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(SNP108) E. Ray Schaffner interviewed by Darwin Lambert, transcribed by Tiffany Cole

E. Ray Schaffner

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Interview with E. Ray Schaffner

Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP

SdArch SNP-108

Interview conducted at Unknown Location

by Darwin Lambert on June 24, 1977

Transcribed by Tiffany Cole, April 20, 2020

Key

[DL:] Interviewer, Darwin Lambert

[RS:] Interviewee, E. Ray Schaffner

Notes regarding transcription technique

(unintelligible) Unable to understand more than one word

() Parentheses indicate non verbal sounds or events that occur during the course of the audio recording

[] Brackets indicate supplementary information provided by the transcriber

(??) Transcriber's best guess

— Incomplete sentence or speaker makes abrupt change in sentence

Transcript created based on "Baylor University Institute for Oral History Style Guide," 2018.

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Total interview length: 02:07:57 min.

Begin audio file SNP108, 00:00:00 min.

Darwin Lambert: —the twenty-fourth of June 1977. And I have Ray Schaffner here to discuss some of the history of Shenandoah National Park that he remembers. (pause in recording) Well, when did you come here, Ray?

Ray Schaffner: I came here in May 6, 1956 as assistant chief naturalist to Kenny Dale who was, at that time, chief naturalist. I came here from the Petrified Forest in Arizona.

DL: Kenny Dale succeeded Paul Favour?

RS: That's right.

DL: So there really have only been Favour—I guess he didn't really have a title of chief naturalist because he was probably the only one that most of the time he was here, but—

RS: Park naturalist probably.

DL: What call park naturalist, but did Kenny Dale come to work for Paul Favour, do you know?

RS: Yes, he was here for about a year, a year and a half as Paul's assistant. I believe that's right. And then when Paul left to go to Acadia—I think I'm right on that—then Kenny Dale took his place as chief naturalist.

DL: Uh-huh. And then you came as assistant to Kenny Dale. Were there others in the division then or were you—

RS: No. We didn't even have a full-time secretary at that time. Kenny and I were the only two in the division for over two years except for seasonals. Plus, we did have a part-time secretary.

DL: Uh-huh. You remember about how many seasonals you might have been have—

RS: Well, the first year I was here they had some extra money so they did hire six seasonals, but that was more than they'd had ever before. I think they'd had about three to four at the most under Favour. And they conducted only a very minimum interpretive program at that time under Favour, although they gave talks at the lodges in the spring and the fall and then campfire programs at Big Meadows. And there was nothing that was —

DL: Was there an amphitheater there at Big Meadows then?

RS: Yes, it was very primitive, but it is what you might call a amphitheater or campfire circle.

DL: Wasn't any visitor center anywhere, was it?

RS: No, they did have a little contact station at the Big Meadows Campground. In the entrance station building there itself, they had produced a few exhibits. And some of those exhibits, last time I saw them, are still up in the attic of the warehouse at park headquarters, but they may have been torn up by now.

DL: Yeah. Who was the superintendent then?

RS: When I arrived, Mr. Edwards. Guy Edwards. Guy E. Edwards [ed. note: Schaffner says "E." but Edwards's middle name was Dewitt] was the superintendent and had been for several years. I will say he was the superintendent here for, oh, until I think it was '50 to '59. I always get—

DL: When [R. Taylor] Hoskins came I believe it was sometime in '58.

RS: Fifty-eight.

DL: —when Hoskins came.

RS: Hoskins I think arrived in August of '58. I became chief naturalist in, I think it was April nineteenth roughly, anyway, that I took over Kenny Dale's job as chief naturalist.

DL: In '58?

RS: Yeah.

DL: Uh-huh. So about the time Hoskins—in other words, you were chief naturalist during all the time that Hoskins was superintendent, apparently?

RS: Yes.

DL: Well, you know I've worked on the history from the beginning up through [Edward D.] Freeland's term. And I'm finding pretty good access to files and people and so on who remember back from the present back to the beginning of Hoskins's term, but I'm at a loss to fill in Edwards's term and just what was going on in Edwards's term and what was particularly important of lasting or historical significance during Edwards's term. Apparently, his term was only about six years. Freeland must have been here till around '52 or '51 anyway. I'm not positive right now the date that Freeland left, maybe it was '50. But that would be—

RS: Well, of course, Mission 66 started under Edwards. That is during that time in 1956. That's when Mission 66 was presented by then-director of—I can't think of his name—

DL: Conrad Wirth.

RS: Conrad Wirth, yes. And he sold the bill of goods to Congress, the ten-year development program. And I remember working—especially Kenny Dale worked a lot on the Mission 66 program for the interpretive division. And, of course, I was more or less running the field operation at that time till Kenny turned it over to me—

DL: Well, what did this involve? What did you get into?

RS: Planning mainly and plans for the future for this ten-year period of improving the visitor center concepts, the expansion to the campgrounds, the improvement of the picnic facilities, and such things as that, and the improvement of the roads and trails. All this tied in with the Mission 66.

DL: It really was a big thing?

RS: Oh, yes.

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DL: A big amount of construction? I guess there hadn't been much from World War—before World War II. Everything kind of ended with the start of World War. And then there hadn't been much construction, I guess, immediately afterward.

RS: That's right. And let's see, I remember very distinctly that under Edwards they did buy the Dickey Ridge cabins and lodge from the Skyline Company. It was sitting there vacant because the Skyline Company hadn't operated it for a couple of years, maybe from nineteen—well, right after the war, I don't know that they ever reopened it or not. And it was sitting there—

DL: They never did do much business there? It was a poor location for business? Or why did they abandon it, I wonder?

RS: They seemed to be too close to Front Royal. And then I think—I've heard rumors that (laughs)—this is just hearsay—that the people that worked there—of course, they were mostly young folks, and they attracted people from Front Royal their own age and had parties virtually all night and then were pretty snappy to the customers the next day. So it wasn't a very popular location as far as service to the public went.

DL: I've run across some of that. I think it's probably true. I think I've found it in those early reports before the war that there was vandalism and so on. There were just rowdies from Front Royal frequently up there apparently.

RS: Yes. Well, anyway, the Skyline Company had, more or less, given it up as a location and had moved some of the cabins farther down the drive. I think there were some moved to Big Meadows. I'm not sure about Skyland, but I know there were a few of the cabins from Dickey Ridge moved to Big Meadows.

DL: Maybe even Lewis Mountain or was that—

RS: And there may have been—

DL: —come along—

RS: Yes. I don't know how many cabins there were originally at Dickey Ridge. But anyway, some of the cabins been moved and there were four left when I arrived here in '56. There was Apple, Cherry, Chestnut, and one other—Oak. Those were the only four left there. But, as I said, the Skyline Company had not operated the lodge for a while. So Mr. Edwards did negotiate the purchase of that to be converted to a visitor center and the cabins were used for quarters for the seasonal rangers and naturalists.

DL: But it hadn't become a visitor center yet while Edwards was here or do you remember just when that happened?

RS: No. Well, let's see.

DL: Happened during your time here?

RS: Yeah, that's right. Kenny Dale left and I gathered most of the material for the exhibits just after Kenny Dale left. He and I together helped plan with the planning—what do they call it—museum lab people.

DL: Uh-huh.

RS: The exhibits for the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center and, of course, the plans had been made to convert the old kitchen into the auditorium. And a projection booth was added onto the auditorium. The area that had been the kitchen was converted into the auditorium and then the rest of the—well, the dining room and so on became the exhibit rooms and the check-in area where the guests registered became the information center. You know, the information place where you enter into the visitor center. Some of the quarters for master corps were converted into the offices for the rangers and the naturalists and on beyond that storage in the back part and restrooms for the public. But this was mostly done right just when Kenny Dale after he left. As I said, I collected the materials and rounded up everything, the photographs, and the rock specimens and, well, the content, anything we needed.

DL: Yeah, there were some mounted birds in there—

RS: Yeah.

DL: —had probably been there for quite a while.

RS: And some of the animals we had those mounted by—I forgot who did the work, but—trap the animals and shot the birds and so on (laughs) and set them off to be mounted.

DL: Well, there were—what would—I mean we had the Skyline Drive—what, wouldn't have been much extra road construction. Maybe the road was resurfaced, Skyline Drive during Mission 66.

RS: Yes, part of it was resurfaced and actually mainly it was an expansion program of facilities. Now, if I remember right, Big Meadows Campground, for instance, only had about fifty-some sites when I arrived here. And there was a little development at Lewis Mountain Campground there supposed to be for the minorities. And it consisted of, oh, I think twenty-some sites, twenty-seven or so, maybe not that many. It was very small. And that was it as far as accommodations plus the lodges. I can't give you the exact pillow count or anything, but Skyland itself probably didn't hold over 150 guests. And Big Meadows probably about forty or fifty, at the most. This is one thing Mr. Edwards did when they started this expansion program, especially the concessionaire. He, during his administration, I remember that he would not let the Skyline Company replace one of the family-like cabins with these big units. He said that each little cabin, counted up the number of people that can stay there, say, like a family unit of six or eight, well, that was all that he was going to allow them to have in their expansion was replace what they had.

DL: Um-hm.

RS: But somewhere along the line this got lost after he left here. And these companies started replacing each one of these cabins with a huge unit with fourteen rooms in each one.

DL: Yeah, kind of a motel-type development.

RS: Yeah, that's right.

DL: And Mr. Edwards didn't care for that.

