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This interview was conducted with Frank Headrick on March 16, 2005 at his home in Seattle as part of the Washington Fly Fishing Club's project to record its history and the recollections of its members. The interviewer is Chuck Ballard of the WFFC.

The transcript that follows is of the audio portion of the DVD recording. The interview was filmed by Perry Barth.

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CB: We're here today with Frank Headrick, a long-time member of the Washington Fly Fishing Club and this is about I think the fifth or sixth in a series of interviews with various members of the club who we consider to be somewhat celebrity status in either creating flies or authors like Steve Raymond or Gil Nyerger, whose quite the artist these days. Anyway we're here with Frank today and we're going to pick his brains about his tenure with the Washington Fly Fishing Club. So Frank, you joined the club in what year?

FH: 1940, June. And I could tell you how and why I joined it.

CB: Well that would be good to know.

FH: I started fly fishing, of a sort, about 1938. I had a bass rod and a silk line, and I'd tie a fly on the end of it and throw it on the water. The strange thing about it is I caught fish. Well then I found out that wasn't the proper way to do it. So I went and found out that there were people here that had fly tying material. So I went up on Broadway and Dawn Holbrook had a tackle shop in the back end of a barber shop. I went in there and got some hackle stuff to tie a fly. That was the start.

Well, the fly club had just started the year before. So, Dawn was getting members and he asked me about joining and I said "Well I'm not much of a joiner." And he said, "Why don't you go over and see Mr. Bradner at the book shop?" And so I did, and Bradner said, "Oh yes, you want to get in the fly club," because I was starting to tie flies. So that's the way I got started and met Bradner and we hit it off, and we hunted and fished together for over 20 years. So that was the beginning of the fly club.

CB: And Dawn was your sponsor, Dawn Holbrook?

FH: Dawn Holbrook, he sponsored a lot of people. In fact Dawn Holbrook and Bradner, Doc Brown, Len Hunton, they were all on Broadway, they started the fly club.

CB: Oh really? So it started as a bunch of local businessmen up there?

FH: Holbrook was great to get new members in and so that's the way it went.

CB: So where were you born Frank?

FH: Well I was born in Bellingham, March the 7th, 1908.

CB: Wow, so you just had a birthday then.

FH: I just had a recent birthday, yes, 97.

CB: 97! Fantastic, Fantastic. That is terrific.

FH: We moved from Bellingham up to New Westminister, when I was just probably four years old. My father built Fraser River Mills, [did] some brickwork on Fraser River Mills. We lived up there; it took a year or so. And of course he was like everybody else and hired all his relatives, had my uncles from both sides of my family working, I remember that. Then we moved back down to Bellingham and came back to Seattle in 1913.

CB: Wow.

FH: When I was six, my mother died. And in those days we didn't have government help so I was pushed from aunt to uncle to aunt, to take care of me. That's why I like women; I was raised by several different aunts.

CB: That's good. When did you get into the stonework? When did you start doing that?

FH: Well, masonry has always been in our family, back to great-grandfather. My grandfather on my father's side had a brickyard in Bellingham. And of course, his sons, my uncles, they all learned the trade, and my dad. So I grew up into it. I went to the University of Washington for a couple of years, and I was running out of money so I went back to work, worked up in Bellingham on the Normal School Library. The architect that I had for class at the University of Washington was the designer of the building. He came up to see how things were going and I was bent over there laying brick and he patted me on the back and said —~~What~~ "What are you doing here?" and I said "I'm trying to get enough money to get back to school." And he says, "You may be better off staying where you are." Because I was in architecture and in those days architects were a dime a dozen.

CB: So it wasn't a good field. So you picked the right field, and it kept you healthy for many, many years obviously.

FH: So of course, the depression came along, and there wasn't much work. But I managed to eke my way through it, by various jobs. I'd do anything that would pay a nickel. Then I started back into the trade and shortly [after] I started on my own. Like everybody else I picked up a little truck pulling a trailer, that's the way it started. Then after the Forties, the baby boom's going [on], all the people coming back from the service, there was lots of work.

CB: Right.

FH: I had three crews going all the time, for quite a while. And while they were going, I built this house, in my spare time.

CB: Really, this house that we're in? Wow, this is a really modern house. So what year was that?

FH: [1952].

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DB: Wow, this house looks like it was built in [1975], it's in wonderful condition.

FH: I drew the plans, and built it, and luckily I've been here ever since.

CB: Fantastic; so Frank, when you joined the club, you joined in 1940. And you were president in 1942-43, was it?

FH: Doc Brown was president after Bradner, and then I was president for a year, whatever year it was.

CB: 1942-43, I think it was.

FH: That always kind of ruffled his feathers when I was the first one that had been a two-year president. He said he was two years, but he was only about a year and a half.

