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(SNP014) Edward D. Freeland interviewed by  
Darwin Lambert, transcribed by Chelsea Gutshall

Edward D. Freeland

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Interview with Edward D. Freeland  
Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-014  
(SC# 4030)

Interview conducted at Mimslyn Hotel  
By Darwin Lambert on May, 14, 1978

Transcribed by Chelsea Gutshall, November 2008

Key

DL: Interviewer, Darwin Lambert  
EF: Edward D. Freeland

[Notes regarding transcription technique]  
Refer to the Baylor University Style Guide for consistency in transcription

Total interview length: 68:34 min.

[Begin audio file, 00:00:01 min.]

DL: ...May 14, 1978. I'm at the Mimslyn Hotel to interview Edward D. Freeland, former superintendent of Shenandoah National Park. I'll repeat the date, May 14, 1978 (background noise and laughter) at the Mimslyn Hotel. Well, Mr. Dixon what I really need is what you think is important and if you have something important during your period in charge here then I'd like to hear about that and then I'd have some questions later.

EF: All right. You realize of course that we came here right at the beginning of the war, and in fact we arrived on January the 1st, 1942.

DL: Just about three weeks after Pearl Harbor.

EF: Right. And we were here from that time on till October 1950. And during those war years, maintenance and protection was quite difficult because of our lack of personal, people lots of people from our organization went into the various military services. And in addition to that we had to give up a portion of our warehouse because the Smithsonian, because of fear of bombing, came out and used the whole main floor of our warehouse at headquarters.

DL: Did you know what was really there?

EF: Yes, yes.

DL: I've heard so much about this but no one has ever whispered to me what actually was there. Was it paintings? Were there...

EF: Well there was the first automobile that was ever made, was there. The "Old Glory", the original "Old Glory" was there. I believe that's now, I'm not sure whether it's at the Smithsonian or the Library of Congress or it's displayed...I'm not sure about that. But we had to, we had to consolidate our warehouse and an elevator was put in, in order to take our stuff upstairs. And then they had a full time guard on the, in the warehouse and the humidity had to be controlled and we worked out a system whereby that could be done. And they stayed on there all through the war until it was open all over. And then they came back. They had numerous cases of various types, I think it was flower samples, flower specimens, and material that had been collected over a long period of years, and archeological remains, early man...(DL attempts to speak over)...I beg your pardon?

DL: Things that were totally irreplaceable. They were gone, they were gone forever.

EF: That's right. That's exactly it. Then we were helped out soon after the war started, we were helped out by a camp of conscientious objectors. Now...

DL: The CCC was all gone?

EF: Oh yeah. CCC was completely folded up.

DL: You still had one camp or two camps when you arrived or maybe more... two moved out in January didn't they?

EF: That's right.

DL: Almost immediately after.

EF: The boys had all gone. The foreman and the camp's superintendents, some of them had left but there was a small contingent of working foreman at the stations so

DL: DW's.

EF: Right. And it was these people who could not be separated without finding a place for them if at all possible because they were political appointees, you see, just as most of them were during that period.

DL: They were the people that helped recondition the house.

EF: That's exactly it. They were the ones that I saw no reason why we couldn't utilize those people to go ahead and recondition the old house so it could be lived in at least temporary for the superintendent's residence.

DL: Did some of the Smithsonian guards help out a little too? Like Glen Black or?

EF: Glen Black was hired as one of the guards and another was Lester Judd who lives just east of headquarters there.

DL: One little point I'd...somebody had said the Smithsonian guards on some of their free time helped also with the superintendent's residence.

EF: No, that's not true. No. And then we had the Corps of Engineers came in for winter training and they didn't, they didn't have a big group but they did assemble waterlines and all the facilities necessary to keep a waterline from freezing. They did some bridge building on some of our fire roads which helped out a lot and they did quite a few things on our trails too to help with...to help with the work that we were not able to do. We were able to get surplus materials for various projects that we would like to carry out during the war years when it was impossible to get supplies, partly because of the lack of appropriation and partly because they, they just weren't available. We had some very interesting and valuable projects going in schools where we, we had the few rangers we had available would go around to the mountain schools and valley schools and make talks on what the Park Service is trying to do, what the park was all about, and especially in a nation with fire protection, we...we...we had a lot of fires in those days. (Background noise of someone walking past whistling) A lot of fires in those days. And it was, it was difficult to...that character threw me off...We tried to get the people around the park boundaries, we, the mountain folks especially, interested in what our aims and ideas were with respect to letting the park or the areas that had been lived in for two hundred years, restore themselves, you see. Restore the landscape where a lot of shabby buildings had been torn down and we would eliminate if possible the foundations and then let nature take over by building, building the...the uh trees and shrubs and flowers that would naturally come back if the area was protected, especially from fire.

DL: That's one of the questions that would be, if I may interrupt just a minute. Now that you're back, how long has it been since you were here last? I mean since you really went around, looked at the park?

EF: Oh it's only been five years, I would say.

DL: It wouldn't be (background noise; something crashing) so vivid then that you could

say what is most noticeable in the way of change here since the time you were superintendent?

