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Oral History Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Candise White

Interviewer: Peggy Leduc

Date, August 26, 2021

Place, Village Day Lodge, Candise's Office, Sun Peaks, BC

Interview Topic: Candise White's experience as one of the early (late 1970's/early 1980's) full-time residents of what is now Sun Peaks.

*Please note, this transcript was created automatically by Google Recorder and was manually corrected against the audio recording for clarity by Peggy Leduc (Archivist)

Transcript

PL: Hi. My name is Peggy Leduc. And today, on August 26th 2021 at the Sun Peaks Village Day Lodge I will be conducting an interview for the Sun Peaks Historical Society Oral History Program. In this interview, I will be speaking to Candise White, who is also one of the founding members of the Sun Peaks Historical Society, on the topic of her experiences as an early full-time resident of what is now the Municipality of Sun Peaks. I would also like to mention that this is the inaugural interview of the Sun Peaks Historical Society Oral History Program. The Sun Peaks Historical Society is excited to initiate such a culturally important program for the benefit of the community.

Hi, Candise. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

CW: Of course.

PL: Thank you, then. Let us begin. Okay, so Candise, your last name is White. What is your connection to the Whites? The family who owned and operated the Whitecroft ranch and after whom Whitecroft, is named?

CW: Well, I'm married to Frank White who is the son of Rob White who is the son of Roda Shaw and it was the Shaws who purchased the ranch. She married Frank White Senior. Frank Boreland White. So that is my husband's grandfather and he served in the First World War and came home and ranched for many years.

And in the late 50s, he died in a horse accident. Which was ironic because he was a horseman and his horse threw him, and he broke his neck.

PL: After his passing, who was operating the ranch at that time?

CW: Well, at that time, Rob would have been 17. So was he and his sister who was about 11 years older than he was and her husband, who would return from the second world war. Then in the late 40s and they were all operating the ranch, the family. So it was a working cattle ranch and it also became in later years a guest ranch for people who wanted to come up in the summer and go riding and experience ranch lifestyle.

You have to remember how remote this place was. So later on when Todd Mountain became, it also became a place for people to stay in the winter. It was one of the first B&Bs. but it only served dinner.

PL: When you go down there today, you can see the lodging house which is being renovated I believe.

CW: Well, I haven't been down that way for a while, so I would have to go and look and tell you which, which one I whether that is the original and it still standing or if it's the one that burnt down,

PL: I believe you used to be a ski racer. What is your background with skiing in BC, and what led you to pursue your passion for this sport in the Todd Mountain/Sun Peaks area?

CW: I was a dreadful racer. I didn't know how to stop. That's why they put me into racing because I could go fast and I didn't know how to stop. So this was in Whistler in the early days. but I believe it was the first mountain racing team. We were the Whistler Marmots. And my family just got involved at Whistler because my father, Blair Macdonald, was an architect and was involved in the development of the first facilities of Whistler Mountain. And he eventually, with his partner, won the contest to design the Blackcomb town center at the base of Blackcomb, in the Blackcomb center. So that whole town center was designed and laid out by him and his partner, John Perkins. At the time the building used to be called Stoney's and it's a big stone building - it's like the hub of the town center that was his own personal design. He also designed the Blackcomb Day Lodge.

So over the years I was just in the ski industry. Everybody skied in the 60's. That (skiing) was very, very big. So I only raced for a few years. I was, you know, good for around there, certainly not anywhere near the BC team or anything like that. Good skier, lousy racer. But okay. So what happened was in school I'm still skiing. And when I went to university, I was at SFU and I was looking for a summer job and there was an ad for Grouse Mountain. I worked there for many years. I ran the sky (Grouse Skyride), all kinds of things, I don't know. It was at Grouse where I became a professional ski patroller, just because it was an interesting job and it paid well. So that's how it worked out. And so over the years I've patrolled at Grouse and a few other local hills and also, so it's paid patroller...and then I came up here because at the same time, I started working for the Keg (Steakhouse) at North Vancouver No. 1, and I was bartender and I was, I think, the first girl bartender (or second one).

