a dozen of those CC kids on the bench just passed out and asleep. Another guy'd come in and walked up to one, picked his head up, knocked him off the bench, went right down the line, just knocked them all off the bench for no reason at all. And they had a pug out here at Cape Horn that whipped everybody. He was mean and he'd been beat up a lot, scarred from one end to the other, but he was still far above anybody else in the camp when it come to a fighter. And he just was mean as could be. And he whipped one little young fella bad, he just really beat him up one night. So, the next weekend why he was in the bar drunk again, the Pug was, and this kid walked in there and he said Pug, you S.O.B., you whipped me once, but you can't do it again. He held his fists up. Outside we go, until a kid run outside, and the Pug come out after him with both hands, and his partner hit the Pug right across the head with a two by four. And just dropped him right there. Now that's the way things were going. That was...

Did you two meet at the Ace of Diamonds?

**Craig:** No.

**Betty:** We met at a dance in...

**Craig:** Hell, I'd just gotten over a black eye that trip.

**Betty:** We met at a dance in Hailey. At the Opera, was it the Opera House?

**Craig:** They called it the Old Opera House.

**Betty:** It's where the...

**Together:** Atkinsons are now.

So, what were the dances like? Was it ballroom dancing?



**Craig:** Oh, yeah.

**Together:** It's good orchestras, real good orchestras.

Where did they come from?

**Craig:** Local and all over.

**Betty:** Twin Falls, usually.

Was that at the Ace of Diamonds?

**Craig:** Oh no, country western over here, banjo and... One guy had a saxophone, Clyde Gillespie played the saxophone.

**Betty:** Clyde Gillespie is a fellow that's in Boise that I wanted Jack to see.

**Craig:** And uh...they had good music though. Good old honky tonk piano and good dance. Good rhythm, you know. But over on the other side they had some real good, good music.

So, when did the infamous Stanley stomp start? Was that in the '50s?

**Craig:** Oh yeah, '50s or '60s.

And what was that in comparison to...

**Craig:** Well, it just got wild is all. What I mean, they started this, what you call your western swing, you know and that's when people got pretty wild. I never did care much for that myself.

**Betty:** We sure had a lot of fun dancing, but there isn't any place to dance now. You can't go to a dance.

The places before, were they like 3, 4 times the dance hall size compared to like now?

**Craig:** Oh, the Ace of Diamonds was big, yeah. And the Rod and Gun Club was always about like it is. It was always large. And the Stanley Club across the street, course it was bigger when it burnt down. They had a restaurant on one side and a big dance hall on the other side there on the Stanley Club.

**Craig:** A humane trap.

Why is that?

**Craig:** Well, it's supposed to break their back and kill them immediately. But the way they thrash around, I think drowning is better.

And what would that catch?

**Craig:** That'll catch a beaver.

**Craig:** That way you... it'll... and you just spread it out like that to stretch it out after you stretch them full length first.

What is...tell us about it, I'm not sure I know what that is...

**Craig:** It's just a board, a stretcher for fur, your skin, your fur, and then uh flesh (?) it good, pull it down over here, and nail it down the bottom. And then you put a cross piece on the bottom and stretch it out so that you've got the whole hide stretched as wide and long as you can possibly get it.

**Craig:** Beaver pond up here that's holding all this water up, back up there. I'm going to have to get the beaver, catch him, I guess, put him on a board.

**Betty:** Oh, don't do that he's a nice beaver. Young beaver.

**Craig:** I don't know whether he is or not.

**Betty:** It's cold.

**Craig:** Are you cold?

**Betty:** Yes.