EF: The thing that's most noticeable...and I called it to the attention of the superintendent the other evening. The trees in front of his house, between his house and the utility area, were just little scrubby trees two or three feet tall and now they're fifteen and twenty feet tall so it's natural to assume that all over the park all over the park that the same thing has occurred with the same natural reforestation of areas that have been used by man for two hundred years. And a lot of people say well, well that place has been lived in and thoroughly used and misused and why do you try to make a national mark of it? Well, part of our educational program in the schools was to tell people what our plan was and if they would be patient and wait a few years, they would see how nature would take over and restore the area that had been so thoroughly used.

DL: They seemed to understand this today?

EF: Well, the children, the older children...the children understood it and I'm sure and we also asked them to go home and talk to their parents about it, tell their parents about it 'cuz we wanted to put it over that way. Now, we had meetings with the parents but that mostly had to do with fires but not as much as in the schools. The schools is where we did most of our work because we had practically no travel at all. So you see the rangers in addition to their patrolling would go to these schools and make these little talks...

DL: I think you...you are really attacking the, one of the central powers that has been with the park from the beginning: the local people tend not to understand very well!

EF: Well, you know what we...we saw that happening in a number of places, happened in Teton, where there were terrific objection to the National Park Service taking over so much of the land for park purposes. And you know now there's no feeling of that source at all since they realized what the park has done for, for the Jackson Poole country for bringing tourists and bringing much, much money into the area. So those people that felt that we were taking their land away from them deprive 'em of a living, they, they got the money for their land and then a lot of them are allowed to live on it anyway and use it for the rest of their lives. So you, in a sense, you can have your cake and eat it too! And that's what it amounted to in most cases there. But we...we, we had a little different situation here. These people were moved out of the mountains, down to the valley and in most cases, like down in Ida Valley, a lot of buildings were built as you know, and people would move there is a very small example. And the funny thing about those mountain folks, not being used to a bathroom, they would use the bathtub to store their potatoes or something like that (laughs) and we found that was the case in a lot, in a lot of cases.

DL: Except...except for the lifetime residents, they were all gone when you came.

EF: Out of the park?

DL: Yes, out of the park.

EF: Yes, they were except...

DL: But there were quite a number of these lifetime permanent people?

EF: There was quite a number, yes, but I think that practically all of them are gone now...I...I haven't really checked.

DL: They're all out. There's one still alive that's...

EF: That's right. And we, we had the opportunity and took advantage of it and in training our, our rangers. Now we had, we had at that time wartime appointments, I mean these appointment of these rangers that weren't permanent then. They were, they were given a duration appointment and at the end of which they were to take an examination and if they passed this examination and there was a place for them, they were given a permanent appointment. And of course we had, we had done such a good job, at least I thought it was

a good job, and it seemed to prove to us that that was the case because every single one of our men, and I think there were seven or eight, took the examination and every one of them passed and every one of them was given a permanent job whether it was in Shenandoah or wherever. But they did get a permanent job. So we thought our training was definitely was a good thing. After the war was over, we...we had a period of course to get back in gear and get back to our normal public service job of serving our people and our visitors and it started to pick up right away. And we had a good many little problems that we were able to work out without too much difficulty. Because the people that were in the service came back and stepped right in and took over and we could really get a good start again.

DL: I have a question that may be fitting at this point. You're through with the war years, to get a quick review. I ran across in the Department of Interior report statement that no other national park dropped so drastically in travel as Shenandoah. Nowhere near. I mean this park had been over a million in prewar years and dropped to one full year during the war something like forty-five thousand (laughs). And I was wondering if you had any ideas why Shenandoah should be the one park that should drop in travel most drastically of all.

EF: You know I can't, I can't give you any real reason. As you know there was gas rationing.

DL: I wonder if it was because it was so close to Washington people felt they were watched more closely in regards to places they were driving.

EF: It's entirely possible. But...but you know, recreation driving was certainly not encouraged.

DL: You know I ran across also a letter from Dean McCall Frazier (spelling?) who said that eleven people were actually given tickets on Skyline Drive in a one week period for pleasure driving. Now I realize there was rationing in some gasoline and tires but I didn't realize that it was actually illegal!

EF: I...I didn't...I'm not at all aware of that.

DL: You wrote back, or somebody drafted a letter with your signature, that said that if this is the case it certainly couldn't have happened in any one day because there weren't that many people traveling in a day. We had maybe at most 3 or 4 cars...I guess this was probably the lowest year of all, maybe '43 would have been.

EF: I would think so.

DL: Well, I thought you might know

EF: No, I don't know. I don't know if anyone...it is certainly news to me if anyone was given a ticket for recreation or pleasure driving.

DL: It struck me as odd.

EF: We...we very often question them about where they were from and where they were going. And it seems to me that almost every time they were going to some point to...on business or for some purpose to visit a sick person, and they were taking the opportunity, even though a little out of their way, to go over the drive, to get to where they were going. And I don't think...I can't say that isn't correct but I certainly have no knowledge of anyone given a ticket for pleasure driving. And then you see our, one of our biggest problems after the war was the racial problem.

DL: Yeah.