RS: No. He said that was competing too much with the local business around the park and that there's plenty of room for people to stay outside the park.

DL: Were the local people complaining about this?

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RS: Well, yes. I think that he was fairly well tuned in with the local communities and he tried to honor their wishes that the park not infringe on the business.

DL: I don't know what there is in this, but I find that there's quite a few records of complaints by motel people in the valley and in the piedmont against development up here. There was further things of this kind during Hoskins's time, quite a lot. Well, now was the—to get the Skyline Company to make these big expansions, they weren't—

RS: Well, they had to promise them a thirty-year contract.

DL: Was this done during Edwards's time? The renegotiation of this?

RS: I think it was, yes. And it may have extended into Hoskins's time where it was finally culminated, but I think probably this came mostly under Hoskins.

DL: Their first contract I think was twenty years and it was from '37, so it would have been expired in '57. So there probably was a lot of negotiation.

RS: There was a negotiation at the time I came here, I know. Just after I arrived they were still negotiating for a thirty-year contract.

DL: But they—this was the incentive they gave them thirty years instead of twenty, which might have been expected. And, in turn, they were to spend so much on expansion.

RS: I think it was two million dollars expansion program. Of course, I think they spend a lot more than that now, but—

DL: Wasn't one of the things included in this two million, even in those days, was Loft Mountain being planned?

RS: I think so.

DL: Loft Mountain was supposed to be a bigger development than it's ever become.

RS: Yeah.

DL: And I wonder—you have to look beyond Mr. Edwards's term now, but I wonder if you have any idea why Loft Mountain has not been developed the way it was intended to be? As I understood it, the concessionaire was supposed to build extensive lodging facilities there and I don't think there's any lodging there, is there?

RS: No, there's no overnight lodging, just for their employees only and that's all.

DL: Yeah.

RS: And, of course, the rangers and naturalists have seasonal quarters there. But I think one of the big things was they spent over their allotment before Loft Mountain really got going.

DL: Oh. They spent this mainly at Skylands—

RS: Skylands, Big Meadows, expanding their already developed areas. So that they didn't want to go into Loft Mountain. They felt it would be a losing proposition. Of course, construction costs have always escalated for many years and they didn't see Loft Mountain as a viable, profitable area.

DL: I ran across a thing in a file just the other day in which Hoskins referred to Loft Mountain in this way. He said he thought it was the most attractive development area on the whole park. That is the basic situation for development—not what's there, but the natural situation—the natural advantages of the terrain or the possibilities for development that he was implying he thought was the best on the whole mountain.

RS: Well, I'm sort of partial to Loft Mountain, of course. I helped pick some of the sites there for instance, for the amphitheater, and the nature trails, and things like that. And it's one of the areas that you can see out.

DL: Eileen [Lambert] and I were down there Tuesday and it's the first time we really went over that whole deadening nature trail and I think it's terrific. It's got just about every type of thing on it. Of course, it hasn't got a waterfall, but—

RS: No.

DL: It's got every type of country, open country, rocks, forests—

RS: Reclaimed orchards.

DL: Apple trees. Yeah. And, of course, these deadened chestnut trees.

RS: Yes. Well, Loft Mountain, I know, to many campers, is considered one of the choice campgrounds in the eastern United States, if not in the entire United States because it has such a diversity. It has such—well, on clear days, beautiful views of the piedmont and the valley and the mountains. Just openness. You can get into the open or you can get into the woods or get into the meadows. It's just a great diversity of habitats.

DL: Apparently, continue to be an unusual number of deer around there.

RS: That's right.

DL: An extraordinary concentration and possibly that's because there's a lot of open country because they like—open country produces more deer food than forest does. Well, while we're still a little bit on that subject, in your time here, do you recall racial troubles? Was the concessionaire still segregating when you came or—

RS: I'm afraid that certain employees of the Skyline Company definitely were very much—and the company itself, by their policies, still insisted that Lewis Mountain was for the Blacks. I remember one of the first campfires, I mean, lodge talks that I gave. It was, well, it was in May or June, may have been early June. At Lewis Mountain Lodge, there was a campfire program scheduled or even lodge talk. And I drove down there in the fog all the way down from park headquarters, and up to Panorama, and down all the way in the fog to Lewis Mountain, and got there. And there was no one there except the manager of the lodge and dining hall. So I waited a while and the young couple came in looking for rooms. Well, the manager said, "Oh, no, no," he didn't have any rooms. Well, here all these cabins were sitting there empty. But he wouldn't rent this young white couple rooms at Lewis Mountain. And, of course, I didn't know that he really didn't—until I checked up later, that he really didn't have any rooms. But I found out

afterwards out of my curiosity just why that couple had to drive all the way to Big Meadows in the fog. And I offered, since I wasn't having the program, to let them follow my taillight up to Big Meadows Lodge and I dropped them off at the lodge. But then I asked, I said—I knew some people in the company that worked and they said, "Oh, heavens, no, there wasn't anybody at Lewis Mountain that night." (laughter) And that was sort of a shock to me, because I was, you know, I grew up in a family where sometimes we had Negro students in or African students in to dinner and so on. So it was sort of a shock to me that they (laughs) couldn't allow a white couple in the rooms that were supposed to be for black people.

DL: Of course, it was true that it was originally built for black people. Originally, it was a park policy, but this was way back in the forties. In fact, before the war, I think where they had most of that trouble and even in the thirties, I think Lewis Mountain was possibly projected—or maybe part of it even opened in, at least the camp, or picnic ground or something, in the late thirties. And it was for Blacks. But this was a furor that got pretty hot along in the late thirties and the early forties, and, as far as I know, it was all settled in a policy way, but I was wondering about the practice.

RS: Well, I'm afraid the practice was different than the policy. I know that one NAACP official came up to Big Meadows, probably a year or so—well, probably in '57 or '58 and asked for a room at Big Meadows Lodge. And he was told that they did not have any rooms left. So he hung around the lobby and very unobtrusively just waited and the next couple that came in went up to the desk and got rooms and, well, they did not have reservations. So this NAACP official complained through official channels and that employee was fired, but that was going on all the time. I know personally it was, but they had to do a token firing to make Washington happy, you might say, or the officials that are trying to comply with the ruling of the Supreme Court and apparently park service policy.

DL: I guess [Harold L.] Ickes was gone then. Who was Secretary of the Interior in those days? Do you— [Frederick Andrew] Seaton? Or what's his name?

RS: I can't remember, Darwin. I can't remember who it was.

DL: Well, that doesn't matter. That's something we can find out pretty easy.

RS: Yes, we can look back in the (laughs) historic records.

DL: Well, what else about Mission 66? The big thing that I know about Mission 66 is that apparently it got you the Big Meadows Visitor Center.

RS: That's right. We got Dickey Ridge Visitor Center and Big Meadows Visitor Center.

DL: But did it get anything else that was really new? What I've got to find is what is the long range and lasting significance? Not just another little cabin here that's built on a development, but what happened that was actually different that started a new departure or that—the Big Mead—I mean, the visitor centers did. This was a new thing that the park had not previously had of any kind in any place and it started a new phase of the whole operation. I wondered if anything else did. Is this when the motel-type developments started at Skyland, do you suppose?

RS: Yes, I think so.

DL: That certainly is a transformation from the old Skyland.

RS: That's right.

DL: The [George Freeman] Pollock Skyland. It's an utterly different thing now than it was then.

RS: I know when they were building the—or had just built, I can't remember—the new dining room at Skyland was quite a contention because it was modern architecture and did not conform to the rustic cabin-type architecture that they'd always had at Skyland. And I know that, oh, Devereux Butcher was very much opposed to that type of architecture. Of course, it had no shrubbery or trees around it at the time and—

DL: The park service apparently didn't mind. They apparently had some modern architects in the park service too.

RS: That's right. And, actually, if you look at the building now after it's got a little age on it, twenty years or so, it blends in very well with the surrounding. If you have to have a building's intrusion on the landscape anyway, but the outside is weathered now and the rocks are just as good as the rocks around the cliffs and so on. And the trees have grown up and the shrubs have grown up so that softens some of the sharp corners and, really, I can't see that you can say that you shouldn't have that kind of architecture as long as it is more or less modified. For instance, even the Big Meadows Visitor Center was supposed to be of brick, aluminum, and glass. And Kenny Dale and I both objected very strenuously and we got them to change at least to the timber and the rocks like there, to conform to what's at the Big Meadows Lodge, for instance.

DL: Yeah.

RS: And it blends in much better than we felt that bricks and aluminum and glass would.

DL: I think the visitor center and the lodge at Big Meadows are very appropriate architecture seemed to me, at least very appropriate materials. And the lodge, when you could see more of it when it was first built, was a very attractive design and very impressive building. Now it's so covered with trees all around here and there that you hardly get the whole impression of the whole structure. Well, what else was—do you remember the other personnel? Well, during the very early days? Who was chief ranger or—

RS: George Sholley was chief ranger here and I had worked with him at the White Sands in New Mexico. I was just starting out as a seasonal. I was a seasonal with White Sands when George Sholley was chief ranger there. And then he had been one or a few other areas and then came here as chief ranger.

DL: Do you think they were having any particular—

RS: Leonard, Leonard Berg was the assistant chief ranger.

DL: When did Granville Liles come?

RS: Granville Liles had already left when I got here.

DL: Oh, he was—he'd been gone?

RS: Yeah.

