

FLYNN, Joe

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USFS RETIREES REUNION
LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
FEBRUARY 9, 2001**

**Interviewed in Camino, California
Nordstrom Whited, Interviewer**

**Revised, place & people's names corrected.
January-February, 2004 by Joe Flynn**

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Nordstrom Whited, Interviewer (lives in Placerville, California)

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Where were you born?

I was born in Georgetown, California, which is on the west side of the Eldorado Forest, about 16 miles north of Placerville. I was born on September 20, 1917 at our home on Main Street in Georgetown.

Who were your mother and father?

My mother was Alice Natrass Flynn; my father was Laurence Vincent Flynn. My father was born in Georgia Slide, which was about 1 mile north of Georgetown. My mother was born in Greenwood, which was about 5 miles west of Georgetown. My parents have been in this area for a long, long time-since they were born. My grandparents arrived in the 1850's during the Gold Rush

What did your father do?

My father was a miner, a prospector, and a gold miner. The family had mines at Georgia Slide, which is just north of Georgetown.

How did you mother happen to be there?

My mother was raised on Volcanoville Ridge, which is above Georgetown between Georgetown and Forest Hill. Her mother died when she was 10; her father died when she was 12. She was sent down to some relatives in Monterey County and then she was working in San Francisco at the time of the San Francisco 1906 earthquake and lost her job when the town burned, so she came back up to stay with her relatives near

Volcanoville in Eldorado County. That's when she and my father got acquainted.

Did you have brothers and sisters and who were they?

I have four brothers and a sister who died when she was a baby. Tom was the oldest, John the next; both of them were born at Georgia Slide. The family moved to Georgetown where I was born. Two other brothers, Bob (who has retired from the Forest Service now, too) and Bill, were also born in Georgetown.

What about your elementary and high school days? Where did you go to school?

I started school in Georgetown and then when I was in the fourth grade, I moved to Placerville because my oldest brother was ready to go to high school and there was no high school in Georgetown. The family moved to Placerville in 1925. We lived on Canal Street. Incidentally, the Forest Supervisor, Edwin F. Smith, lived next door to us. I went to Eldorado High School and graduated from there.

What were your interests at that time?

I always thought I would be a carpenter. When I was about 10 or 11 years old, I got a job as a water boy on the forest fires. The State of California had a little fire department then and I went to the fires around Placerville and they paid me 15 cents an hour for being a water boy. I remember one fire just out of Placerville at the old city dump where the fire got away. Both the Forest Supervisor and the Forest Engineer were out there and I was on the line with them. I guess they thought I did a good job fighting fires, so it wasn't long afterwards that I started going to Forest Service fires.

Did you play sports in school?

I wasn't much of a sportsman. The coach always said I was better at

collecting the gate receipts.

Were there any particular people during your school days or special events that you remember?

Not too many. Because I was collecting at the gate for a football game and during that period, somebody robbed the players' clothes so I got called in and they wanted to know if anything was suspicious. I said, "Yes, there was a gang who tried to get in without paying. I took down their license number." What do you know, the license number didn't belong to the car. I knew one of the girls who was with them. They got her in there and what do you know, they got a ring of car thieves who were changing license plates and what not. That was my first law enforcement.

Where did you go to college?

I went to college at the University of California at Davis. I usually went in the spring because I worked in the fall. I went two semesters at widely varying intervals. Then in the fall of 1941 I had enough money saved up to go on through college. So I went back to Davis and I was in Davis when Pearl Harbor happened. Three or four days later I was in the Army Air Corps.

What was your major?

I was taking a pre-forestry course at Davis then. You could take the first two years at Davis and then take the forestry courses at the University of California at Berkeley. Following World War II, I went up to Oregon State College and finished up there. I graduated there in 1947.

Why would you say you chose forestry?

My whole pre-war experience had been with the Forest Service. I had

worked as a warehouseman and a roustabout around Placerville, and a forest guard. In 1934 they sent me over to Georgetown Ranger Station as a fire assistant to take the place of a fellow who got injured, Joe Schwartz. He had an eye put out in the fire. I was on that fire at Whaler Creek. Joe Schwartz then was not able to come back to work, so I stayed there until that fire season ended, probably in October 1934.

Didn't you say you worked when you were 14?