CB: Well Brad had a way with making his point, preponderance for argument I guess. That's terrific. So how about your first fishing, you say you started in 1938?

FH: My first was in Sumas creek.

CB: Really?

FH: Sumas Creek starts with a hole in the ground up there.

CB: So it's a spring creek then?

FH: No, it's a little pond and then it's fed by other creeks; one of them is Breckenridge Creek, which always had a bunch of little beautiful trout in it. It's very colorful. Something in the water made them a different color. They weren't large. And then Sumas Creek runs into the Fraser. And I found a fairly large hole in the creek. The creek is covered over with foliage. It's sometimes a mess; I don't know exactly what it was. But I fished this one place, and I got a [four and a quarter pound] cutthroat out of it.

CB: Wow.

FH: And also several others. I mostly kept everything but the trout.

CB: Sure, sure. But this is before fly fishing. This is when you first began fishing.

FH: Yes, that's when I first started fishing.

CB: How old were you then, about?

FH: Oh, I was twenty, twenty-five.

CB: Oh, so you were already an adult, kind of when you started fishing then actually...

FH: I was already married, so, that was the start. Well, then it developed, after I got started to see how flies were built. I taught myself and sent for stuff from Herter's -- got the world-renowned materials from Herter's. I got started tying flies. I've always been able to try to do things by myself. I rigged up a vice—I took a saw to a bar [that I had], drilled a hole through it, put a thumb screw on it, and that was my first vise.



CB: Did it hold the flies very well?

FH: Well, it worked. Then of course I had things develop. I bought a good vise and got lots of material and started tying flies. Well in those days I was a cutthroat fisherman. And in the first years of the fly club we, what was his name? [Marvin Hedge?]. He was a cutthroat fisherman. So we went up to the Stilly and he is fresh full of all these spliced lines; the first ones I saw. He was making a forward tapered line in those days. We caught some cutthroats. Then fishing at the Stilly one time, I said, "Let's go up to Oso I heard a lot about steelhead up there." Well [we] went up there and we didn't catch any steelhead, but I was intrigued by the place and went back later, this is after I started fishing for steelhead, and caught a couple small steelhead, about five pounds, four or five pounds. Thought about putting them on display in Holbrooks' display case, and Doc Brown comes down and said "Hm, kind of small." So that was the start.

CB: Once you started steelhead fishing, did you tend to stay with the steelhead fishing more than anything?

FH: Yes, that's right. In fact I started a method ... I was anxious to get better rods. I had a Lyon and Colson [(Buffalo)] rod at first. And Letcher Lambuth, he said, "Oh, that's a good rod, you keep it." Well I started marking down how many fish I caught; when I got 100 steelhead, I retired the rod.

CB: How many? A hundred? Wow.

FH: Well as the years went by, I took the rods and stuck them up overhead in the basement and one day I got looking around, I had six of them.

CB: Six 100 rods, 100 fish-rods?

FH: I got two of them that I haven't used since. Then after the 600, things kind of tapered off with me. I began to travel a little bit. Bradner and I traveled on several cruises that got me started. So there [for about] five years during the Seventies, I would take off and go down to Mexico and South America and what not.

CB: Did you fish when you went on those cruises?

FH: Never.

CB: Neither one of you?

FH: No.

CB: Ok.

FH: You couldn't.

CB: No time.

FH: Well, we were on their schedule, not ours.

CB: Yes, exactly. So did you do any salt water fishing, Frank? Like for cutthroat or anything like that?

FH: No, I've never fly fished the salt water. I've fished it with salmon gear.

CB: Were those rods you were talking about, were those all cane rods?

FH: No, three of them were cane rods, and two of them were glass. I still like the glass rod.

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CB: They do have a nice action, don't they.

FH: I've got an 8-foot glass steelhead rod that was very good. Then I built an Orvis impregnated rod, 8-foot, never caught a steelhead on that.

CB: When you say impregnated, you mean that was a cane rod?

FH: Yes, just as straight as the day I bought it.

CB: No kidding, is it a two-piece or a one-piece?

FH: Two-piece.

CB: So tell me how you came about the Dandy Green Nymph? How did that get created?

FH: Well, as I say, Brad and I fished a lot and we went over to [Ed. note: Price Lake, near] Lake Cushman and we had to walk in, about a quarter of a mile, dragged our boats. I built some little one-man boats. And we dragged them in. The day before we left, I was tying up some little nymphs, and it worked over there. So Brad had to see what it was, so he named it -- called it the Dandy Green Nymph. That turned out to be, Perry can tell you, he used it. I never paid much attention to it.

CB: Any other patterns? Did you ever develop any other patterns?

FH: Oh yes, steelhead patterns. I got one, I call it the Headrick's Hellcat and a black one called Haille Selassie.

CB: Oh that's good. Do you have some of them still?

