

Summary of Conversation
Facilitated and recorded by Pat Clemens,
August 4, 2010,
with Earl Higley and Diane Higley Senecal,
Lynn Peters, Darlene Lewis, Georgie Hurd, and Carl Arent,
With respect to the Higley cabins, 1946 to present,
Red Feather Lakes, Colorado



Former Gooch house which became the Higley antique store



Earl Higley



Diane Higley Senecal

Ray and Beverley Higley, Earl and Diane's parents, came to Red Feather Lakes and bought their first cabin in 1946. That cabin was very near Henry and Alma Rogers' cabin. He was from Atwood, Kansas, like them and that's why Ray and Beverley came to the area – at his invitation.

The Higleys were basically farmers and they came west two weeks max in the summertime, around the end of July and the beginning of August. Two weeks was the limit – they were farmers. Beverley was a modern woman, however, much before her time. When it came time for Ray to retire, she said, “Ray, if you want to stay here and kill weeds all summer, fine. I have a place I can go and relax.” So she would come up in May and stay until September, usually with her daughters Diane and Janice. She had a small antique shop in the former Ralph Gooch family cabin next door. She would load up her cat, two dogs and all her antiques, and she would drive west. Ray would come out for a while with their son Earl, until they needed to return home to harvest.

Beverley truly loved Red Feather, much more than Ray. She played bridge, liked to fish, painted the scenery, and sold a few antiques.

Their son Earl said the main thing he did in Red Feather Lakes was fish, both as a child and as an adult.

When Diane first came to Red Feather she was nine and her little sister Janice was three. They climbed rocks and followed their mom to the lakes. They had to take everything with them – blankets, raincoats, art supplies, lunch, fishing tackle, and chairs to sit on. They did fish, a lot.

But when the kids got bored with fishing, they would end up running around the rocks, climbing, and having fun. Diane said their mother never worried about them. Maybe she could hear them, but then maybe not. No one ever worried. They went to all the lakes. Family favorites

included Snake Lake, Nokomis and Letitia – and sometimes they even lugged all their stuff to Parvin. Beverly always had to have her paints. At the time they could go anywhere – there weren't any fences or barriers. If you were on private property, no one cared, and there wasn't a lot of that. In those days there were perhaps only two or three cabins at Snake Lake. They could tramp anywhere and everywhere.

The “state lake” was Bellaire, and occasionally the family would go there, but that was an organized trip in the car, too far to walk. They used to call it “Blair,” and Westlake used to be “Twin Lakes.”

Once the Higleys made a trip to Lost Lake, east of the Creedmore Lakes. That required some planning – you couldn't just pick up and go. That would be a “picnic trip” in the old '45 Dodge. There weren't any mechanics up here at the time and one car got high-centered going down into Creedmore Lake. The roads were just awful.

There weren't too many “events” during the summer. There was the old CC (church camp) up on the hill and one time they showed movies. And sometimes there were dances. There was the dance hall on Dowdy Lake, and Earl remembers dating the girls and taking them to the dances there on Saturday nights. That foundation is still there, behind Clem's.

There were several big logging camps up on Deadman in the 1940s and 50s. Earlier there was a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) logging camp. Later the “prisoners of war” from Greeley worked out of that camp.

Janice, Beverly's youngest daughter, was always afraid her mother would stay in Red Feather and she would have to go to school there. Beverly threatened that a couple of times to her children “if you kids don't straighten up!”

The first cabin the Higleys bought was already constructed, but then Ray built one on Hiawatha Highway in 1949-1950. That one is at 222 Hiawatha Highway. Janice Higley Haneborg now owns the cabin next door where the antique store was located. The stove in there is the original one. They changed some of the furniture, but it still has all the original woodwork. That is the same cabin which was previously occupied by the Gooch family and was moved from over near Ramona Lake, board by board. It always had a clock, but the original clock has been replaced.

Diane Vap (sp?) is still using the family cabin that belonged to her grandparents, Alma and Henry Rogers. She is up a lot and can tell more about her family. Her granddad used to play the trombone, and Alma played the piano.