EF: And the secretary of the interior had issued orders there'd be no discrimination in our public meeting places and campgrounds and so forth. And we attempted to carry it out as faithful as we could but what we tried to do was ease into it gradually in order to get our own people in the proper frame of mind so they would go along with the new policy. And it worked out very well. We had a little...we had a little trouble with the

concession but even they in time, came across very nicely and did just as we had asked them to do. We had a number of unfortunate incidents where the blacks would come into the park and make a reservation and then not keep them just...

DL: Just to see if they could.

EF: Just to test. Yes, just to test, to see if they could make the reservation. And that was, that was unfortunate because it threw out people who would like to stay and couldn't get a reservation because the place really...after gas rationing was over, it was really surprising how travel picked up.

DL: You feel that in regard to race and racial desegregation that the park was forward, was ahead of the surrounding area of Virginia?

EF: Oh definitely.

DL: There wasn't any desegregation outside the park at that time?

EF: As far as I know, there was no desegregation. There was no...

DL: There was I guess, going on in Washington, and a little bit...we were more like Washington really then we were like the surrounding area.

EF: That's right. Well of course after things got started we enlarged our naturalist service and location...visitor location of campground, you know. We had eight new campfire programs, and a slide talks. We had nature walks.

DL: You did get a naturalist, per se, as distinct from a ranger assigned to naturalist work, a long when was it? '48 I think...Paul Favor (not sure if correct name; DL and EF speaking over each other). He was the first one with the title, actual title. He came, this was inaugurated during your period here.

EF: Yeah. And of course during the summer months we had quite a few temporary men, you know, who helped out not in the ranger force but in the naturalist force because one man couldn't handle it alone. There was too many areas to cover and...turn it off (tape shuts off from 0:21:42 to 0:21:43)

EF: We had very good relations with the state forest service and they came in and advised us on various problems we had. Especially along the drive where we where we see the forest return so fast that the first thing we knew we were just driving through a green tunnel. And we realized that we had to do some vista clearing. So we not only called in the Virginia Forest Service but our own landscape people from...from Richmond where the regional office was then, came up, and we had various meetings. And we made a complete survey of the whole drive from Front Royale to \* (tape appears to cut off). And outlined on the plan just where the vista clearing should be done. Now of course we had, we had objections to that from various sources. They said you let the trees grow then you go and cut them. Well of course these areas we cleared were the only areas where there were overlooks. And there wasn't any sense of having an overlook if you couldn't see anything. (DL laughs) So we naturally had to do it. And...

DL: Wouldn't that antagonize probably some people like Averill Butcher (?), ever the conservationist?

EF: He would want...he would want...

DL: The idea of cutting anything...you can't even pick a flower in the national park, much less cut trees (laughs).

EF: That's right.

DL: I've had him talk to me about this.

EF: Yes, yes indeed. He was a powerful man (?) when it comes to things of that nature. We

had the...we had quite a lot of work done by the conscientious objectors on the Appalachian Trail. And I assume you know that the park service now has the problem of acquiring lands for the Appalachian Trail.

DL: Yes.

EF: Where...where the trail goes through private property, either getting the land or getting a right of way for the trail.

DL: I gather that doesn't affect the park very much but...

EF: No, no.

DL: The park kinda impinges into this, the last ten miles of Garvin Gap to Rockfish because the trail is in the park and then out of the park and they just have this narrow right of way.

EF: Senator Byrd was of course very much interested in the trail and he had...he had done a lot of hiking on the trail and I think, if I remember correctly, and furnished the money for the shelter, one of the shelters along the trail. And I think it was named after him, I'm not absolutely sure.

DL: Yep, Byrd's Nest. They call it Byrd's Nest.

EF: Yeah, I guess you're right.

DL: There's more of them now.

EF: Yeah, yeah that's right.

DL: Well, the senator, I guess, was always a friend of the park.

EF: Oh yes, oh yes, definitely.

DL: Grattonville (?) told me an interesting thing about him. He always insisted on paying his admission fee.

EF: Yes, right.

DL: He wouldn't accept admission, when, normally, a senator or congressman is not charged admission. Is that correct? (speaking before EF has chance to answer). Anyway, Grattonville (?) made quite a point out of Byrd's insisting he pay his fee.

EF: It was a courtesy, you know, that we gave people that were interested in and did things for us, did things for the park. He did things for other areas as well as Shenandoah and he was very instrumental and...in legislation that helped the park service, in other areas, other than Shenandoah. Now do you have some questions on just about...

DL: Yes, yes I have some.

EF: I'm just about talked out. If you can...if you can have some questions, it probably will help me to remember. You know, it's been a number of years (DL talking over)...

DL:...this can be done in a more or less...

EF: It's been a number of years, you know, since I've been here, and were involved in a lot of other things. You forget and you know, as you get older, you know, older people, they have a tendency to forget too (laugh).

DL: I'm afraid I'm just about in that position myself. When I undertook this project, I thought, gee whiz I'm pretty much familiar with the history of Shenandoah National Park. I've lived in it most of the time, and quite a few bits of work in the park, one of which was when you were superintendent. I've written a guidebook and other things about the

park, but I found that I really, even things I thought I knew, I just had an inkling really. And I found a great deal more in my research on this thing than I actually remembered! It's overwhelming! I think this book, this manuscript, is going to be ninety percent research and only maybe ten percent memory. And I thought I had it in me already!