DL: He was here with Freeland maybe.

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RS: He was here with Freeland. And let's see, I was trying to think—Woody Zenfell was the, what they call the park engineer. They later changed the title to chief of maintenance later, many years later. But Woody Zenfell was the—and Dick Bowman was his assistant engineer in charge of maintenance. Let's see—there was a landscape architect was—I can picture him, but I can't think of his name (laughter). If I'd known you were going to ask me this—

DL: Well, I didn't really—no, I don't have these questions—

RS: The pictures in the files—

DL: —all down and—

RS: (unintelligible)

DL: This I can probably find although it's surprising in this middle period how many records are missing. They don't have them in the archives. And they don't have them here. But they may have them out at Suitland, Maryland.

RS: Vic, Vic LaFollette was the—what you call it—they would call the administrative officer and Doc Blevins was his chief assistant in the payroll and finance department.

(pause in recording from 00:30:25 - 00:33:17)

DL: —I can't really utilize anymore. I don't believe, in fact, I'm going to have trouble being brief enough (laughs) for that period. The whole manuscript could be written about that twenty-five year period.

RS: Oh, yeah. Sure.

DL: And I've got enough to do it. But that won't be—that wouldn't be what I contracted to do. I contracted to write the whole period of the park, at least through '75. And I've got to try to fill in this period of the fifties. And I've had my moments of thinking, well, gee whiz, there wasn't anything interesting happened in that period. All the really important decisions were made, the policy was set, the basic development was here, but then I find that what we brought out here that they didn't have any visitor centers. Well, this is a very important part of a park and so the coming of visitor centers is certainly of fundamental importance. So there's one that came in that period.

RS: Well, they didn't have any self-guiding trails either. They didn't have any—

DL: Wasn't there a White Oak self-guiding trail?

RS: There was.

DL: —when you came? Or had it already been abandoned when you came?

RS: It already had been abandoned. It was just too difficult to keep up.

DL: Why?

RS: Too much vandalism, I think.

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DL: Oh, vandalism on the posts and the messages. I wondered if it was such a steep trail that the thing would erode from usage, but that, there's never been a time I guess, when it didn't have heavy traffic.

RS: Yeah. But that, I guess that was, but it had been abandoned before I ever got here.

DL: Well, you know, Benton MacKaye had a large part in developing that White Oak Nature Trail.

RS: Well—

DL: He worked with Freeland and Bob Moore. That's something I didn't know till I'd delved into these records.

RS: You know I ran across, you know, guide leaflets or whatever you want to call it or write-ups of that trail. Many years after I was here that I didn't even know about it.

DL: Well, then you were developing nature trails in the early days?

RS: Yes.

DL: Still in Edwards's term or—

RS: Yes. Stony Man Nature Trail was developed and the Swamp Nature Trail. Those were the first two under Edwards's time. And then they were later when they expanded the campground. Of course, we had to redo the Swamp Nature Trail almost completely or a lot of it had to be redone. And the—then, let's see, I was trying to think—of course, the campground expansion program was one of the biggest things during the Mission 66. They not only expanded the Big Meadows Campground to over two hundred, almost 250 sites from about thirty-some, I think it was, it was less than fifty. And they also expanded the Lewis Mountain Campground to more than double what it was. And also built Loft Mountain Campground. I think it was finished about '58, if I'm not mistaken. And then the Mathews Arm Campground was begun under that program. And, of course, it was just finished not too many years ago. But the lodges themselves were, well, I'd say, tripled in capacity, at least. Each one of them.

DL: Skyland and Big Meadows.

RS: Yeah, at least. We can get the exact figures on that in the records I'm sure, but—

DL: There must be an easy way to—

RS: Then they also—

DL: Do you know of anything that was ever written up as a report on the accomplishments of Mission 66? You find this so widely scattered and you find so many discussions of proposals and tentative plans that it's just awfully confusing to try to find out what really was done. Not what was talked about, but what was done. And it seems like there should have been a summary report after Mission 66 was concluded as to what it accomplished, but I have never run across one, but it just seems kind of logical to me that there would have been sometime.

RS: I think there was probably, Darwin. And maybe you could get that from the director's office, I presume.

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DL: Yeah. Maybe. If there's one around here maybe June Campbell—was June Campbell here when you—was she in the park office when you came?

RS: Yes.

DL: She had—she was in and out for a little while.

RS: She's been the superintendent's secretary ever since I arrived in '56.

DL: So she was secretary for Edwards? She'd been even secretary for Freeland, but she quit and had two kids, I think.

RS: That's right. Uh-huh.

DL: Then she came back later.

RS: Two children and then came back, but she was here when I arrived in '56.

DL: Uh-huh. Probably been here ever since.

RS: She was a very good source of information, of course. Now I don't know whether there are any—should be records up at the Byrd Visitor Center. Have you checked with Millie on that?

DL: On Mission 66?

RS: On Mission 66.

DL: She has in her bibliography about a six-page paper on Mission 66, but it doesn't seem from the title from what she has to make quite clear. And she no longer has it. She said she sent it down to Phil Hastings and I haven't pursued it down there yet. A lot of these things I'm looking for an easy way. Every once in a while, if I keep asking questions here and there, I find somebody that tells me fairly exactly what to look for and maybe even where to look for it. Then if all my sort of teasing leads don't get me anything, why, I ultimately really start single-mindedly pursuing it, but every once in a while I find a lot of things by fortunate accident, just by noising around that I want them and it doesn't consume hours or days of time. I'll have to follow into this business of the shifting from sort of a family cabin-type development at Skyland to a motel—what I call a motel-type development. This is quite significant. And along this line, have you run across the—have you followed into the water resources problem? Hoskins told me one time that—I said, "Gee, whiz, I don't think you ought to build a lot more of these motel things up here" to Taylor Hoskins and he said, "Don't worry, we won't." He says, "You don't have to limit the development of Skyland. You don't have to draw any more lines. The lines are drawn; nature did it. There's just no more water you can get up there within reason."

RS: Yes, well, see under this program they did go into a drilling water exploration program under Hoskins and with the state of Virginia, a geologist, and they got federal funds as well as state funds to drill these test wells. And there were probably fifteen or twenty test wells drilled, some of them quite deep. And those are all on record. There's actually a big thick volume written on the—

DL: The water resources of the park.

RS: The water resources of the park.

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DL: This came out fairly recently.

RS: Geologic maps. Yeah, it just came out since I've retired.

DL: I haven't seen it, but that's the thing I want to get a hold of. Because I have this—

RS: —or by the time I retired.

DL: Yeah, I have this idea, which may not be very good, but it seems to me that the park really asked for trouble along that line by planning all these developments on top of the mountain. (Schaffner laughs) This should, this is a place where water is a little bit hard to come by.

RS: Yeah.

DL: And I wonder if they really thought, well, they probably didn't because the park had Skyline Drive foisted on them really.

RS: Yes.

DL: The Skyline Drive was there before the park was although, of course, the park service was working with it a little bit, but they didn't have adequate time to study all the aspects. [Herbert] Hoover said to [Horace M.] Albright, "Get going. Build that thing now!"

RS: Yes.

DL: Yeah, well—

RS: Well, it was sort of like a WPA or PWA project to give employment to the unemployed.

DL: But this, I guess, has been a continuing problem, providing adequate water. I also run across references to their having to haul water to some of the developments every once in a while during kind of period of drought. Apparently, Swift Run was one of the worst ones, but they have also hauled water I think to Panorama and to Elkwallow and to Lewis Mountain. I don't think they ever hauled water to Skyland or Big Meadows. In fact, they may not had tanker capacity to haul water of significance in view of the usage at Panorama and Big Meadows.

RS: There was supposed to have been a third visitor center in the south district near Loft Mountain, or some other location. It was never really chosen, location wasn't, but that was part of the development package.

DL: Was that to be under Mission 66 too?

RS: Supposed to be three visitor centers, yes. Of course, that was postponed and not developed. And then an edict came out there would be no more visitor centers. (laughs) Except then they got into the Union Station in Washington, D.C. and went bankrupt I think. (laughs)

DL: You mean this has been a—kind of a final edict that no more visitor centers at all?

RS: At one time, yes. One time about ten years ago, they said there'd be no more visitor centers.

DL: Well, this isn't still enforced, is it? I mean you could—

RS: I'm not sure. It's just sort of nebulous. I think probably they abandoned it especially when they started building things like the big visitor center up at Independence. They spent a huge amount of money there building a huge visitor center for the Bicentennial and they spent millions elsewhere to build visitor centers for historic and natural areas, both.

DL: How about telling me—you must have a lot of memories about getting together these things for the Big Meadows exhibit and for choosing the theme.

RS: Oh, yeah.

DL: Kind of think back and tell me sort of how the Big Meadows Visitor Center got to be what it is.

RS: Oh, (laughs) that's a long story, Darwin. (laughs)

DL: Well, I know it is, but it's one you were the key man in, wasn't it?

RS: Yes. Well, there'd been merely an outline of the exhibits there. And then I felt that there was a place to show the man's relation to nature and nature's relation to man. And so that I took that tack from the very beginning, is try to show the interplay of man with nature and nature with man. And it was, to me, it was a matter of convincing the planning team that the museum lab sent down from Washington at that time and get them on my side to get the exhibits lined up to show the influence man had had on the area and vice versa. So you might say, it's nature and man. Either way, I put one first one time and the other the first next. And yes, and I had a lot of fun contacting people and rounding up appropriate artifacts.