FH: Oh yes.

CB: So when we quit talking we'll take some pictures of the flies with the camera up close. That'd be great to have some pictures of the flies. So fly-tying, when did you stop fly-tying?

FH: Well, I still tie one once in a while.

CB: Do you? Great.

FH: Just out of curiosity. I take them to Perry when I tie up these little nymphs, because he liked his Dandy Green. And I have some feathers off of a Reeve's pheasant.

CB: Oh what's that? I don't even know what it is.

FH: Also some off of a Mongolian one, that's very dark. So the feathers on those, you just don't see anywhere else. I'll get back to it maybe.

CB: So when did you stop fishing? I mean, do you remember about what year you gave it up and just couldn't get out anymore or didn't want to?

FH: Well, let's see -- about five or six years ago.

CB: Oh, not long ago.

FH: My legs won't take it anymore.

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CB: Sure, sure.

FH: I've had my share of fishing.

CB: That's fantastic. Let's talk a little bit about the club. You mention that you used to fish and hunt with all the charter members of course, since you joined in 1940, which is one year after the club began.

FH: I was thinking about that the other day so I made a list of the people, I got it here. Here's some of the names of the first members of the fly club. Enos Bradner, Dr. Marvin Brown. Letcher Lambuth, Walt Johnson, Charlie King, Les Pickersgill, Dawn Holbrook, [Len Hunton], and I think Jack Litsey was in there, and Firmin Flohr. They weren't charter members, but they were the early ones [Ed. note: All but Johnson and Pickersgill were charter members]. I suppose a lot of these names (I'll run right through them in a hurry), see how many people today know all of these people because most of these, in fact I think all of them, they are gone. No, not all of them; Steve Raymond's still here. But Ralph Wahl, Jack Pratt, Harry Dunnigan, Sandy Bacon, Rollie [inaudible], Colonel Bill Fraser, Bob Perkins, Elliott Klosterman, Admiral Rowe, Boyd Aigner, Bill Hosie, George Lemke, George [inaudible], John Story, well, Jerry Swanson, but he's still alive. Well, that's a lot of people that have come and gone.

CB: I know it's just incredible. I think about the fact, Frank, that you joined the club the year I was born and I'll be 65 in October of this year, 2005. So Frank's been a member of the club as long as I've been alive, that's fantastic. And what a superb mind, I just can't get over it. This is kind of a personal question, but genetically, does your family have a history of long life?

FH: Yes, on my father's side. My great, great grandparents lived up into their late nineties.

CB: What are you ethnically? I mean what's Headrick?

FH: Well, it's Irish; mostly Irish and every kind of mixture, German, a little French. I never went back into the complete family history, it's all hand-me-down.

But I'd like to get back into the beginning of the fly club, what we started for. We wanted to get a fly closure, and they brought it up at the council. In those days we had a King County Council, or a state council. We went to those meetings.

CB: Those were sportsmen councils?

FH: That's how Ken McLeod got into it, he was writing [for] the *P.I.* And by that time, Brad was writing for the *Times*. So Brad kind of had a little bit of jealousy there, he didn't [want] Ken McLeod to be running things in the fly club, so they made him an honorary member. And it kind of ruffled Ken's feathers, but he stayed for quite a while. Well then we started promoting this fly closure. So we traveled all over the state, pleading our cause. I remember one night we left Seattle and went over to Cle Elum; Doc Brown and Bradner and I. The crowd was very antagonistic; they didn't want any fly closures. But eventually we got it through, and we got Pass Lake [closed]. We had the same fight on the Stilly and finally got it through, so that's how it started. After I was president (I don't know how it came around, but I represented the club for about 10 years), I went to all these council meetings. It helped a lot; I got to meet all the heads of the game department. It helped things in the fly club.

CB: It's probably the equivalent of what we call today our Conservation Committee, you know, it was promoting the fly fishing and stream rehab and those sorts of things.

FH: Well the club has grown so much and there're so many more people. You can do a lot more and you have a lot more money to work with, which [we] didn't in those days. We had meetings, I remember the first meeting I went to, the dinner was 35 cents.

CB: You can hardly put that in a parking meter today.

FH: Then I went to the next meeting; it was up in the Spring Hotel dining room. That was 75 cents.

CB: Wow, big increase. So where were all the meetings? Do you remember how we got to where we are today?

FH: Well, we chased around. We met at the Edmond S. Meany Hotel in the University District for quite a while, that was the first permanent meeting [place] we had. We met there for quite a long while. And then we went all over downtown to different restaurants and what not. We had a Christmas party at the old College Club before they moved to where we are now.

CB: Oh really?

FH: And Reuben Helms' wife ran the, I don't know what her title was, but she was in charge of the kitchen and that stuff, the cooking. We had some great times.