EF: Well, you're mentioning that guidebook reminds me that during the war years, we had a few men in the conscientious objector camp that helped immensely to help put together our first ranger manual. Now you will perhaps remember that there are a number of small golden books, guidebooks, on flowers and various things. And one of the authors, Zimm...

DL: Herbert Zimm.

EF: Herbert Zimm. Now he was...

DL: What kind of a fella was he? Was he showing signs of this type of talent when he was here? Had he already been engaged in this kind of thing?

EF: He had...

DL: Before he was drafted?

EF: He was with a...he was with a newspaper outfit, and he had been a writer; he had been writing various things. And when we found out...you see we surveyed the whole... we surveyed the whole group to find out if they had any special talents and he was the one we picked. And he worked out of headquarters all the time he was in the park.

DL: He helped with the ranger manual?

EF: He did.

DL: He was one of them who did.

EF: He helped with the ranger manual.

DL: He made certain studies such as Lincoln...Nicholson Hall and sort of recommended preservation of, or at least stabilization of, some of the old buildings.

EF: Yeah, especially the cabins, the log cabins.

DL: Yeah, and one old mill. I forget which one it was. Maybe it was Lamb's Mill that was still there down near Switch Run. But anyway I've seen these studies in the file, with Herbert S. Zimm on them. He must have been quite a...quite a remarkable fella. Was he quite young, do you remember? Or was he a middle-aged man? (some background noise)

EF: I'd say he was about twenty-eight or thirty.

DL: Your CPS [Civilian Public Service] people weren't all young like the CCC, were they? They had different ages.

EF: No, there were some older ones. But they were mostly...they were mostly from the farms and the...you know the church furnished their...their transportation here. Their parents furnished all the food and clothes. And every weekend these people would come with truckloads of stuff. You see all we did was furnish their quarters, the tools to work with, and supervision. And it didn't cost the government anything other than that, because the feed, the food, was all furnished by their parents and the church. And they were...they were Amish and, what's the other word?

DL: Mennonite?

EF: Mennonite, yes.

DL: Not Quakers? Quakers are another (talking over each other) passage.



EF: There might have been a few...I believe there were a few Quakers, yeah.

DL: Lancaster: was he the superintendent in charge of your work project? Do you remember?

EF: He was one of them, yeah.

DL: Well that was an interesting episode. Were they real good workers?

EF: Very good. They didn't...

DL: Better than the CCC workers?

EF: The only time...yes, they were...

DL: More skilled, I guess.

EF: Yes, that's right, more skilled. They were more mature and they took orders better. And the only time that we had any difficulty, and it wasn't any real difficulty, the army came in and wanted some of the surplus CCC barracks in various places where the CCC camps were. And we wanted the...they asked if the CCC...or the conscientious objectors would help dismantle the buildings. And that's the only time they refused. They said no, that would help the war effort and so they refused. They were very nice about it. They just wouldn't do it. And so we made other arrangements. The army did it themselves.

DL: Quite a bit of their time, I guess, was taken under some special provision where they could go out and help on the farm when...when there was some emergency or labor shortage on the farm.

EF: That's correct.

DL: An agricultural program?

EF: Yes. They didn't do much of that but they did...they did go to the mental institutions and hospitals and help out if they were needed.

DL: So you did lose some of their labor from your party?

EF: A little, yes, but not very much. Not very much.

DL: Yes. Well, I had a number of other questions. One of them was if you remember what the country was like when you first came. It's back to what I introduced a while ago, but, do you remember if Big Meadows was perhaps much larger than it is now and if there weren't other mother oaks and grassy areas when you first came or had they already disappeared, the oaks and grassy areas?

EF: Well like the vista clearing we did along the drive, those oak and grassy areas, it was decided that some of them we would allow to return, nature to return them to their original state and other areas would be kept open. Now Big Meadows was one of the areas that it was decided to keep it open and we had some difficulty there. The area was pretty well defined on our plans so that we had no trouble in keeping it to its original, and when I say original I mean the area that was used by the mountain folks for pasture or grain or potatoes, corn, whatever they used it for. And it was decided just to keep it open as an open meadow; not to plant it or do anything with it other than to mow it and keep it looking half-way decent. I remember that one spring...the grass and weeds and the little new trees, especially during the war when we couldn't spend the time to do it, it got ahead of us and when we went in and cut it there was great objections by certain people because they thought it should be allowed to return to nature. There were also objections because of the bird life that nested on the ground and there was other... other objections to other people objecting to our cutting the meadow. It had been decided by all concerned, and I certainly agreed with it that at least some areas like that, that had been farmed by the mountain people, should be kept open. And I believe there are very few areas, other than the areas along the drive that we now keep open for vistas and the

greened forge along the drive.

DL: Was it ever considered the type of thing they did in the Smokey's and Kate's Cove to actually let some mountain-type people graze live stock on some of the open areas as a means of sort of illustrating the life that was there in the past?

EF: You know there wasn't the...there wasn't the opportunity in Shenandoah that afforded that sort of thing like it does on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We didn't have many people living anywhere near the drive. They lived down in the hollows but they didn't live up on top of the mountain where the road is. And I know it was considered, it was talked about, and the idea was studied but it never was carried out the way it is down on the Blue Ridge Parkway. And I think that's a wonderful thing down there.