DL: A lot of them were contributed, weren't they?

RS: Yeah.

DL: Did the park service buy any or—

RS: Oh, yes. We bought some, but most of them were donated by people just by contacting them, word of mouth, and little articles in local papers and statewide papers dropped an article here and there in different newspapers and then you get on the (AT??) and the people write and say they have this or that they'd like to contribute—

DL: Did the Natural History Association—was that of any help?

RS: Oh, yes. Now, I know I bought a lot of things at what they call the Winn Way sale. This was the sale of property out on the, in the Sandy Hook area of the Shenandoah River. The two Winn sisters, one of them had been very active in their early days with the—

DL: Mountain people—Elizabeth, Elizabeth Winn.

RS: Elizabeth Winn.

DL: Yeah, I knew her.

RS: And her sister Mary Day. Hey, I didn't know I still remembered.

DL: Yeah. (laughs)

RS: Had been a war correspondent during both world wars. A female war correspondent. She was a women libber from way back. (laughs)

DL: Yeah.

RS: But anyway, Miss Elizabeth Winn had worked with the mountain people and actually established what she called Mountain Neighbors, which was an organization that she'd established to work with the mountain people and help them earn money from their crafts, like weaving and making corn husk dolls and carving and making things with their hands and things like that. And she was very instrumental in getting this Mountain Neighbors industry started. Well, from what I gathered from talking with her, this nucleus actually moved south and became part of the mountain crafts set-up down around Cone Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway. And some of their crafts down there, some of the people from here and the ideas spread down there anyway.

DL: People that she had trained to help—

RS: Yeah, she had helped train. So that—

DL: Well, then you got some—

RS: Then I went to their sale when they sold out, I forget, this was before the visitor center was completed. And bought looms that they had that were from the actual Blue Ridge area and quite a number of objects like cooking utensils, things like that. A lot of those are now either on display at the Byrd Visitor Center or in the collections, in the museum collections up there. So that—and I was able to buy things, they're very reasonable. They donated some things that weren't sold at a very reasonable price because fortunately I had the Shenandoah Natural History Association's money to bid with. (laughs) And people soon learned that I was going on to my price no matter what. And I got a lot of things very reasonably. In fact, I got one loom for my first bid at twenty dollars. And another loom I think was donated by Miss Winn. She found out who I was and, well, she recognized me and she came along about that time and said, "Well, I've got one out here in the barn you can have too." (Lambert laughs) So—

DL: Well, this, wasn't this—how fundamental a departure was this theme of man and the mountain or bringing in man so strongly into the interpretation of Shenandoah? Favour wrote me that he felt that his job was 90 percent interpreting natural history and only 10 percent interpreting human history and included in that 10 percent was the history of the park itself. So that puts the mountain man, say, down to considerably less than 10 percent of the possible total interpretation of Shenandoah. And doesn't this represent a shift? The biggest visitor center has man at least on a 50/50 basis with nature.

RS: Well, I think it does. In fact, man wasn't even supposed to be in the picture at all. It was all supposed to be nature, but I found that in my association with the park and in life itself that man was a very important part of nature, and was only supposedly—now this may be putting man too high on the scale—he was the only one that could alter nature to any great extent by what he did. In other words, the animals couldn't use tools and tear up the mountain sides and cause erosion. And in other words, man does that and he depends on the mountain side to raise his crops and the first thing he knows he doesn't have any topsoil left. So I think man is the most important thing to influence nature, but, in turn, that importance that he has caused to take place reacts and falls back on him, you might say (laughs) and causes catastrophes and so on. So that, well, I felt that we should at least balance the picture.

DL: Did you get into any involvement with the possibility of saving any of the old mountain structures or old mountain farmsteads or—

RS: Well, unfortunately, by the time I got here, there was very little to save after World War II and in '56. There was very little left although there had been the Steer Report written many years before. I can't tell you when, I think it was in the thirties.

DL: Thirty-five.

RS: Thirty-five. And I went back in the files and found out that—and even the regional director when this was brought up, well, why shouldn't we try to restore or recreate or rebuild or build from the ground up similar structures to show that what the life was like, for instance, when the park was created here or just before. And found opposition from the regional director on up to the director, "Oh, no the Great Smokies has this. The Blue Ridge Parkway has this. We just don't be copycats." And just as important here as it had been in those locations, but we could not do it because we were being copycats, but you look back in the files, there had been attempts to save some of these original structures and although there was lip service to it, there'd never been any funds to really save any of these places. It takes reconstruction money or, at least, maintenance money to keep these things going and to say the Steer Report pointed out twenty or thirty of these that should be saved, but nothing was ever ever done to keep the termites out or the vandals from burning them down and having picnics in them or anything else. (laughs)

DL: You know, sort of by accident—

RS: And the park itself found that these were such nuisances, unattended nuisances that they may have burned some of them down, as I had heard, to just to get rid of them. Because otherwise people are moving in and becoming problems—thorns in the side—

DL: Well, you remember when we were interviewing Big [C. Victor] Bert down at Elkton, and he told us about this incident of his foreman and the crew burning down a mountain house. That they weren't—found out they weren't supposed to burn because it was outside the park. (Schaffner laughs) Well, now this couldn't be the only case of burning down one of those structures.

RS: No, no.

DL: (laughs) This is just one that attracted a great deal of attention because it wasn't supposed to have been done.

RS: Well, it was an abandoned one I hope. (laughs)

DL: But also during Freeland's term, I found that there was quite a lot of this, whether burning or not, they always razed them.

RS: Yes.

DL: And the records say they were razed. Well, I suppose that unless there was a lot of salvageable lumber in there, which is unlikely, they were probably burned. I mean, that's a form of razing, isn't it? You can raze it by burning or you can raze it by just tearing it apart.

RS: That's right. And tearing the roof off—

DL: But their word was always razed on the records. And Bob Moore signed most of these reports. He was a ranger then, I guess.

RS: Yes.

DL: Maybe he was acting chief ranger for a while. Well, you got into another revolution in the interpretive work, I think. This environmental revolution. Environmental education. I think that was a lasting change. I know there's even a recent allotment or something to carry this on. And now they're adding energy. The big push up at the training this year—Eileen and I were up to a couple of days of it—and the park service wants them to talk about energy. They want them to get this energy coordinated into the park message somehow and, of course, it was pointed out that the park operates on energy, of course, and the energy comes from the sun and it's picked up by the trees or it operates the weather and you got energy running down the streams. But, in any event, I wanted you to kind of give me just a little bit of your thoughts or your recollections of the beginning of this environmental emphasis in the interpretive program. You do think that's kind of a fundamental—

RS: Well, yeah and I do.

DL: —new thing—

RS: Well, it's new and it's old, Darwin. The thing is that some of the basic concepts, back in Greek philosophy, you'll find that the human concept of the universe and the world—the basic elements for instance, they stress in environmental ed, the air, and the water, and the land, and the sun. You find those in Greek philosophy. They call them the fire, of course, and water, and air, and rock. The same elements are stressed in environmental education about the earth and the interplay, the interrelationship with these basic elements. Plus, of course, when you get into the green plants, producers and the consumers and, of course, we're one of the consumers. (laughs) And one of the biggest consumers of all these things that are produced by the basic elements. And, I say, it's new and it's old. It can all be tied together. Ecology is a peculiar term. It means not just one system, but all systems related and how they interact with each other. And I've always found it very fascinating to see, as I said a while ago, how man influences nature and nature influences man. And this, I think, ties right in with environmental ed.

DL: It really wasn't very difficult to coordinate this with the interpretation of the park.

RS: Oh, no. I found it—

DL: Seems so natural, doesn't it?

RS: It seems a very natural thing. I think it was just a different—I wouldn't say it's different, but it's just a re-emphasis of man's place in nature and his influence. As I say, man is the only critter that can use tools to great advantage and then, in other words, extend his power beyond his two hands and what not.

DL: Well, isn't this a new thing though? In that the idea at first was to interpret the park, to tell people about the park, and get them to understand the park. And then what is new is that this is used as a way of teaching people about how to get along with the whole overall environment, not just within the park itself.

RS: That's right.

DL: But over the whole country or even over the whole planet.

RS: That's right.

DL: And this wasn't in the park service interpretation until later, was it? Until at least the sixties.

RS: You might say it wasn't so much. There wasn't so much emphasis on it until about sixties, late sixties. I think it's about 1968 that they really began emphasizing—'67 or eight, maybe '60, might be a little earlier than that. But anyway, I was going to say that we always considered when we were doing the environmental education with the teachers, we tried to point out to them that they could probably do this in their own backyards or make a lot near the school. But the park was a nice, great big laboratory. They could come up there and see how it was, things were interacting much better and get out on a field trip and we were up there to help them. And it was up to them to do it. And we found that most teachers were really more than willing to cooperate and incorporate the ideas into their curriculum.

DL: Yeah. It kind of sharpens the attention to go out and get into a beautiful place, wild place like the park. I don't know, I've always associated this kind of ironically in my mind—

(pause in recording from 01:03:52 - 01:04:05)

DL: Well, we were talking about this environmental irony. Another one that—some of this stuff I just need to get into proportion. I just need somebody to talk to about it. I don't necessarily expect you to come up with any original information or thoughts, but just to sort of put my thoughts into some kind of perspective. I've been finding out recently that, for years, the park up here was using 2,4,5-T. And they were using it on their gooseberry program. And they even, for a time, allowed the power companies to use it and 2,4,5-T is one of these very lasting herbicides that affects the soil apparently for a long time. And it was ultimately put on the interior secretary—I think [Stewart] Udall put it on the—or maybe it was somebody before Udall, but I believe it was Udall that put it on the prohibited list for interior department use. And was this generally known that—I mean, of course, originally, we didn't know what these substances would do.