CB: So you went from the hotel in the U District to the old College Club.

FH: I'm not sure where we went.

CB: After that?

FH: But we were there for a while. Then we were down there [at] the yacht club, we were in there a long time. That was a nice place to be.

CB: Right.

FH: But then we started having those awards and we got to meet Tommy Brayshaw and Roderick Haig-Brown. And in those early days I used to go up to Letcher's house and he called me an artisan, because I work with my hands.

CB: Oh, ok.

FH: And he was building those fly strip rods that were twisted. He never gave me one, but I helped him there. Then he got so he could hardly see. Then we went to hospitals after the war and taught fly-tying to, some of them were prisoners of war here in the hospital, and some weren't. We started several people in their own fly-tying business.

CB: Fantastic. Do you remember any of those?

FH: No, I don't remember their names. I know we met in one hospital, a bunch of Italians. [This is another story] we ran into a bunch of German prisoners over in Eastern Washington, in the Okanogan country, working in the orchards. And I don't understand how they did all that. So we did a lot of good work.

CB: Did you teach fly casting and fly tying?

FH: I helped on the fly-casting, yes, at Green Lake. I got a kick out of some of the people who came from the east, and one young Italian guy who claimed to [know McLean] the guy who wrote the book, oh...

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CB: *A River Runs Through It?*

FH: He was a teacher back there and he worked under him and all he was trying to do was get as far as he could. I kind of straightened him out and he was very grateful. He belonged to the club for a while and then he pooped out and flew back east again.

CB: So he wasn't a good distance caster, then?

FH: Well I had never paid much attention. I cast to catch fish. And you don't have to cast more than about 90 feet to fish anyway.

CB: 90 feet's far, Frank. That's really far. If you can cast 90 feet, that's a long cast.

FH: Jim can cast long too; he can cast further than I can.

CB: Wow. So if you were to philosophically say what you'd like to see the direction of the club head in, or stay the same. How do you feel about how the club has progressed up to now?

FH: Well at first, I felt a little resentful because we were teaching everybody else to fly fish, and that's competition. But then I realized that everyone should have their chance, if they want to. I know I've seen the advancement in the fly fishing now where it's got so commercial, you know. If you don't have a \$500 rod and a \$300 reel, you're not worth it.

CB: Well you don't have to do that, believe it or not it's actually come full circle and you can get some very good rods for a hundred dollars. I think it's interesting that you'd bring that up, Frank. Because I remember at a board meeting in probably around 1978 or 1979, Dick Thompson, believe it or not, made a comment at one of the board meetings, he said, "You know I'm not too sure whether we're doing the right thing by teaching everyone about our sport, because they're going to be in competition with us." So that's true, but on the other side of that sword is the issue of, we need the support of all those people who have that common interest to be able to maintain the rivers and lakes that we've got as fly-fishing-only waters. We need their political support, so that's kind of like a two-edged sword.

FH: Away from the fly club I have taken some rods out and showed people how to cast and I've have one little glass rod made by, he's a fly-cast champion, oh, what's his name?

CB: Oh, like Steve Rajeff?

FH: Rajeff. I bought it at a yard sale and it was shot, so I brought it home and renewed it and put on guides and everything, it's an 8-foot rod. And that casts a number 8 line just as beautiful as any rod I've ever had, and probably sold for 10 dollars to start with.

CB: Amazing, yes.

FH: And I've also picked up some bamboo rods that looked terrible. As a matter fact, we used to have one fellow that came to the fly club that'd show you how to cast without a rod.

CB: Just the hand, just use his hand? Really?

FH: I forget his name. We had a lot of fun in the old days with the meetings. There weren't too many people, you know. We could kid each other along and have a good time.

CB: Sure, it [was] more a social evening as opposed to all this business we have to contend with today.

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FH: I'd like to mention about fishing with Bradner. You know, for twenty years we went to Wind River every September.

CB: Really?

FH: I went down one year, I had a broken arm and I couldn't cast but I went along. We fished the Columbia before the last dam was in. We fished down at a place called Plymouth and we waded up as far as we could. The river was pretty swift; you couldn't go very far – a nice big, long run. We caught steelhead and salmon. I don't know, one day

we went down and I think we caught 7 or 8. We didn't keep any. Even went up and fished for them small-mouthed bass, in the Columbia.

CB: Is that where the Wind River runs into the Columbia?

FH: Oh no, this is way down. Can't tell you exactly where, you go through the Rattlesnake Hills and down to Plymouth but that's all under water now, from the dam. And we went down and fished the North Umpqua and stayed down there. We borrowed a tent and went down to the Steamboat Inn; I guess it was a resort, the famous Steamboat Hole. And I looked around and I said –"This looks like rattlesnake country." A fellow said, –"Snakes? What? Where?" I found out that later that same day they killed two or three in the camp. Brad didn't want to stay there so we pitched a tent. He got excited and went all around the corners to make sure everything was staked down. The next day we went fishing and we got separated. I fished for a while then I would come up out of the canyon and start calling Brad. I thought he was fishing, I could hear his metal reel going around. It was rattlesnakes.