DL: Yeah, it's interesting to the park visitors.

EF: Yes, definitely is.

DL: Quite interesting. And I know I wondered about the emphasis of your interpreting program, if it was entirely on natural signs as on the flowers and trees or if some attention was given to the mountain people on the interpretation,

EF: Oh yes, yes indeed. I think that...I don't think we were doing the job then as well as the interpretive people are doing nowadays.

DL: Well the money was much less, wasn't it?

EF: That's true. But there didn't seem to be quite as much imagination as there is now either. For instance, you know, they're doing all kinds of things like in some of the areas they have a blacksmith's shop in operation. In some of the Civil War areas they have little camps set up and the women will be cooking and making cornbread over the fire and all sorts of interesting, local industries carried on.

DL: Why did you accept this? Because I don't know, not just during your term particularly, but it seems to me all through the life of Shenandoah there has been a sort of reluctance to take advantage of even such opportunities like this that have really sort of presented themselves.

EF: I know, I know.

DL: The only...well the PATC at Corbin Caverns, this was saved and reconditioned actually during your period here. But not I guess as a historic building as such but nevertheless it's the one thing that has really been taken care of that represents the life of the mountain people.

EF: Well this new program, you know, is called "Living History Program" and this "Living History Program" is being carried out in a lot of areas now. And it's one of the most interesting things that the park service has done in a good many years. Now the one thing I object to personally in the Civil War...in the Civil War areas is dressing up a bunch of people and fighting battles. Now I think that should be forgotten and I think that ought to be subdued and it shouldn't be revived.

DL: Yeah, yeah I sure agree with that.

EF: I think it's a mistake and I think the park service is making a great mistake in dressing up a bunch of people and having these imitation battles between the North and the South.

DL: This was proposed in Shenandoah and you know every once in a while there's a movement to emphasize the Civil War history of Shenandoah. And I think, personally I think, this is rather ridiculous for several reasons. First because nothing that happened in Shenandoah was of any great consequence to the Civil War.

EF: It just passed through.

DL: Jackson passed through that's all. But this was all sort of incidental. It's not major history. And yet somebody...well the Skyline Company did in cooperation with the park erect quite a number of fairly large signs about the Civil War involvement with maps and it's interesting as long as it's interesting to the people, it's probably not hurting anything. But it's not of the essence of the history of the Shenandoah National Park. But I'm just commenting to see if you...but I think you already had that...you expressed that view that...Well how 'bout the...do you think that anymore should be done or should have been done in Shenandoah in terms of interpreting, maybe preserving, the remnants of the mountain people? Of course most of the buildings I know have termites and pine and leaky roofs and they're gone.

EF: That's correct and I think that there were some buildings that should have been saved. Now there was a brick building at Front Royal and I don't remember the name of it...I don't remember...

DL: Probably either the Simpson House or the Belmont.

EF: Well I'm not sure.

DL: It was Dickey Ridge, I think. I remember it up there, seeing it.

EF: Now I think that that building should have been saved because it could have been restored. Now whether it could have been used for anything worthwhile, in interpretation or not, I don't know. But it's been so long that I couldn't really comment on it intelligently. But I think then there were some log cabins and...

DL: The ones Zimm perhaps...

EF: Beg pardon?

DL: Perhaps the ones that Zimm studied?

EF: Possibly, yes. But I do know that I saw some log cabins that I had hoped we could do something with but we just couldn't do it during the war and by the time the war was over, due to natural deterioration and vandalism, the poor things just went to pieces.

DL: Yeah, quite a few of them were...were razed, I think, when you were superintendent.

EF: Yeah, that's right. (talking over each other). And I think they were a little too fast in trying to clean up the area. And then of course, you know, there are a good many... a good many home graveyards and...in the park they probably are pretty well obliterated now.

DL: So few of them have been taken care of with park permission (talking over each other), but most of them have not. It's true.

EF: Well we have no objection to the old timers whose graves were...I mean the survivors of the old timers, coming in and cleaning up their graveyard if they would like to do that. And we have no objection, we just... all we ask is they let us know about it so that we can keep track of it. But there are quite a number in the park. I don't know if there has been an inventory of how many graves there are in the park. I could take you to a few but I don't know where they all are now anymore.

DL: There've been some little study of this matter in very recent years, especially there was a quite thorough study of the Rappahannock County portion in regards to cemeteries.

EF: Is that so?

DL: I'm going to turn this tape over.

EF: Okay.

[End Tape 1, Side 1, 0:43:13]

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2, 0:43:14]

DL: Well one thing that I would like to bring up and ask about is in regard to the park boundary. Of course nothing could be done about it during the war, but I wonder if it worried you much, the very zigzag type boundary, not following geographic features. This has been a continuing worry and is right now very top worry and I just wondered maybe if you had any little background or recollection about anything in relation...