RS: That's right.

DL: And, perhaps, this is the reason it was used. But I—

RS: Well, then too the people that were using it were—they react to results and they didn't know the side effects. In fact, it was still on the market and they kept buying it as long as it was on the market.

DL: Well, hadn't there always been no, not just just in recent years, but hasn't there always been a feeling since the park service was originated that the park service should be more careful and caring for nature than the average agency?

RS: Yes. That was always my impression. In fact, that was one reason I joined the park service (laughs) because I felt that they were a little bit more aware of the problems that can be caused by man, by his careless actions. And I felt that the park service was a little more aware of this than the general run of the—

DL: The park here was using DDT for quite a while.

RS: Oh, yes, definitely. In fact, they sprayed with DDT two times from helicopters against the—what do they call—

DL: Fall webworm.

RS: Fall webworm, yes. Because it was unsightly and instead of accepting it as a part of the natural scene and that it wasn't, it was not killing the trees. If it was, if there were some attrition it wasn't a great deal among the forest trees, but that it was a part of the natural scene and it took an awful lot of talk and

convincing to have them reverse their policies. Once they get started down the road on a policy to eliminate the fall webworm, there they go barging in with helicopters and all the modern technology.

DL: (laughs) (both talking at once) I guess they got some pretty strong complaints about these fall webworms, but I don't know how many it was. Do you have any idea whether they got a lot of complaints?

RS: No. The people said, "Well, what are those unsightly things?" Well, if you told them what they were and that they didn't hurt the trees and they only occurred in the fall and gone and it doesn't appear until the next fall and the cuckoos eat them and—(laughs)

DL: And they could feel all right about it.

RS: Yeah. But no, because they had a few complaints, right? They had to do something about them.

DL: Well, I just wanted to see if I was all totally by myself—

RS: No, you weren't.

DL: —in having this kind of a grinding in the gears over the consistency so to speak.

RS: In fact, I think probably the best thing that came out of the environmental ed program was that it did re-emphasize that man can mess things up as well as any other part of nature or mess nature up much more than any other one part of nature can itself even from natural catastrophes and so on.

DL: I wonder if the environmental education program didn't help us get the money for our new sewage systems? (laughs)

RS: Probably. You know, this sewage system deal actually is one that went back even when Pollock was at Skyland in the early days. They didn't bother to even have a semblance of a treating sewer plant. They just dumped all the sewer out the pipe over the cliffs. (laughter) Didn't even have a septic tank.

DL: Well, I wonder what the people down in Kettle Canyon—

RS: See, well, nature is supposed to purify it, you see. (laughs)

DL: Well, actually it probably did. But that quantity wasn't anything like the quantity they're putting out now.

RS: No, that's right.

DL: I guess nature, perhaps, will purify it in a mile with a lot of drop in elevation and so on. But that's a small quantity.

RS: Yeah.

DL: Well, there was another thing that isn't really in your field, but I know you must have some thoughts on and maybe some recollections. We've always had this terrible boundary problem. You just got four hundred miles of boundary where you should settle for 150 if it was reasonably drawn, enclosing about the same amount of territory. Do you remember that along in the sixties, I think, Senator Byrd Sr. was—maybe it was even as early as about '60. Anyway, he was going to help straighten this thing out. And

Hoskins was getting together a recommendation and they were going to acquire a certain amount of land and give away a certain amount and Congress was going to authorize them to do this, which would straighten the boundary. And that bill apparently was pending and pending and Byrd was always said to be for it and yet it never passed. Do you recall anything about this at all?

RS: No. I think probably the best source on that would be Hoskins himself who is now in Tappahannock, Virginia. But my impression was that just about that time that Senator Byrd begin, his health began failing somewhat. And the last dedication that he was at was in 1963 or four.

DL: That was when—

RS: That was the Number Four Byrd's Nest Shelter at what we call on that Neighbor Mountain spur, north of Panorama about ten miles. And at that time, he was at this dedication, but he looked very feeble and he kept licking his lips every few seconds. And Vera [Schaffner] said to me, "I had an uncle that did that just shortly before he died and he had a brain tumor." And this is exactly what I found out six months later Senator Byrd had and died of maybe six months after that. So he was in failing health and I think his mental capacities were probably affected before that, and he was not pushing anything and that's about the time he turned over the reins of power to his son by appointing, stepping down and having his son appointed as senator. And, of course, when this happened, it was a change from father to son and the father really wasn't in a position to, you might say, indoctrinate his son on what was happening and everything. It was a very touchy situation there for a while until his son got used to it. By that time there had been complaints that the park was gobbling up all the country and everything and all that, sort of propaganda.

DL: Have you noticed this flurry of protests over an alleged expansion program (laughs) just in recent months?

RS: Jim Aleshire. I think you know the guy—a character—started all that.

DL: But it's been going on in the other counties too. Most of the counties have taken this thing up and started to issue some kind of protest.

RS: They don't realize how valuable the park is to the community and to the state of Virginia as well as the country.

DL: But it's also—they've taken a false impression from this thing.

RS: Yeah, sure.

DL: There wasn't any proposal to expand to that old Cammerer Line.

RS: No, unh-uh. That's right.

DL: It was just presenting the—of course, Jake came out with that and it was in the local papers.

RS: Yes.

DL: But I knew that in the first place and yet the way it was presented in there some people could misunderstand.

RS: Expect the park to spread out and take in all the towns.

DL: You see a map there that says—well, there's a certain kind of line and it's got the coded down here for that kind of line, says, "authorized and intended boundary."

RS: Original. It should say original.

DL: Yeah, they should have said—

RS: Original proposed.

DL: Originally authorized and originally intended. But, anyway. What do you think has got to be done about this? Does this boundary business worry you or does the problem of access to the boundary worry you at all? Or did it ever in your work that—the park administration maybe never considered much about the outside boundary?

RS: No, I don't think so because when Hoskins came here as superintendent I think it's '58, he asked his staff what problems there were that probably needed tending to. And I mentioned that although it probably wasn't critical, that I felt that if they straightened out the boundaries it'd probably be easier to administer and get along better with your neighbors without having all these embayments and pieces of land that stick out. If they'd just went along cut off the part that stuck out and build in a little bit where it didn't stick out, it would be much better as far as, for instance, law enforcement and ranger patrols and people knowing where the boundary was. There wouldn't be as near as many game violations by hunters and things like that, encroachments, if they could just have a definite straight boundary down at the base of the mountain. Now this didn't concern what was going on much at top that I was in charge of interpretation at that time because people just didn't get down there. They all came up on top where the cool weather was and the action was, so to speak. But it still was a problem and I pointed that out to Hoskins and he said, "Well, that'll take a lot of doing" and I said, "Well, the longer it waits the more problem it'll be." But I think they just waited too long because now the land is selling for, what, a thousand to two thousand dollars an acre up against the park most any place you can go because the people want to be against the park because they know that one boundary will be—

DL: Well, then you have this thing of—

RS:—no problem.

DL: —loss of access to, like, Jeremy's Run. Jeremy's Run, ever since I can remember, has been one of the hikes that people from Washington and elsewhere like to take from the mouth up to Elkwallow and maybe back over the Neighbor, or back over the Knob as well as the other way around. Of course, they start it there and then go down to the mouth, but in recent times, why, Jeremy's Run has got a very hostile landowner. He's the one that's been there for a long, long time. And he was very agreeable for a long time. But I guess the hikers got to be such a nuisance that—and they're parking their cars in his way and finally he's got so that he just won't let them let him in there. And the same is true of Overall Falls. And I guess the same is true or has been true at Big Run.

RS: Yeah, access is one of the things for the lower reaches of the park. And I think that this is regrettable because anyone that really likes to climb mountains shouldn't start up at the Skyline Drive and climb up without the last little stretch of peak that's sticking up there. They should start down in the valley and hike up to really get—they're always making fun of these mountains, oh, look at the rock that is there, two times or three times higher, (laughs) but if you start down at the bottom in the valley and climb up to over three thousand feet, you've got quite a rugged climb.

DL: I arrived here fresh from the west and decided I was going to climb Stony Man. And I looked at up the thing from the valley and said, "Yeah, I can see where I can go. I can go right up there."

RS: Yeah.

DL: And I thought, well, it's four thousand feet tall. I'll be up there and back in time for dinner. (laughter) And I started out, of course, it wasn't all together the mountain. It was, to a large extent, the vegetation. A lot of the area had recently been abandoned and I wasn't on a trail. I'd all my life had gone where there wasn't a trail if I took a notion. I still do, but that was quite an experience that day. I got into briar patches and some really dense places and I fought my way up that mountain all day. And it was about dark when I got up there to Skyland. I got over to the Camp One. I walked around there and got over to Camp One. I knew where it was. And they put me up for the night and gave me some dinner. I wasn't prepared. (Schaffner laughs) I thought I'd be back for dinner. (laughter) That's what happened to one overconfident Westerner.