CB: Oh my gosh!

FH: Well finally, he came up. And I was standing in the road and had waders on, standing like this. And a snake came down when Brad came out of the lake so I went down into where a tree had fallen over and I threw a rock and it was full of rattlesnakes.

CB: Oh my gosh, it was like a den.

FH: There was a crew working there in the woods, and they all carried pistols with bird shot.

CB: Oh to shoot them up close.

FH: Yes. But I did catch a very nice steelhead, the only one on the trip.

CB: So I think we're about running out of film here, Perry indicated. We've got Perry here, Perry Barth, Frank's friend and my friend doing the camera work today for us. So we're running a little short of film Frank, so maybe we should close. Any great words of wisdom you'd like to say?

FH: Oh they say, –"Wisdom comes with age," but with me, age came along by itself.

CB: That's great. Alright, very good, well thank you very much Frank.

FH: You know I could go on and on about all those years and probably missed a lot of things that have more value than what I've said.

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CB: Well what I'm going to do, we've got another cassette here and what we'll do is close off and then if that other cassette is workable, we'll put it back in and keep going. We don't have to stop, other than that we're just running out of film on the one cassette. We want to get all the knowledge you have and learn about some of the early years and early days in the club. Alright, we'll sign off for now. Thank you very much, and it's just been [great] knowing you Frank.

Part II

CB: I'm so happy, Frank just got out of the hospital here, what, about two weeks ago? {He] had a bout with pneumonia. It's just wonderful at 97 years old to be in your own home and self-sufficient, now that's terrific. That is just terrific.

FH: I'm pretty lucky.

CB: Yes, very good. Let me just set these down here a second. So I don't know if you can zoom in on those any, we'll get a close-up here. I don't know if you can see those. You tied these? But they're Ralph Wahl patterns?

FH: Some of them.

CB: Some of them, yes. One thing that's beautiful about these flies and we'll try to get a close-up here in a minute, but the beautiful thing about these is that they all have eyes. And I find that really interesting because there's a lot of discussion off and on about fly patterns and whether eyes make any difference. And I really truly believe that they do. I think eyes help a lot in flies. But those are beautifully tied.

FH: Nowadays, they're using beads.

CB: That's true.

FH: But some of the beads are painted like eyes. Those are old eyes.

CB: Yes, the jungle cock feathers. So Frank, tell us about this feather here.

FH: Well my son Bob and I were hunting over in the Palouse country near Colfax and we were hunting pheasants, had an Irish setter dog. We jumped over a little wire fence and this bird gets up and flies away. I thought it was a Chinese pheasant that had a bunch of straw on its tail because there was loose straw on the ground. Anyway, it turned out to be a Reeve's pheasant. And they had planted just two or three over there to see if they would take off. Well, apparently they didn't, they didn't have any young. So this is kind of a souvenir of the old hunting days.

CB: Fantastic.

I have to tell you a little story; I used to work at a sporting goods store when I was a kid, well as a teenager. And we used to have a competition for the longest pheasant tail feather, [whoever] would win [received] a shotgun every year. Well somebody entered one of these kind of feathers and claimed they'd shot it. It was Yates Vanderford; it was Vanderford's Gas Station, out on the Eagle Road in Boise. But they'd figured out that he cheated because there was no pulp in the feather, it was all dry. So the guy had imported it from China or something.

That's amazing, this thing's probably 35 inches long or something like that. That's just incredible. Beautiful material.

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FH: That reminds me, when I was in Bellingham, I stayed up there and worked for a while and went hunting. I turned in a pheasant to Kienast; it was a cigar store and a sporting goods store. I got 2nd place, got a pair of hip boots for a prize.

CB: Fantastic, that's great; for the longest tail feather?

FH: I forget what the length was; it was the next to the longest.

CB: But the competition was for the longest tail feathers? And was the pheasant you shot on this side of the mountains?

FH: Oh yes.

CB: Really?

FH: Whatcom County; there used to be good hunting up there.

CB: Do you think they're all gone now pretty much or there's still a few?

FH: I don't know, haven't been there for so many years. In those days we had lots of grain fields and they had Hungarian partridge in there by the hundreds and thousands. And then after the war was over they couldn't raise enough food and they just disappeared and I don't think a Hungarian's been found up there in years.

CB: Wow, that's interesting they could live on this side because it's so damp over here, and usually they claim that's not real good for a water-fowl like that.

FH: But the Hungarian partridge makes good fly-tying.