EF: It was of some concern of ours that zigzag boundary. It was especially true where it went down far enough where the people could... could use it and they would run their cattle on it where they weren't supposed to. And if we said don't run your cattle on it because it's park property, then they would burn it all because after you burned off a section the next thing that came along, the first thing that sprouted out and produced at all, was the huckleberries. And the huckleberries, you perhaps remember, the mountain folk used to make quite a thing of the huckleberries because they would pick 'em and sell 'em in the town or some to people along the roads. And of course a fire, why the huckleberries came and we often thought that they...they started some of these fires just for the purpose and we weren't so sure they didn't set the fires just to annoy us because we were confining them to their own property.

DL: Yes, this was a difficulty. Another type of difficulty on the boundary that is emerging rather strongly now is hiker access as these people from the city make vacation homes and so on around the boundary. They tend to post "no trespassing" signs on some of the trails that have been important park trails: Big Run, Jeremy's Run, over all the falls, Devil's Stairs, that have access from the boundary as well as from the Appalachian Trail. Some of those are being blocked off with "no trespassing" signs at the boundary. Was there any beginning of this type of trouble in your time?

EF: No, no I know nothing about that now. That's all new to me.

DL: Really? The boundary wasn't anything that involved a project or program of correction in your term?

EF: All we tried to do was keep it marked. That's all we could do.

DL: No effort to buy, sell, or trade land?

EF: No. (talking over each other). No, no money available anyway.

DL: Yeah. Another little question. Was there radio communication, mobile radio, car-to-car for the rangers?

EF: Not till after the war was over.

DL: But after the war, it was?

EF: Yes, then we had good radio communication with the...with every part of the park.

DL: A little more on, on relations with the Skyline Company. Do you have any thoughts on...was the Skyline property helping to promote, helping to understand the park, or were they sort of just acting like a rich business? I mean, I don't mean to make it rough but...but to make it plain. Were they really cooperating and understanding what the park was about, trying to get this across?

EF: Certain individuals in the company were very understanding and wanted to cooperate. Mr. Lakey (?) was one of those people that was very understanding and he tried every way to go along with our desires and regulations. The biggest problem we had was, has been mentioned before: the Blacks. When they started coming and wanted to go into the dining rooms like everybody else and he was one of the first to help us with that problem and was very cooperative. Now some of his superiors didn't go along with him on that and that made it difficult for him 'cuz he was in between, you see. Then the other, another thing

when you speak of the concessioner (?) in their, in their literature. You know I was trying all the time I was here, to get away from Skyline Drive all the time and talk more about Shenandoah National Park. Now you know when I came here I noticed that everybody in the office, when they answered the phone, they'd say "Skyline Drive" instead of "National Park Service" or "Shenandoah National Park". They'd say "Skyline Drive."

DL: You mean the people in the company?

EF: Even our...no! We're talkin' about people in the...our own people in the office. When they answered the phone they'd say "Skyline Drive".

DL: Oh! My goodness gracious. (laughter)

EF: And we tried to get the...the company in their literature, instead of having this folder headed "Skyline Drive" and in little tiny...in little tiny letters "Shenandoah National Park". We asked them to put "Shenandoah National Park" in the large letters and in the small letters "Skyline Drive". But you go, you come into the park from Front Royal and if you go down the street, you'll see right now signs put up by the state, or the county, I don't know who. But it says "Skyline Drive" and there'll be an arrow. There's no word at all, anyplace, about Shenandoah National Park.

DL: You know this has a kind of natural origin. This is one of the very strange things about the history of the Shenandoah National Park. You know Skyline Drive existed about four years before there was a Shenandoah National Park.

EF: I know.

DL: And yet it was built for the Shenandoah National Park (laughter). But it was built, I think, before the park service really had any thorough opportunity to study the area.

EF: It was a project.

DL: Really?

EF: It was a project.

DL: It was sort of hoisted on. And it had this immediate appeal to the people to such an extent that it got famous before the park was really, was really created.

EF: That's right. That's correct. And...

DL: It's made for a difficulty even to this day.

EF: One thing that's unique about Shenandoah is that the people of Virginia bought the land. I mean they furnished the money to buy the land for the park. I don't know...I can't tell you what percentage of the land the government actually bought; I can't say, I don't know.

DL: It was almost zero. Not quite, but almost.

EF: Yeah, that's what I understand. And it's one of the few places in our country where the people themselves bought the land for the park.

DL: I think there's...there's...Shenandoah is a very unique...I mean it is a unique park; in its history, its origin. Great Smokey resembles it to some extent, but not completely. Great Smokey got some volunteer contributions and some state funds to help buy also, but federal government and Rockefeller did most of it. Great Smokey had some land that had some mountain homes on it and they had...well they moved themselves out. Not quite the resettlement project like here. But Shenandoah I think should...I don't know, as I go through all these things it seems to me sometimes that Shenandoah is not taking full advantage of its own uniqueness. That this unique thing of being long ago wilderness, being two centuries a heavily exploited area, and then returning to wilderness is an

event, a sequence, without any real parallel in history. In fact Shenandoah is a park not making enough of that in its public presentation to the people.

EF: You know that's one thing that we...that's one thing that we tried to put over all the time I was here, that this was a unique experiment. When taking over an area so thoroughly used by man and burned, and used, and farmed, and then let it return to nature.