RS: Yeah. As I've often told visitors that say, "Oh, these are just small mountains." I said, "Yeah, from up here at top of the Skyline Drive, which is around twenty-six to twenty-eight hundred feet (laughs) and then you got only a hundred feet or so to go to the top, why, naturally it doesn't look like much, but you start down the valley and you have a different matter." Yeah, I think it's unfortunate and there was a drive here about ten or twelve years ago—quite a push—to establish a low-level campground so that the area could be used more year round. Because, you know, in the wintertime the weather's pretty unpredictable as far as ice storms and blizzards go up on top. Yet down in the valley, why, the lower reaches of the park, why, it's not too severe, at least in comparison to what's going on up on top of the mountains of the ridge.

DL: I really—don't you think that's going to come yet? I mean or has it died away?

RS: Well, there would have to be quite a bit of—a little bit of valley land, the flatlands and the—what do they call it—the hollows purchased because the park doesn't own them and it was too valuable—

DL: Jeremy's Run was one that was on that program and Hawksbill Creek and was Staunton River on it? I think it was.

RS: Possibilities. But there was quite a bit of opposition because they figured the park was taking over land that could be used agriculturally or taken out of tax revenues and so on, and so on, and so on.

DL: Yeah, I know. And that still, of course, exists. Well, there was a—

RS: This doesn't take into account that the—I'm sure it's much more now—but ever since the park was established, except probably during the war years, the people that came to visit Shenandoah spent at least twelve million dollars every year to come to see the park from other states. Now that's a small amount. That was way back when it was first established. I imagine it's a lot more than that now.

DL: Well, it must be, yeah.

RS: Probably must be thirty or forty million (laughs) that they spend to come through Shenandoah now. To get here and to have lodging and meals and actually, camping equipment and all that can be thrown in, for that matter.

DL: Well, do you have any ideas to methods of maintaining access, like, to Jeremy's Run or Overall Falls from the low side without buying land? I mean—

RS: Why, I should think there should be a matter of right of ways that went to the mountain in the first place, went to the people whose property it was in the first place, that the park took that property that it seems the right way should go with it without having to go to court about it.

DL: What strikes me—now let's take this thing of ours here—it always strikes me that if somebody wants to come hiking up that road, that I really haven't got any right to stop them. I think I do as we kind of assumed one day when you were here too that day we stopped the motorcycles.

RS: Yeah.

DL: I think that's something else.

RS: That's something different.

DL: Especially, I wouldn't really have tried to stop them if they hadn't just come riding at us full tilt and just kind of made me mad. But I don't think they have any business coming up for those noisemakers. But because there's no road, there's no road proper, but there is a trail. This is a fire foot trail. And I think that anyone who wants to walk on that trail and will behave in any reasonable fashion as you behave in a public place that has got a right to do so. And I wouldn't think of trying to close this as a trail to the park and my part, our part of it.

RS: Well, I think this was part of that program also. Not only lower level campgrounds, but trail heads. The idea of trail heads for parking cars where people could leave their cars and then go on hiking trips without having to worry about the cars. And most people don't want to park on private property or block roads or things, but they have to have a place to leave their vehicles while they're out hiking. It's too bad that they haven't established trail heads, been able to. Of course, the park can buy no land without it being donated now. Unless Congress changes the law so that the Water—what is that—Water Conservation Act, whatever they call it.

DL: Land and Water Conservation Fund.

RS: Land and Water Conservation Fund, which the park has contributed to for years and years. And yet they have received no benefit from it.

DL: Well, I'm going to ask you before we get through what do you think the future holds for the park? But first, I have a couple of little details that maybe you could help me a little bit. I've been finding in the files over the last few days that I've been going through and I found in the monthly narrative reports, for years, several years there during Hoskins's time—about the midsixties I think—that they were expecting to have two—I believe it was two—Job Corps conservation center camps. And then I began to find that he's reporting in his monthly report that he's going to county supervisors meetings and so on to explain to them about the Job Corps plans for the park. And then pretty soon it dies out and there's no more talk about Job Corps camps. No Job Corps camps ever materialized. And I suppose there should be a set of clippings or something somewhere because apparently the public rose up and said they wouldn't tolerate them. Is that true? Or do you remember anything?

RS: Well, I know that—the time I remember, the articles and talk about—there was local opposition, I think, around Elkton is one of the places I can remember. I'm not just singling Elkton out, but there were several other places that objected to the Job Corps because they said it was a bunch of hippies. And they didn't want their daughters associated with them and so on, and so on, and so on. (Lambert laughs) And

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besides that, they were supposed to be integrated and they couldn't stand to have these black people coming into town. (laughs) They were afraid of all the crime rate and all that.

DL: They had one in Kentucky, in Mammoth Cave. They had one in the Great Smokies. That's south even more so than this is. Well, anyway, you do remember something about that.

RS: There was—

DL: It was probably the public objections that prevented this from getting them because apparently Hoskins really wanted them.

RS: Yeah.

DL: Well, let's see. Before I ask you what now or what's coming in the future—there was—I don't know whether we really got as much as we could have about Edwards. What was Edwards like personally? A typical park service man or did he have any particular characteristics that made him different?

RS: Edwards had an engineering background. He'd been with the Army Corps of Engineers. Of course, he was—I guess, he was in his late sixties when I knew him.

DL: He retired from here I guess?

RS: Yes, he retired from here. I always felt that he was in very good physical shape. Must have been about less than three months before he retired, I hiked down to Dark Hollow Falls and back with him on—well, some of the staff did—on improving the trail down there. They'd had a flood from one of these hurricanes and it torn up the trail and we hiked down to see what needed doing to the trail, to see what we could do to resurrect it, and put it back in shape. I remember that going back up he outwalked all the staff.

DL: You say he was in his late sixties?

RS: I think so, yeah.

DL: Beyond sixty-five?

RS: Oh, yeah.

DL: No mandatory retirement at sixty-five?

RS: No, it's only mandatory at seventy.

DL: But he had served in quite a lot of other park service areas.

RS: Yes, he had. I think he'd been in Yosemite and several western parks. I was astounded that he would be able to, you know, at his age, just practically outwalk all of us. And then it wasn't too many months later, though, that he had a replacement, a valve in his heart was replaced, one of these artificial valves installed. But he had a leakage of some sort, but he certainly was in pretty good shape when he retired. (laughs)

DL: Did he have any—in a sense this attitude about the cabins that Skyland was a little different from what's happened? Did he have any other policies or tendencies that were different from the later administration? That you can recall?

RS: Ah, Darwin, I can't. See most of the time I was here, Kenny Dale was the chief naturalist. That is, most of that—

DL: And he would have attended the staff—they were having staff meetings, I suppose.

RS: Yeah, only about the several month—April, part of April, May, June, July, obviously only three or four months in there that I was the chief naturalist. And Kenny had dealt with him before that. I was trying to think—but I always felt he was very fair minded. He tried to encourage his staff to make their own decisions and then contact him and explain them to him why they should be that way. He was very fair minded in that way. He always tried to give you enough rope to hang yourself if you wanted to. (laughter)

DL: Trying to put myself, in a sense, into his—

RS: He was a very good administrator, as far as that goes.

DL: Do you know what worried him? Did anything particularly worry him? You know, I don't know about what worried, say, Hoskins, but I think Hoskins was more aware than most of the superintendents of a sort of inherent hostility all around the boundary. He was always—had the feeling that people were trying to burn the park up. That the residents around the boundary were just looking for an opportunity to set fires so they can burn up the park. I don't mean this in an extreme sense, but this did worry him. And I wondered if Edwards had any particular things that really worried him or if you were aware of them. He probably wouldn't talk about them particularly unless it was to the person in whose department this came, but—

RS: No. There was one thing about this park though that's maybe also present in some others to some extent, but one of the things about Shenandoah is that you have so many pressures from the outside just like this boundary thing. And you also have so many demands from the neighboring communities for interpretive programs or talks from civic clubs and civic groups and to try to establish a good rapport with all these neighbors, as you say, 450 miles of a park boundary and the park itself only seventy-five miles long. All these pressures to me and I reported this in one paper I had to write on why in justifying the grade positions in the civil service system. At one time, they asked why we felt that we should have certain grades in the civil service setup. And they were giving special consideration to the western parks, what they called isolation. They gave them a higher grade or a higher salary because they were isolated. Well, I felt that all the pressures here at Shenandoah, not only the travel to the park was one of the greatest in the country, but we also had all these problems of—(pause in recording 01:34:53 - 01:36:39)—did not just considered that isolation makes your salary go up. (laughs) I felt that all the pressures from all the communities and all the boundary problems and all the pressures and like Hoskins was saying they want to burn up the park (laughs) and things like that. I felt that the staff here had more problems on their hands than any park that was isolated. (laughs) And therefore, the salary should be equal or greater than any of the Great Western parks where they had set around all winter waiting for the snows to melt so they could let people into the place.

DL: I have met Edwards and one of my guidebooks came out when Edwards was here. He had his letter in there with his picture—I guess his picture was in there and signature—but and I didn't talk to him but very briefly because I didn't live here while Edwards was superintendent. I just was down here on a couple of visits for not more than two or three days each time while Edwards was here. So I never really got the feeling of Edwards. I did more with Freeland although, I didn't really live here most of the time that Freeland was here. I did a little bit of the time. Of course, I knew Lassiter very well. And I guess I knew Hoskins very well.

RS: Have you talked to Doc Blevins?

DL: Not very much.

RS: I think he was here a lot longer than Edwards.