CB: Yes it does. It certainly does. Well, these other boxes, Frank. These patterns here, we'll try to get the camera like I said a minute ago, up close. These are cutthroat patterns?

FH: Cutthroats, yes.

CB: Ok, and again that one looks like a Ralph Wahl-style one.

FH: Well, no, not necessarily.

CB: And that looks like a Brad's Brat almost, I can't really tell from this angle. Now this is pretty close to the Dandy Green Nymph right there. Is that it? Is that the one? It's pretty close, it's very similar.

FH: No, that's not it. I think I gave Perry a dozen of them and I don't think I've tied any since.

CB: So there's not Dandy Green Nymphs, Frank's famous fly is not even available.

FH: And I don't know if I've got my Hellcat in there anywhere.

CB: What was the style? What was the tie of the Hellcat? Was it brightly colored?

FH: Yes, fluorescent, this color.

CB: Fluorescent pink.

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FH: Purple hackle and I forget what the rest of the fly was.

CB: But it was effective.

FH: I gave that box of flies to my son. And I don't even have a pattern.

CB: Speaking of that, you're one of the five or six guys that all had cabins in a row on the Stilly, right?

FH: Yes.

CB: And you still have residence there, your son lives there now?

FH: Yes.

CB: Because when we did the interview with Steve Raymond, we talked about the various cabins and who owned them.

FH: Well I could tell you about the cabins up there. When Bradner was working for the Times, they sent him over to [Ed. note: Bikini Atoll to cover the atomic testing] and just before he left, we heard there was this fellow up there that wanted to sell some property. So there was nothing more done then Walt Johnson came over to me and he said, "Frank, let's go up to the Stilly together, I think we can get some property up there." So we decided to buy two lots together. Then my wife, you know how women are, getting along, she said, "I don't think it's a good idea; fine to buy but get them separately." So Walt bought a hundred feet and I bought a hundred feet, side-by-side.

CB: Ok.

FH: Then Brad said before he left, "If you buy the property up there, see if you can get me some." So I bought the next lot, it was a fifty-foot lot. And he when he came back he paid me and I bought that for \$500 and paid \$600 for my hundred feet. When he got back, he and Sandy Bacon must have got rid of it, that's where Steve Raymond is now.

CB: With the little cabin.

FH: Yeah

CB: Ok, wow.

FH: I get a kick out of this -- my first bill for taxes on the property was 29 cents. Can you imagine 100 feet of waterfront on the river?

CB: That's amazing, what year was that about?

FH: The Forties.

CB: That's amazing. So there were you and Bradner and Sandy Bacon and Walt Johnson [all] had a place there?

FH: Walt Johnson had built his fireplace in his little cabin. Then there's some other lots further down the river, one's Knudsen's; Al Knudsen had some property. And Wes Drain had a little strip of property. And there were two or three other people that didn't belong to the fly club that had some property up there.

CB: So you were all basically in a strip.

Frank Headrick Edited Transcript

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Fly Fishing Collection

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FH: We're all fishermen.

CB: That's fantastic. So when you built the house up there did you live in it? Or you lived here and that was just your cabin?

FH: Well, first I built a squad tent. Built a floor and had a 16x16 squad tent. And finally I built a cabin out of [logs]. Then Bob tore part of it down and made a two-story house out of it.

CB: Right, right. That's what I saw when Steve and I were up there a couple years ago.



FH: Of all the people up there, Walt moved across the river, back in the woods. And of course, Brad and Sandy are both gone. There was another fellow who had property up there, a piano salesman. I can't remember his name. But in those days it was really something. There were a lot of people fishing as you looked down the river, there'd be seven or eight people in a line. And some of them were gentlemen and some of them were fish hogs, had all kinds.

CB: Well, Steve mentioned that a lot of stuff goes on because some of those people live up there in Oso and above, that don't have a lot of respect for conserving fish. They're there to catch them and eat them. So were you a part of the group that got the Stilly a fly-fishing only [river]?

FH: Oh yes; I just heard lately that they're going to divert the river away from the clay bank.

CB: Really?

FH: Now, there's another story. We decided in the fly club that we were going to do something about that clay bank. So I got my nose in it, being in construction, I got hold of a guy who had a bulldozer and got up there and all they had to do, actually it would be part of the old stream, [was] move it around closer to the road, away from the clay bank. The game department got wind of it and closed it right off. So I actually had the bulldozer ordered, and now they're going to do it.

CB: No kidding, after all that. That was probably 30 years ago you tried to do that.

FH: Oh, forty years ago.

CB: And now it's going to be okay to do it. Suddenly they finally woke up to that. Wow, that's incredible. So that clay bank, do you remember the year the river was wrecked by that?

FH: I don't remember what year it was; we had it pretty bad there for a few years.

CB: Yes.