DL: This is Shenandoah's great uniqueness. It places Shenandoah, if you want to look at it this way, among the crown jewels of the continent. Which nothing else does because Shenandoah is not a great, virgin forest with immense trees, which is what they claimed it was when they first proposed it. But it is equally important, maybe more important, because it illustrates the...the relationship between nature and man in all its variations; from the beginning wilderness, back to the wilderness again; from farming or grazing or mining or sight-seeing, the whole gamut almost of human activities are represented. The mountain residents, the Indians, and I think Shenandoah has a great uniqueness which should be the central focus always of it. Things can go on, I think, just as they always have. You can't, you won't, interfere with anybody's recreation, but you would have a real unique reason for existing and a unique mission to fulfill. I don't think the park feels now that it has, that it's always second to something. We're second to the Smokies in size of mountains, or to the size of our trees and the immensity of our real wilderness.

EF: I wonder if we're advantage of that important point in our interpreting programs. I wonder if they are, I haven't heard.

DL: Oh they're moving in that direction.

EF: That's good. I'm glad to hear it, because it is a very important point.

DL: Yeah, yeah, I really believe so. (pause) Let's see, I did have some other possible questions but probably we've covered most of them.

EF: Well you made some notes of that.

DL: Well most of these notes were kind of an index to my tape.

EF: Oh, oh, I see.

DL: So I could find out in what order, if I didn't have time to play the whole tape at a particular time, I'd know about where to go to. But vista cutting is a thing that I think is so crucial but I think this fits into this pattern where you can't cut vistas in a truly nature park in the minds of the conservationists. And of course it's not a historic area. If it's classified as a nature area you can't cut vistas. If it's classified as a historic area you're stretching a point because those places aren't all that historic. Use Big Meadows; it's not written up in any history books that I know of. And so in keeping with what we were talking about a while ago, you need sort of a man and nature relationship area. Big Meadows is ideal for that. But also the vistas are, and the way that man lives, the way that people live with nature for a certain purpose which is in line with the central mission of how Shenandoah has evolved, then you can have a continuing thing and you can study the park's succession and so on in these vistas. And take little nature walks as to how in five years such and such happens and instead of sort of being a little stealthy about this vista clearing you could even get people to face to it directly, the way the park service is and to find it interesting. And fascinating.

EF: You know another, another thing that I think in this human history interpretation...you know there were just lots of stills in the hollows where they made illegal liquor and you know we raided quite a few.

DL: I went on one raid. I got one still (laughter).

EF: And you know I wonder if I don't know what the policy is, but it seemed to me that something like that could be done in the living history program. I don't see why not;

it's part of the history.

DL: Yeah. You know, was Drew Chick (?) still here when you came?

EF: Yeah, sure.

DL: And he was during naturalist type work?

EF: He was doing naturalist (talking over each other)

DL: He was a district ranger too I think.

EF: Under Paul Favor

DL: Well Drew Chick got a still and set it up Skyline. But it wasn't operating or anything; it was just sitting there and operation of course of some form would make it living history, otherwise an attractive museum exhibit. Nevertheless it would attract a great deal of visitor attention. Now currently in recent years it's vandalized or something; some parts of it are gone. But they can replace that if they had it as part of their power.

EF: I thought about it a good bit and there's no reason why it couldn't be done you know. You don't have to distill liquor to be in living history.

DL: No you could operate this thing as something else.

EF: I have a suggestion: plain water, just plain water. It...you take the steam off of the...off of the hot water and run it through your coils. And cool it and that's it. And the thing that drops out in the jug is still plain water. But it...it starts out from steam, goes through your coils, and comes out as liquor in reality but in...in the demonstration there's no reason at all that all parts of it couldn't be labeled. You wouldn't even have to run it with a lot of firewood the way they did it, you know. You could have a burner under there of some sort you know and not necessarily operate it all the time but for a demonstration.

DL: And again this relates to the man-nature relationship. And you could even point out maybe the locations of old corn fields; in some cases the surviving trees from apple orchards because some of what they distilled was apple brandy. (pause) Yet another thing that we didn't cover...it seems to me, as far as I can find in the records, that you inaugurated what was called an 'open house' at park headquarters and made a great effort to invite people to come and I think this...was this the first one at the park as far as you know of? The first one you inaugurated?

EF: Well the first one for Shenandoah. Now whether it hadn't been done in any other park or not I really...I really couldn't say. But I know we had a very successful program. We worked at it for...months to get ready for it. And every, everybody in the park had a part to play in getting ready for it.

DL: I saw in the paper Page News and Courier had about two pages on it, in articles about the park. And one was by you and one was by Graham Van Wiles (?) (crashes in background). But this I think...you know, I've been wondering if it was a park man, who yet became perhaps more completely a citizen of the...of the county than almost any other smart person here. I've lived here long enough and consistently enough so that I get a lot of the gossip, so to speak, from the local scene. And you were working there with what was one of the great essentials of this park. Lots of trouble, not just around the boundary and possibly setting fires or something, but suppose you need something from Congress, which came up during Hoskins' term, particularly an effort to get this boundary line straightened out. Well there was a great deal of local opposition and not just from landowners. It was really unnecessary except that these people felt that the (as if spoken from local opposition) damn park was a conquering foreign body in our midst. We don't understand them and they don't understand us. And so they're opposed to what the park wants to get through Congress. And they write their Congressman, the seventh-district Congressman, and they make all kinds of trouble.