DL: You think Blevins would be a pretty good source on the Edwards period?

RS: I think so, yes.

DL: And June Campbell too. I mean to talk with June Campbell. I've talked with her just a little bit, but I mean to really sit down with her and have a period of time with June because June has got a lot, I think, to offer and she also knows a lot about what's available in the records. You know, I can't possibly go over everything.

RS: No, that's right.

DL: I need some little guidance as to where I might find some fruitful papers. And, of course, I'm getting some from time to time. Nobody seems to know everything. A lot of them—

RS: Well, for all during that period, we did do monthly reports, I know.

DL: Yeah, well, I've got—

RS: I don't know whether those are helpful or not.

DL: —monthly reports for just about every period, but that and maybe I can find some in the—

RS: Staff minute notes.

DL: Yeah, or the division, the different divisions, but the—

RS: An annual report (both speaking at once).

DL: The summary—the superintendent's monthly narrative reports, which were written during that period, are not available. I've got them in the archives up to 1950. And that's a good slug of them, and I've got them here from 1961 to 1967, all of which are Hoskins's. And from 1950 to 1961 I can't—they're not in the archives and they're not here. And if they're at Suitland, Maryland, which is a federal record center to which some of these things are sent, they're not in the place they ought to be.

RS: What about St. Louis?

DL: No, I think I've got the straight story on this St. Louis thing. St. Louis was set up as a record center for personnel. At least this is the guy—the archives guy—tells me that he knows, he says he knows, that all the records that were sent to St. Louis were personnel records. And they were both military and civilian personnel records. And they had a big fire, of course, and some of them were destroyed and he said those were all military personnel records. No civilian records whatsoever were destroyed and the only civilian records there would have been personnel files.

RS: What about Chicago? What happened to the records from there?

DL: Well, this I don't know. You mean, when the park service was stationed at Chicago?

RS: Of course, I guess they'd already moved out of Chicago, hadn't it? No, it seems to me that they stayed in Chicago for quite a while.

DL: Chicago was supposed to have been just during the war, but how long they really stayed—

RS: They hung on quite a while after the war, I think.

DL: [Newton B.] Drury was director.

RS: Yeah.

DL: And when did Drury—Wirth succeeded Drury?

RS: Yeah.

DL: When did Wirth take over, I wonder?

RS: About '56, I think.

DL: I don't think Wirth was ever in Chicago.

RS: I think it was about '55 or six that Wirth took over. '55.

DL: Oh, really, that late? I don't know how long the office was in Chicago. I had the impression that shortly after the war, they came back to Washington.

RS: Well, they drug their feet a little while there, a few years I was thinking. But that can be found out easy enough from Washington.

DL: Well, wilderness—you were right in the middle of this wilderness study thing.

RS: Yeah.

DL: Was Drew Chick into this?

RS: Yes, he—

DL: He was part of the team?

RS: He ended up, more or less, riding herd on the thing. And the thing is that he was very skeptical about Shenandoah having any wilderness. And then by the time he got out and over the country that he'd been on before, but when he was acting—you might say acting—he was dabbling in naturalist work. And he was—this was before there was a naturalist here—he was taking pictures, some of which are still very good and still in the files. And he was doing what little bit of interpretation was being done of the natural scene. But the thing is that he'd, more or less, it'd been turned over to him to—oh, I know. One of the kicks they got on was motor nature trails. Drew was bound and determined that we were going to have motor nature trails.

DL: Oh, we were going to have them?

RS: Yeah, because Washington said we would, see. Well, I think we could more or less convince Drew it would be rather impractical if we were going to have wilderness to have motor nature trails. (laughter)

DL: But he didn't think when he first came out to look, he didn't think there was any wilderness out here to be found.

RS: That was my impression, anyway. Of course, Drew was sort of hard to fathom because he always has a poker face. And you don't know what he's thinking, really. But that was my impression.

DL: Well, you know, he was out here in the thirties. I was too and I had this feeling when I came down here from Alaska, nobody had really recommended or thought of any wilderness quite when I came down here in '64. And Eileen and I got hiking a lot. We went—for one thing—over to this Sisk place. And it took us, took me several hours to find that place.

RS: Yeah. (laughs)

DL: And I began to perk up and I said, "Hey, this is an entirely different thing here than it was." There's been kind of a fundamental transformation going on around here. And Hoskins felt that same thing when he came back. He hadn't been here for twenty years, approximately. He said, "I went over these places that I thought I knew" and he says, "I couldn't tell where I was." Said "It was just forest, forest everywhere." He said—I put this in *The earth-man story*—"There was a big pile of sawdust." He said, "I think it was twenty-five or thirty feet high, was an immense pile of sawdust down there and there'd been one of these mills down there on Hazel Mountain somewhere." He said, "I went down there and hunted for that thing and I couldn't find it. And finally, I did find some sign that indicated this was replaced," but he said, "that great pile of sawdust, it just melted into the ground. It was gone." Chick must've had this kind of reaction.

RS: Yeah, (both talking at once) I think he realized finally that, you know, there was a great possibility of having wilderness here. But then when they—somebody had watched them, you know, these things come out of the director's office or one of his assistants decides they should have motor nature trails. Well, if you're going to have wilderness, you don't want a motor nature trail running through it.

DL: You sure don't.

RS: And so we finally convinced Drew that we didn't have any suitable (laughs) sites for motor nature trails going down to the bottom of the mountain and back up, you know. (laughter) But one thing about this area—I kept running across this all the time I was chief naturalist and assistant. Since this place was supposed to return to nature, why, the maintenance crew and everybody should get out and clean up all signs of any cabins or any stone walls or any orchards, cut them down, get rid of them to help nature out. And I told them, "No, that's not the way it's supposed to be done." (laughs) I said, "To me it's much more impressive to come across an old stone foundation with just a few (unintelligible) lying around with trees growing up in the middle of the foundation, maybe twenty inches through than it is to—no sign of what has been here before." I said, "It's much more impressive to see what nature has done herself without any help from man."

DL: Yeah. Actually, the fact that those things which were there are gone—if any (both talking at once, unintelligible) just a little bit, that's an indication of man's interference.

RS: Yeah, that's right.

DL: Recent man's interference. And they're stumbling into this same trap to some degree right now. They're trying to eliminate these old roads. Well, nature will eliminate those old roads.

RS: Certainly. Just stop using them and nature will take care of them. (laughs)

DL: And yet, there might be some little trace like a gun emplacement, a cannon emplacement which just adds immeasurably to your experience without taking away from the wilderness feelings.

RS: That's right.

DL: But here's where man was or here you find—

RS: An old cemetery.

DL: An Indian arrowhead or an old cemetery and this adds to the resonance of this thing in your feelings.

RS: And that shows that man did have a place in this.

DL: And yet, it's no less wilderness.

RS: Yeah, that's right.

DL: And I feel this very strongly and I think that just a little bit—they're going a little bit overboard to eliminate these things. Of course, I can see taking out a culvert.

RS: Yeah.

DL: It's kind of obtrusive there.

RS: They had a nice—Darwin, they had a nice aluminum corps of engineers bridge, you know, down in the Limberlost at one time when they'd gone in there to drill for water for Skyland. And they said, "Schaffner, we're gonna leave that bridge down there in the Limberlost." I said, "What! You're going to leave that aluminum bridge down there?" And here the darn fools had cut down about an eight inch spruce tree to put the road in there in the first place. They said, "Oh no, we won't disturb a thing, you know. They're just going to put a little trail in there so they can get their rig in there and drill." They cut down these beautiful spruce trees which you don't find many of in the Limberlost, you know. Plus they cut down some mountain ash (laughs) that you don't find many of in the Limberlost. And then they put in this darned aluminum bridge and generally wrecked the place. But then when they pulled out—thank goodness they didn't find enough water for Skyland—they wanted to leave the aluminum bridge to see if it was easier to leave than it was to take out. (laughs) I said, "That's just too much." I said, " You practically wrecked the place getting in there, you take that darn thing out." (laughs)

DL: Now that's going a little far. Well, how about just thinking, trying to imagine Shenandoah National Park fifty years from now, 2027 or anywhere around there, any time in the future and what will be different, anything?

RS: Well, this is awful hard to predict, as I've often said, that you can't tell what man—especially his representatives in Congress, be their good or bad—might decide is best for the country. They might decide that, my gosh, here we've got this beautiful ridge of mountains and there's no housing there except for a few idiots that go hiking there every weekend or come to spend a few weeks in the summer. Why

don't we make the most beautiful housing development or apartment house complex you ever saw? That's ever been built on this world? And we'll just vote the funds and we'll do it right now. (Lambert laughs) So I can't predict what Congress is going to do with the national parks and especially Shenandoah, which is surrounded by pressures from all side. And especially, idiots like some people who say, "Oh, the park is going to take over the whole country and we're going to buy up all our farms and we won't have any place to live. They're ruining our economy by taking stuff out of the tax bracket and so on." So I don't know, Darwin. It's awfully hard to see into the future, but I think if the park is allowed to exist by pressures from all around and they don't decide they need the timber or the rocks to pave the roads or something else, I think Shenandoah is probably going to serve more—continue to serve more people for a longer part of the year than any park in the country. And as far as some people saying, "Well, they're going to have to ration the park. There'll be too many people," I see around the D.C. area, for instance, they are closing schools because they don't have enough students. I think there's going to be a leveling off of the population as zero population growth is going to take hold and we're not going to gobble up all of our resources and we may go back to wood burning stoves and wood burning locomotives, (laughter) steam locomotives, and—

DL: Do you foresee possibly further increase in hiking by comparison with motoring, say, in view of this energy?