FH: It's strange, that bank is quite high and it's all just gray clay—kind of a blue-gray.

CB: You know Zane Grey wrote about that river, didn't he?

FH: Yes.

CB: And do you remember the era when that book was written? Was it written before you guys started fishing?

FH: Oh yes, oh yes.

CB: Oh, it was?

FH: And Haig-Brown was up there to Deer Creek. He liked to fish in the creek. Well, I've been up and down that Deer Creek twice. I took the first trip seven miles, up and came down. Ken McLeod and I did it. Then one of the fellows in the game department wanted to take a survey and we went through up to [Lake] Cavanaugh, or almost to Cavanaugh, and went down through all the brush and clumps and what not and hit the river and came all the way back down to Oso too. That was a while longer than a nine mile trip. I got pictures of it, steelhead and salmon in the holes.

CB: Is that right? What year was that about?

FH: Oh, I don't remember.

CB: In the Fifties, or earlier?

FH: Yes, it had to be in the Fifties.

CB: Ok. And how about the Seep Lakes in eastern Washington, you were here when that came about, right?

FH: Oh yes. I remember our first trip over to Jameson; also we went to those lakes down there... Teal

CB: Oh. Hampton and Teal.

FH: [One where I got mine], Beverly was it?

CB: There may be a Beverly Lake, I don't know honestly.

FH: And we got fish about that long in about that deep.

CB: Oh, they were fatter—

FH: Little bitty heads.

CB: Isn't that amazing? Last night we were talking about [this] discussion [they are having] about building a huge dam, 500-foot earth filled dam in the lower Yakima River [(Black Rock Reservoir)]. You know it would flood an enormous area down there out of Horse Heaven Hills and down in that part. They were talking about, well would that much water, 500 feet of depth, you know, they'd pump the water out of the Columbia River and have to go up over the hills like they did at Banks Lake. You know how Banks Lake was formed out of Grand Coulee. But then the question of course came would it be the similar situation of what happened when all the Seep Lakes formed? Would you start a whole new set of Seep Lakes in all that part of Washington State, you know down around Walla Walla and down in that area. All the sudden springs and lakes would start to form out of ground water. I don't think it'll ever happen, but it's really interesting how those lakes came about.

FH: That's been a big problem with water, this year particularly.

CB: Have you ever seen a year, Frank, in all the years that you've been here in the Northwest, of this poor of snow pack?

FH: I don't believe so.

CB: I don't either, this is incredible.

FH: But everyone's depending on water. And look at what's happening to California; they've just about used up the whole river.

CB: I know, I know. It's really going to be tough.

FH: I don't know what's going to happen this year. We might get a lot of rain that will help.

CB: Well, if we have a wet spring, you know it's a possibility that we could get our weather pattern back to normal and have the rest of summer be normal.

FH: I think we're nine inches under what we usually have for rain.

CB: I think we only have nine inches; we're way, way under what we're supposed to be I think. I think we've only had, since December, I think I heard it was like six or seven inches. So it's very, very low. And there's no snow. I just came across the pass just three days ago; I was over at Lake Chelan. And there's no snow on Blewett, or any of the passes. It's just barren.

FH: The North Cascades Pass opened up earlier.

CB: It's open on Thursday, unbelievable.

FH: Last time I was over there, right after it opened, there was snow piled up 15 feet high on the side of the road.

CB: So do you have any great words of wisdom you want to leave to the heirs of—

FH: I like to talk a little bit about Jameson, because that was a lot of fun going over there. And I remember when Gordy came into the club, Gordy Young, and he just did a [inaudible] and he came over there. He forgot to bring anything to drink I guess. So I don't remember if I gave him a pint of whiskey or just gave a drink. But anyway, he came over and I was cooking a fish on the charcoal. Sometimes the fish over there was good, sometimes they were a little muddy. This happened to be a good one. But that's how I got acquainted with Gordy. And we had a lot of fun over there. We also went hunting and shooting [chukar]. Hell, Elliott Klosterman come over with a brand-new Jeep, tore off through the sage brush, and scratched all the sides off of it.

CB: Elliott was kind of a wild man, wasn't he?

FH: He was strong as an ox. He did a lot of [chukar] hunting.

CB: He was quite a photographer, I understand. In fact he actually did it professionally for a while.

FH: Oh yes, he had a studio up on the Skagit.

CB: Is that where it was?

FH: And he went up to Salt Creek frequently because he was selling stone, working for a stone outfit, sideline. He spoke German fluently, so they sent him over to Germany and he had a special job.

CB: Interpreting, probably trying to pick their technical brains.

FH: I don't know if this should go in there or not, but he sued Boeing.