EF: Well that happens today.

DL: Of course maybe there's nothing that could be done about it. You certainly did a lot to alleviate that and create understanding. But maybe there's not any way to do it, 'cuz I don't know but there's a lot of goodwill for the park. And it could be strengthened by working with them more. You know mostly I had this idea, I don't know, if you've got just a minute I'd like to test it out on you. It seems to me that if there had been (interference in background blocks out speech; tape cuts off at 1:10:03 and then restarts at 1:10:04)...was thinking that...this thought occurred to me, I don't know if it's any good; it doesn't necessarily have to do with our subject but I don't often get the opportunity to test thoughts out on a man with your understandings. If there could just be a few developments around the boundaries so that...like a...a trailhead development or a low-level campground, everything is sort of internalized in the park. For example, over on the Staunton or Rapidan River, in the lower places, there could have been a ranger's station over there and a ranger there most of the time. And park visitors obviously coming in there and being taken care of and getting on the trail that goes out there. And that this would have...would have been a rather fundamental thing. A lot of these people have felt that by drawing inside itself and feeding only from the Skyline Drive, the park service is sort of turning its back on the local people. We don't want to have any more to do with you than we have to.

EF: I think you have an awfully good point and you know that would be a wonderful public relations, especially local public relations, program to have...to have these little stations even though manned only part-time at these trailheads, important trailheads. Because a sign doesn't do the job that an individual does. And you've got a good point. Have you ever talked to the superintendent about it?

DL: No I haven't. I just dreamed up this idea in the last stages of my work here.

EF: I think you oughta talk to him about it.

DL: But I...I will.

EF: Of course you realize that it takes money to provide the facility and the physical facility and individuals to operate it. But you know we have in the parks now what they call volunteers; VIP: volunteers in parks. Now you know that would be a wonderful opportunity. All of the parks have young people now. The schools, you know, a lot of colleges are putting on training programs for...for park people. And I know that where my, my son-in-law is superintendent down at the Pinnacles National Monument in California. He has volunteers that come in there. They're in the program at their college and they spend the weekend in the park, working. They wear the park service uniform at their...at their own expense and yet they come and work in the park. And of course their work is part of their...is part of their training. And they get credit for it. And yet they're doing us a lot of good because they're doing a job that we don't have the personnel to do.

DL: Yeah, they've had quite a few VIPs here in the last year. Probably will have this season.

EF: Good, that's fine. But now some of those people could operate those trailhead stations.

DL: PATC would volunteer to help with that. I mean they train some VIPs, some volunteers. They've always indicated that they were willing to do something like that and they've volunteered to help control. You know they have this new backcountry program in which you can go anywhere, camp overnight; that is, almost anywhere with certain regulations. You get a permit. Well the PATC would furnish volunteers to help control that. Well, that's good. I appreciate your comments on that. And another one that I think hasn't been given enough attention in recent years is this: that they charge a fee, a fee that...a fee for admission to Shenandoah. The fee has gone up in recent years, so it's two dollars per car. Blue Ridge Parkway does not charge a fee. Great Smokey Mountains does not charge a fee. And if people were being equally treated; I mean the local people feel this. Many of the local people that would like to go up in the park are mad at the park because they



have to pay this (as if spoken by local resident) damn fee. Was that true in your time? Did you get any static or...

EF: You know we didn't have...we didn't have any fee at all.

DL: Not during the war.

EF: During the war. And it wasn't until after the war that we did start having a fee and I think it was a dollar then. But you know I tried something in Teton. I got in the doghouse over it but...yeah I felt that it was important from a public relations standpoint with our local people. We had each county in...in Wyoming have a number and Teton County, if I remember correctly, was twenty-two. And I just passed the word around that anyone with a number twenty-two license would be admitted free to the park. Well of course there was nothing official about it; it was just something I was doing under the heading of public relations in order to get the people of our county who were the main objectors to the park and its enlargement, to feel a little better about it. And it helped a lot. I think it was more than the small amount we would have collected...worth more than the small amount we would have collected with the fee.

DL: Well this strikes me as a matter of accumulating a significant fear. The people have said to me, "well I gave fifty dollars to buy that land to give to the government. And then I want to go up there and they charge me two dollars. And I don't really think it's right, especially when they charge...when they don't charge anyone on the Blue Ridge Parkway. They don't charge anybody in the Smokies." And they say, "if every area was doing this then I might be able to be content with it. But I gave money to buy that land. It was presented to the government without cost. And yet they...and now they're soakin' us to get in. It's just us! They're not soaking other people in the east." I don't know about Acadia, whether there's a charge for admission to Acadia but possibly not; I doubt if there is. Yep, well, I got...unless anything further has occurred to you, why we don't have...

EF: Well I'll tell you, I'll look over my notes when I get home and if I have anything there that we haven't covered, I promise I'll drop you a note; I'll drop you a line.

DL: I really greatly appreciate the privilege of talking with you about this because as I say, I feel a little lonely sometimes because I'm working with things that no one else knows about. Knows about or can connect up with.

EF: Sure, sure.

DL: Yep.

[End audio file, 68:34 min.]

End of Interview

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