No, I was 13. My first fire for the Forest Service was in August 1931 and the two years before that, I had worked on the State Division of Forestry fires around Placerville. They had a volunteer fire warden, Willard Dean, from Pleasant Valley. He used to pick me up and take me on fires. Then one time we were on a fire just on the south side of what is now the Placerville Airport. He left me there all night along with a couple of other guys. We got relieved in the morning. I came back down to where the truck was at old Merriman's Resort. They were taking people in to get some breakfast; I hadn't had anything to eat all night. I thought that was a good idea and I started to get on the truck. There was a state forest ranger there who asked me how old I was. I told him I was 12. He said I was too young to ride the truck, so I had to walk downtown to get breakfast. I had almost got downtown, pretty near about 1 mile away from town. My mother ran a restaurant in town at the time. I was heading there and here comes Dean, the volunteer fire warden, who picked me up and said, "How's that fire line?" I said, "It doesn't look too good to me." He said, "Let's go on back up." I said, "Well, I haven't had anything to eat yet." He said, "There's a can of tomatoes and some crackers." That was the normal state ration at the time. We opened the can of tomatoes and ate some crackers. I went back up there and walked the fire line with him. Then I quit. I didn't go

to the State fires any more after that.

When you were in college, do you remember any of the classes you had?

Particularly, I liked the botany classes at Davis. They were expert. In fact, Dr. Robbins was the professor and he was an excellent teacher. I took the land surveying courses there, too. At the Oregon State College McCullough, who later became the Dean, was a professor in policy, I guess. I became one of his readers and then I had a job as an undergraduate student instructor with the beginning students on tree and plant identification. I headed field trips and had a bunch of younger students and I was the mentor. I read for Professor McCullough. Every time you went into McCullough's class, the first 5 minutes of class he would say to put your name on a piece of paper; then he'd write a question on the blackboard. I had to grade those. One time he handed me the grade book and said " At the end of the semester you grade these students." I said, "I can't do that." He said, "Well, why not?" I said, "My brother, Bob, is in one of the classes." He said, "OK, give me the book." He gave Bob an "A" and he said, "You mark the rest of them." I learned the system in college of how to get good grades in college; I got very good grades in college.

Do you think the forestry training you received in college prepared you adequately for a professional career in forestry?

In a way, yes. Before I got out of college, I had 8 years of non-professional work in the Forest Service. I was a CCC foreman at Snowline CC Camp. First I was a fire crew foreman, and then I became a year-round foreman. Before that I was a forest guard for 3 years in field stations. I went to Chicken Hawk Springs in 1935; it was just a little tent camp. Then I was a lookout fireman on Iron Mountain for the next

two years-1936 and 1937. In the spring of the year I did roadwork and fence repair and telephone repair and things like that. At Snowline CCC Camp I did all the telephone maintenance that they had out of there, because they had both single tree lines and a pole line that went to Placerville and up to Pacific Ranger Station. On the days when the weather wasn't too good, I'd take two or three boys out and maintain the telephone lines and replace insulators. I did a lot of non-academic work.

In college, both at Davis and Oregon State, did you get into any extra curricular activities?

In the fall of 1941 while at UC Davis I was enrolled in the Civilian Pilot Training Course which I completed just after December 7th, I flew J-3 Piper Cubs and qualified for a civilian pilot's license. The ground school was at the College and I received college credits for those.

I was the Forestry Club President one year, which was the year I graduated at Oregon State. When they had any disciplinary problems with students, the Dean had a couple of us who were his student advisors. In order to get through college and before my money ran out, I had two kids by the time I got out of college, I was taking 21 units one semester. After I got that many units signed up, I found out that I had to get at least a "B" in all of them or they would knock me down to 17 units. I was running out of money so I had to be in a hurry to get done. I was in class all day.

Did you go to summer school?

In order to get out, I went straight through from the fall of 1945 through the summer and graduated in June 1947.

Was your college split? In other words, you went into the Army Air Corps.

I had three semesters at the University of California at Davis when I went into the Army. When I left, I was a sophomore at Davis and then went in the military during WWII. I came back and went to Oregon State because they had housing. As a married student, I got \$75 a month plus my books. I didn't get housing; I had to pay for it. After the first year, they moved some prefabs from Hanford, Washington, onto the college. At that time, we got one. By that time, my brother, Bob, joined us and so he paid rent (board and room) to help us pay for it.

Were you doing any part-time jobs?

Those were just the ones at the University where I was reading for the professors. I got paid for doing the field classes. It worked in well. I also had a job fueling a sawdust burner to heat the water in the laundry room of the complex where we lived. But when I left, I was broke.

Did you ever have anything to do with the University of Montana?

No.

What did you do for recreation as a college student?

I didn't have any time for recreation. I went to a few basketball and football games.

Did you have a degree?

I received a B.S. degree in Forest Management from Oregon State College.