So anyways, some friends of mine bought the Keg in Kamloops. So I came up here to train and sort of get the (Kamloops location) a little more upbeat. There were a whole lot of people from the lower mainland, who did come up because things were not running well. So, we came up to train people and in the course of that, I broke up with my boyfriend and a job came (and I finished school..) a job came available for pro patrol at Tod Mountain.

PL: Roughly what year was that?

CW: That would be '79. So I applied to the job and I got the job. I had scads of experience from Grouse, because Grouse is such a busy hill. And the patrol leader (at Tod Mountain) at that time was Frank White. So he hired me, and we worked together. It was very, you know, a working relationship. And then eventually, we just (after the season) we got together and the rest of his history. So I was a pro patroller there for, I don't know... a long time. At least 10 years?.

PL: So that was your earliest experience with Tod Mountain, is when you came up to be (a patroller)?

CW: I had been here once before in the mid 70's and I came up and it must have been February. I thought the place was hell on earth. It was so cold and being from the lower mainland. Like, seriously, it was ridiculous. They still had capes for the Burfield chair. You put your cape on and then he left at the top, and then they sent it back down. The capes all got blown away, or taken over the years.

PL: What was the community in the ski operations like in the days before you lived on the mountain - when you first started coming up?

CW: Well, we actually lived on the mountain because Frank became Mountain Manager. So we did live in one of the cabins down - it's on the side of the road there. Across from Shorty and Gail Stiles.

PL: For clarification, what was the address of that?

CW: I have no idea. We didn't have addresses. There were four people who lived up the hill: (Ron) Shorty and Gail Stiles and Frank and I. And then in the summer, Bill and Alvril Rublee. Bill was the ski school director then and they managed the McGillivray Lake Fishing Camp which also did not have an address and didn't have any power either. So, that's, yeah. So we actually lived on the mountain then. We moved off Mountain to build our house. So, we're just about at Heffley Lake.

PL: And what was involved with your decision to move permanently up on the mountain at that time. Just proximity to work?

CW: Frank was Mountain Manager - it came with the job. So it worked because we were building our house so it was, it was cool. It was free rent. And the ski operations, I mean, it was pretty small. It was a local ski area.

We had some people that would come from somewhere else. There weren't many places to stay. There was the club cabin, but if you wanted to come on an extended visit from somewhere else, you had to stay in the cabins, pretty much.

PL: And what was the road like coming up for your, say, your day trip to Tod Mountain?

CW: Well, it was a gravel road. It actually was pretty good. The plowing was really good.

PL: How many full-time residents were up here prior to your moving here? Was it pretty lonely up here?

CW: It was Shorty and Gail Stiles. And there's a manager in the club cabin but that was sporadic. Most people lived at Heffley Lake. There were a lot of people that worked up here pre my time - you could talk to Frank about that in great detail and you probably should. But most people lived at Heffley Lake.

PL: You mean around the shores of Heffley Lake?

CW: Yeah, there is one particular road, Lake Shore, where a lot of people just built houses. Or rented. A lot of people lived at the fishing camps, the two fishing camps ... There's one on the other side of Heffley Lake. And then the one that's closest to the road. Okay, so a lot of people, a lot of employees lived there as well. Rented cabins for the winter season, nobody lived up here.

PL: My next question delves a bit more into that: please tell us a little bit about your street and your house. For example, where was it? Did you build it yourself?

CW: Well, we built our house at Heffley Lake. We didn't build the cabin, right?

PL: Who had built the cabin?

CW: I don't know..

PL: So it was just you and Shorty and Gail...

CW: They owned the house that the cannabis store is now in so we were across the street from them. And Shorty Stiles is iconic and has countless history. He was a hockey player, he was a big deal in town. He was a pioneer. So Shorty is somebody you should talk to. Yes, they're in Victoria now.

PL: Were you in the cabin that is currently located on Sun Peaks Road? There's one off by itself.

CW: It's the one right across from the cannabis store. There were people who have had cabins, places that they built over the years along Burfield Drive. But it was not a big community. There were of course, as well, to clarify, employees didn't live up here but there were an awful lot of people like the Greys, and Merediths and others. And if you look at those houses above the Burfield Lodge, many of them being refurbished, those have been here for ages and ages.