RS: Oh, yes. That's already—

DL: It's going on right now.

RS: (unintelligible) is increasing all the time.

DL: Do you foresee further developments like Skyland to Big Meadows or Loft Mountain? Do you think there'll be more of these?

RS: No, I don't.

DL: Think that's the crop?

RS: Yeah. I think they have seen the light there that they have enough for most people that want to stay in the park, yet there's still plenty at peak lows, there's plenty of places in the surrounding valleys, towns and it's only a half day's, well, two hours drive from Washington D.C. for that matter.

DL: In one sense, in some of the standards that they use out west, there's not a great deal of excuse for developing any lodging facilities in the park.

RS: No, I think the only—I think the reason that started here is because originally before the park was ever created there was a place like Skyland.

DL: Yeah.

RS: And, of course, Big Meadows just—

DL: There's no concession in Smokies except this one hiking—

RS: Way up on top—

DL: You can reach it only by hiking. There's no concession for motorized, for motor people, not even a restaurant inside Great Smokies and yet, Great Smokies is a lot bigger park than this one.

RS: Yeah.

DL: And that road is thirty miles from Gatlinburg to Cherokee.

RS: No, I don't see any great push for anymore concession developments.

DL: How about transportation? Do you think that there might be public transportation ever primarily over the drive that there would not be so many automobiles?

RS: Well, this was proposed about three years ago, two and a half, three years ago. And the concessionaire actually was rather interested in it at the time to at least try it on an experimental basis, maybe in the north district. And they were going to develop a parking area down on that property they acquired from the remount station or near there anyway. Have a parking lot, protected parking lot. People park their cars and they could get on the buses. See the Skyline Company has a lot of school bus—I don't know if you call them concessions or contracts or something or other. The ARA is what I'm talking about, the American Restaurant Association. And these buses are virtually sitting empty in the summer and they would have—now whatever happened though, you'd have to ask [Robert R.] Jacobsen why this thing fell through because he was all in favor of trying it out in the north district.

DL: I don't know whether it's fallen through. I wonder if it wasn't delayed partly by this delay in the master planning operation.

RS: Maybe that's it.

DL: They still haven't gone forward with their master plan. It seems like they're about to do it again. How about hang gliding? Do you think that'll ever amount to anything here? That seems to be the novelty of the last couple of years, this hang gliding idea. I'd like to see it once.

RS: Well, I once saw a guy up on top of Stony Man with his kite. And I was going someplace in a hurry to get there and I didn't ever go up to the top of Stony Man to see what happened or I didn't ever stop. But he was definitely up there with his hang glider. (Lambert laughs) I guess he took off. I don't know, I don't think you can stop idiots if they want to do this and they say it's probably safer than riding in an airplane, I don't know.

DL: I can't really see anything wrong with it if they don't cause a kind of a disturbance of other people in the park if they can do it in a sort of a place where it doesn't attract a great crowd and just—

RS: Man's always thought he ought to be a bird anyway, like to be a bird, soar around. I don't know if there's even—they once set a world record from the Big Meadows, you know on gliders.

DL: Yeah.

RS: And there's one time a push to reinstall this as a gliding site, but it was blocked as not being appropriate.

DL: Well, on interpretation in particular, do you think there'll be any fundamental changes in interpretation in the next twenty or thirty or fifty years?

RS: Well, I'm not a seer. (laughs)

DL: More complete audiovisual or eliminate audiovisual or—

RS: One thing that, of course, I've worked many long hours trying to build up the audiovisual in this park so that the people that put on the programs, it will be available to them as they want to use it. And I think any interpreter or any person that puts on a program should be able to get along without it. But it always embellishes or enhances the presentation if you can have some good illustrations and some good sound effects. It's more—you might say—professional, it's more—I hate to use the word entertaining because I think interpretation is not especially to entertain, but to inform.

DL: Sometimes a little bit of entertainment quality helps the information get through.

RS: Yeah. It helps to get through, just like, well, I still am not word shy in the sense that I think interpretation is also education. And education, of course, itself in the true sense is life and the more we can get out of life and the more we can understand the processes of life and of nature and how man and the other life should combine or—as they say—fit into the ecological picture and get along compatibly, the better it is. And I think we can do this better with good presentations, good illustrations, good education, and use any means in our power to do it. Yet, we should be able to carry on if the electricity goes off, for instance.

DL: You don't foresee any reaction against this ecological emphasis in the interpretation, do you? I mean, this is likely to continue or—

RS: Well, I would hate to see it. I would hate to see it, Darwin, because I'm a firm believer in it and always have been. Even my father, who was probably ahead of his time, used to hassle the governor of Kansas for messing up the environment in Kansas by letting the oil men spill their overflow of their slush ponds into the creeks and kill off the fish. And the governor appointed him the special representative to go around and inspect these oil explorations and see that they didn't do this. So I think as long as we can contribute to a clean and decent environment for not only ourselves, but all things in nature and on the universe and not pollute the air, and the oceans, and the streams, and our environment, why, I'm all for it. And I think everybody else should be or they're not going to be here long.

DL: Yeah. Just lately there's been some talk about that they're going to—somebody is proposing to stop hiring so many of these young seasonals and contract out interpretation to professionals, to actors and professional lecturers, and so on and not have these young seasonals so much. You ever heard of that? This was in the last few weeks I heard some talk of this.

RS: I've heard of it, but it leaves me cold.

DL: You don't think that's a good thing?

RS: No.

DL: You don't think it's a serious threat or do you? Sometimes somebody gets a funny idea down there in Washington.

RS: —you got a dictum from the director's office, why, (laughs)—we're not gonna hire any seasonals, we're going to hire all the actors in the country.

DL: But you must, over the years, develop a feeling as to what would be feasible. I mean, one man down there, even if he's director, can't totally change everything. It's just like President Carter. He might want to

totally change the federal government, but he can't. There's this momentum or this tendency which is kind of built up.

RS: Well, I thought it might go the way of—what do they call it? I've even forgotten the term for it now—(laughs) But at one time we were all going to be equal in the eyes of the public. We were all rangers. There's no such thing as interpreters. And the rangers were going to put on the programs. There'll be no specialists in the interpretive field. In other words, they were going to combine law enforcement and interpretation. Well, this fell flat on his face. They tried it out at Rocky Mountain, and I think this was [George B.] Hartzog that was the one that was pushing it. And finally, gradually they came to realize that you have specialized jobs. But I don't think that they had such specialized jobs we need to hire professional actors to do them. You know what I mean? I think—

DL: Yeah, I think that interpretation—I think an actor, by and large, carrying his art very far would be a detriment rather than an advantage because nature is supposed to be the actor, nature is where the focus is.

RS: That's right.

DL: Not on the performance of this individual. Although how well he performs certainly has quite a bearing on how well the visitor sees the real scene. But you don't want him to occupy the full stage. Do you want him to reveal the—

RS: All right, what happens when he has to vary from the script that he has written, you know, to produce this production and the curtain goes down and then he comes out to answer the public's questions. How much depth does he have in this line, see? He has no depth at all.

DL: Yeah.

RS: And this is one thing, there are qualifications for an interpreter or a naturalist. He has to know the basic subjects that he's supposed to be interpreting. And how many actors are actually rounded in the field of science?

DL: Apparently, they were just, somebody was just overwhelmingly impressed with their success of these touring groups in the Bicentennial.

RS: They put on quite a good show.

DL: Yeah. But that has no relation really to interpretation in a natural area.

RS: No.

DL: At least I don't see how it does. They might be able to put on some pretty good interpretation in certain types of historical areas. But how do you act out a wildflower (laughter) or anything about—

RS: Or how a (unintelligible) lays its eggs over its nest. (laughs)

DL: Yeah. Well, I'm about run down if you are, but if you have any other thoughts.

RS: Well, if i think of anything, Darwin, maybe we can have another little session. There's so much to think of in twenty-one years that, of course, I've been associated with this park. Some of it in my retirement years, of course. Last two years have been retirement. (laughs)

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DL: Yeah, but you haven't been much separated from the park, really.

RS: Dennis still comes around to ask me questions. (laughs) I'm glad to help when I can.

DL: Yeah. Well, it's—

RS: Oh, before we quit, maybe you'd like my reactions to the new exhibits at Dickey Ridge. Have you seen them?

DL: I haven't. We've got to go up there and look at them.

RS: Well, maybe I shouldn't give you my reaction. (laughs)

DL: Oh, no go ahead. Go ahead why we're talking. We want to see if we agree with you.

RS: My only great criticism, I felt that—of course, they're entirely different content—they don't try to go into the history, and the geology, and the human history, and geology and things like that so much. But they do emphasize what you can do in the park, which I think is good. But unfortunately, the structures that they have these things mounted on are very modernistic in this chestnut paneled building, you know. (laughs) It just sort of hit me the wrong way, you know. Just like sharp knives (laughs) sticking you all at once, several sharp points, jabbing you all at once. And that's the only criticism I had. It wasn't the content, which is entirely different than what it had been, the theme had been entirely changed. It was more what we used to have in the program and the auditoriums, to see what to see and do in the park. They've taken that and put it in the exhibits now. Now I don't know what they're gonna do with the program.

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