CB: I know he did, no, I'm well aware of that. And rightfully so, I actually knew part of the internals of what went on there and the company thought they could do better than he could. So they gave him the patent rights, thinking they were going to go off and do something way better, and they were never able to do it. So what it ended being is they ended up having to pay him for the patent because they basically ended up using his design because they could not come up with something better than what he designed. [Ed note: The reference is to a type of adhesive that Klosterman invented. He eventually got a big settlement from Boeing].

FH: Oh!

CB: That's how it came about. It was a fair and square deal. I mean, I'm sure there were people in the company that were mad at him, but—

FH: [He] got several million.

CB: Yes, I think it was four or five million dollars, that's right. Good for him. I mean, it's one of those things were sometimes companies get a little greedy or big-for-their-britches and think they can do better and they can't. That was pretty commendable of him. It's interesting that he would give up his engineering education, and be a photographer, and then come back to it. I mean I found that quite interesting.

FH: They pulled tricks on me up at the Pass Lake. We used to have our annual meeting up there. We would get up in the morning and, —“Would you like a drink Frank?” Those days, I was drinking. Here he would have a bottle of scotch but he had it full of rum, high proof rum. You take one drink and your ears were steaming.

CB: There were a lot of pranksters in the club, weren't there? Al Pratt used to play poker in the middle of the night up there in his camper at the outing, the annual Pass Lake outing. That was quite a thing. I kind of miss that; we kind of got away from it. It became so difficult because of all the park rules and you couldn't get it in, you couldn't have liquor, you couldn't park in the parking lot, it just sort of ruined it. Did you fish Pass Lake a lot?

FH: Yes I did, and I got skunked quite often, too.

CB: Oh I'm glad to hear that, because that's a tough lake for me, I've never had good luck there.

FH: Some days it was real good, some days, I knew the fish were in there. When I first fished, I caught a lot of perch.

CB: Really?

FH: They had that Perch Weed, the first bay you come to in there, and it was up there. There were channels, like this wide, going through it. You drop the fly down in there you get a perch about this big.

CB: Wow.

FH: That was before they poisoned it. And then they put Silver Salmon in there, and we caught some Silvers. I caught a big brown trout, about a 5-pound brown trout. The only one I ever caught. It had a salamander sticking out of its throat and a fly stuck in the side of it.

CB: I'll be darned. So that must have been a long time ago, although there are still brown trout.

FH: I think they poisoned it after that too.

CB: So where's your favorite fishing place? The Wind River, or the—

FH: Oh, the Stilly. I hope they put my ashes in there.

CB: How many fish do you think you've caught? You said you had four or five fly rods that have 100 fish on them?

FH: I've got six. I've caught over 600. Since then, I've caught more, maybe twenty or twenty-five.

CB: But that's still an incredible amount of fish, isn't it?

FH: But you know I've fished an awful lot. I'd work all day; of course I was my own boss, so I could quit early, go up and fish till dark. And do that two or three times a week sometimes.

CB: Was it mostly summer fishing?

FH: Oh yes. And then sometimes I would get up in the morning and go trout fishing. Used to drive out to Ballinger, get up in the dark, go out and fish, come home and have breakfast and go to work. Now you've got a fellow in the fly club now, Japanese, what's his name?

CB: Oh, [Miyawaki]?

FH: Yes, and he's about as crazy as I used to be.

CB: About fishing? I agree, yes. Leland gets out a lot. He's an avid fisherman, very avid fisherman. Yes, he's great.

FH: Some of us, it wasn't an avocation, it was a passion.

CB: Right, right. Well I think the problem for most of us today, in the modern world, if you will, is that you end up having almost two jobs in order to make ends meet. I think that's the downside of the modern age, but I think most of us have the passion but we tend to not be able to get out. I'm embarrassed myself for not getting out more than I do when I'm retired, and I have every opportunity I just don't do it enough.

FH: Well, it's a great sport.

CB: It is a great sport.

FH: I just wandered back on when they first started meeting in a nice clubhouse. When we first started the club, there was a few very prominent people, let's say. Like Letcher Lambuth, he had several friends that joined the club just on his account, never attended meetings. We had a hard time ever getting dues out of them. The rest of us were more of the working class, there were plumbers, electricians, painters, artisans, and writers, and what not. You're running out of—

CB: Well we'll close one more time Frank and we'll depend on which closing we'll use. I did want to make one other comment though, I'm really impressed with the artwork you have in your house. This stuff is beautiful, you know, some of these pictures in here are—maybe we can—

FH: That's another story. I've always worked with my hands. And somebody (Don Ives) wanted me to do a little deal, it's like a garden work [he] wanted framed. I said I could do that. I framed that for her. Then I got started in, I framed all these. Some of them are originals, some of them prints. All of that stuff over there [are] originals. And I think that one is. Then I got acquainted through my friend Betty, she belonged to the, this isn't recorded is it?

CB: It's on, yes, we better shut it off.