PL: Did they precede the house that you lived in?

CW: I don't know, you'd have to ask Frank. And also that development of the small condos up and behind - those have been here forever. So it was, as far as full time residents, Frank and I and Shorty and Gail Stiles. Other people would come up. You know, they come up for the fall or maybe hunting season or just to get out of town and people were always there during the winter but as far as permanent full-time residents it was just us. But don't misunderstand me, there were a lot of people in the cabins long before I showed up. And there's a lot of people that you could talk to...the McLarens, of course.

PL: We hope to. Your story is particularly of interest just in the fact that you were an early first full time resident. Pertaining to that, as a resident of the mountain at this early stage in its development, services must have been really limited. What, if any, were some of the practical difficulties in living on the mountain at what time?

CW: Power went out a lot. It would be out over three days. You know, in the dead of winter because there weren't a lot of people living up here... particularly if it was winter. All these people that had been here forever, you know since the 60s - since the place was built - it was developed for the winter. So in the winter it was better, but if it was the off season, it would definitely be three days (before the power came back on) because there weren't a lot of people up here.

PL: So did that ever make you want to high tail it? Move?

CW: No.

PL: What about things like grocery shopping?

CW: Well, you went to Kamloops. As one still does quite frequently. Kamloops is not that far away. Now the road is certainly better, but we would go to town once every two weeks. Payday, do the laundry because we didn't have washer and dryer and you know, do your shopping, go for dinner...

PL: Were there any retail services up when you first moved up here? I've heard of people going to the tuck shop, trying to get the basics like milk...

CW: I don't remember that, It could be before my time. No, if anything, if you could go down to the Heffley store, That was about it. I'm not familiar with the tuck shop. You have to ask Frank about that. We had the rental and ski shop in the Burfield Lodge and that was about it. Then when the Shuswap Lodge was built, which was supposed to eventually turn into a machine shop and since being turned into the Annex - was Bento's, and then it was the Annex... and we had a ski and rental shop out of there. Then we moved it into a trailer, but as far as retail services, no, it was pretty limited. This was all forest.

PL: I had heard that the first grocery retail shop here was Roxy's. What year was that around?

CW: Well, that was in Sun Peaks time so it would be in the 90's, but I can't remember what year. Yeah, Roxy's (Market). That's (Roxy's) It would carry newspapers, it was exciting. So Roxy and Conrad (Glowczynski - owner of Bolacco). And then Ian McLaren built McSporties later on.

PL: What was social life like up here on the mountain in those days?

CW: It was pretty social. We had a lot of parties after work. Everybody would convene in the Burfield which had a sort of pub bar, then. And have a drink or two and then everybody would scatter - go home. Go to their cabins... whatever... make dinner. We had a lot of dances. We had a lot of parties downstairs in the Bier Stube. It was very social, very social - it was constant.

PL: How did you find it community wise? I know there wasn't a full-time community, but did you find it more social in those days in terms of community getting together?

CW: That I can't really compare because I'm at an age where I don't party. I mean, we were in our mid 20s and we didn't have kids. Your social life goes... things change. Now we just don't go out because I don't like to drive in the dark and might as well party at home.

PL: I've heard from a lot of people that the Bier Stube and the Burfield Lodge was the place to party.

CW: Always.

PL: People would go out of their way. Now, let's see here... you are still a full time employee of the resort? What year did you become an employee of the resort?

CW: So, I have been an employee of the resort since 1979

PL: And in what position?

CW: Well, I was a professional ski patroller. I worked in the bar at the Burfield when they ran out of bartenders and then they could just grab you (to bartend). I have done everything. but significantly the ski patrol job, Frank became Mountain Manager so I went to Bill Rublee to see if

I could be a ski instructor and then took various levels and became a ski instructor, worked for a number of directors and I was supervisor of the Sunkids program for ages and ages and ages like, probably good 10 years at least.

PL: We might be meeting with you again, then, to discuss the development of that program.

CW: It was a cool program. I can't speak to it now. Of course, because I'm not in the ski school, but it was a very cool, very popular program, especially what we call the locals program because we didn't have a lot of local kids up here, but we could go around town and pick up all the kids by bus, bring them up here and have camps. So we had Christmas camps, New Year's, Spring break camps, that was massive. I can't speak to the runnings of the ski school today but at the time yes, it was a blast.

PL: Well, that was the end of the questions that I have for you. Is there anything else that you'd like to share with us just to help us get a sense of what it was like to be, you know, one of the first full time residents up here?.

CW: I would say, I don't even know if I go with "one of the first" because I would be wrong. There might have been somebody living up here full time before that. But, you know, there were times that it certainly, it just felt like the four of us on the road and we both lived our lives. It was great for great neighbors, and never had to feel like you had to be in somebody else's face. It was "Hi," having the occasional dinner or occasional drink or something. It was lovely. We just lived on the mountain because we enjoyed it and people lived up here because they like to be away from things right? So yeah, it was fun. But a lot of people came and went over the years but more people came and stayed, than not. But then there's a lot of people that Frank would know, like the Menchie's, and oh, just scads of people that have been and gone and spent, you know, five or ten years here long before I showed up.

You have to remember the place was, you know, from the 60s, right? So there's a lot of people in that almost 20 year period that were here may have lived here full-time year-round. I don't know. So this is just putting it in my perspective. Everything I say is only speaking from my perspective. I don't know about the time before. So I don't want to be historically inaccurate and saying something that isn't true.

PL: We will take note of that then, but I think that your story is important whether or not you are, in fact, among the first full-time residents are not.

CW: You know it's like being a pro patroller up here. I think I was probably the third women pro patrol or I know they're at least that least two before me. Again (I don't know) before my time. But it was an unusual thing at the time and into the 80s... then there started to be a lot of women pro patrollers. I don't think that it was never a job that women couldn't do, it is just that they didn't seem to apply for it. But, you know, if it was something you were interested in, you're doing first aid and skiing. It was really a logical step.

PL: Do you feel that Sun Peaks (Tod Mountain) was particularly forward thinking in that regard?

CW: Well I would say the patrol director certainly was. Yeah, absolutely. It wasn't a question of oh, we need to have this many women or no, we don't. It was just open. You do a job, great. You're hired, male or female.

PL: Anything else that you'd like to add?

CW: I'm sure... but nothing I can think of.

PL: Well, you know what, there's always another interview...

CW: History is evolving...

PL: It is. And this (interview) is going to be part of the thread that is going to help us understand Tod Mountain.

CW: And(remember) all those people and all those cabins, and all those houses were there long before we showed up. And Frank could tell you some pretty funny stories too. What I am certain of is that they had a sense of community there. I have no doubt because they were families and then their kids became friends and then their kids had kids and so it went. But you know, a lot of those people that were there then, their families are still here now and I taught some of their kids because I coached Nancy Greene Ski League for quite a few years as well. But the sense of community when you start to talk about streets and neighborhoods and all that that kind of thing came when Mario and Robin came and built their place, you know up on Sunburst Drive and suddenly there were people that were living here full time year round. That might have worked in town as Mario and Robin (Pozza) did. There were people like Ines and Peter (Popig) who came up here to live.

Nancy and Al (Raine) came here, built a hotel. She began to be a spokesperson for the resort. So I think this is the time when there was a really starting to be a community, Roxy opened the store, Conrad opened the coffee shop. You know, these were places where people went. But that was after we'd moved off the hill. But we never intended to live up the hill permanently. Which had nothing to do with anything other than the fact that we didn't want to live on the mountain year round. It's lovely. It's fabulous. But it's a long winter. Winters can start really early and you have snow late. And summers can be a bit buggy. So moving off the mountain just gave us a bit more of four seasons. From our perspective you wanted to get away from work. I mean, you can't live and work (in the same place). Many people do of course but for us you want to be away from working. You want to go home and turn your mind off. It (here) is fabulous. It's great. And kids growing up here, they know. It's lovely, but was not what we wanted to do. And plus, we had this fabulous piece of property at the lake.

PL: I will just end the interview here and say thank you again Candise for sharing your experience with us. It's been a pleasure to speak with you today. And your interview will be a valued addition to the Sun Peaks Historical Society's Oral History Program.

CW: Thank you very much.