Did you consider doing any graduate work?

No, I never did.

What was your first job in the Forest Service?

My jobs in the Forest Service for the first couple of years was just fire

fighting jobs. On June 1, 1933 I went to work with the CCC Program because I had been familiar and cleaned up after forest fires in the warehouse. I knew where everything was in the warehouse. The warehouse was an old stable about where the District Attorney/Public Defender's office is now on Main Street in Placerville. Because I knew where everything was, I cleaned up after these big fires. Ed Smith wanted me to come down and go to work. So I left school a little early in 1933 and went to work. I worked all summer and before it was over, I was kind of the Purchasing Agent going around town with a purchase book, which made me very popular. That was between my junior and senior years in high school. Because times were tough--I had a brother in college I was helping - I made a deal with the principal at the high school with my mother's consent that I would be tutored at night in English and in mathematics. So I went two nights a week to the homes of two high school teachers who volunteered to give me tutoring so I could work full-time. This was while I was living on Canal Street. So I would work all day and go to the teacher's homes at night. I worked up until the end of 1933 and then I went back to school and finished my senior year. I quit a little early and went back to work for the Forest Service in the spring of 1934. I graduated from high school in the Class of 1934.

Was there a grade, or what did they call you? Do you remember the pay?

I first started out in 1933 at \$3.75 per day. Then they promoted me to warehouseman and the salary was \$100/month. The Economy Act of 1932, I think, said you got a 20% cut because they said to government employees that times were tough and they were saving money. So I think I only got \$80 of the \$100/month salary, but nobody else was working and that was real good.

This was official service time so it's all on your record?

No, they just said seasonal labor, warehouseman, forest guard, and what not.

Then in 1934 they started me out as a laborer again. After I graduated I went to work on 5/15/34. I got 55 cents per hour. Then when Joe Schwartz was injured on the Whaler Creek Fire, I went to Georgetown and became the Fire Assistant, they put me down and graduated me to \$125/month for maybe half of a month. Then I went back to being a laborer. In 1935 when I first started out, I got \$4.50 a day until the first of July. Then I went down to \$105 a month to the Forest Guard out in the forest.

Where were you a Forest Guard?

That was at Chickenhawk Springs up on Peavine Ridge. I just had a tent platform. The Fire Control Assistant loaded up the tent and some boards. He helped me put the tent up and hooked up the telephone. I had to finish building my camp.

How did they run the telephone?

The telephone tree line went by up Peavine Ridge and we just dropped a line off of it and had the telephone hanging on the side of the tent. I worked that year until October 7 when it rained and I got laid off. During the winter of 1935 I worked underground as a gold miner in Garden Valley. One of the winters I ran the rock crusher on the surface on the mine in Georgetown. Then starting on May 15, 1936 I went to work as a Forest Guard at \$110 a month as lookout-fireman at the Iron Mountain Lookout. They raised you \$5 a month each year when you came back. I worked until way late in the season that year, until December 15, because it was a dry year. Part of the time I went back to work on the trails for a while.

Did you have a uniform at that time?

Yes. You had to buy it. It had the regular Smoky Bear hat, high boots, and chokebore trousers (they were like riding britches). I first started wearing a uniform when I went up as a Forest Guard at Chicken Hawk Springs in 1935. I got a silver Forest Guard badge with "USFS" on the bottom of it. It looked more or less like the bronze one. In 1937 I went back to college. In 1938 I came down and became a CCC Foreman in the spring. I was a Forest Guard at Iron Mountain until October 1937 and then in the spring of 1938 I drove the school bus from Georgetown to Placerville and did odd jobs in town during the day.

Were you working for the Forest Service when you were in CCC?

I always worked for the Forest Service.

Were you wearing a uniform when you were buying supplies?

Sort of a uniform, but no badge. I didn't have any law enforcement or anything like that. It was only when you were out and had a book of citations that you could..... I'll tell you about the first citation I ever handed out. I was up doing the hunter patrol as a Forest Guard in 1936. I was up on the Iron Mountain Road and found this campfire that wasn't put out; it was smoking and hot, so I put it out and left a note on the fellow's car to stop at the lookout when he came back down the road. When I got back, I called the Forest Service and Bill Kelly was the Fire Control Officer for the District. He said, "You've got to give him a ticket." I said, "He might be a friend of mine." He said, "You give him a ticket." This guy showed up. He was a nice guy from Sacramento and was just apologetic as the dickens. I said, "I've got to give you a ticket." He said, "I can't afford to take time off from work. Is there a chance I could come in the night?" So

I wrote him the ticket to appear before the judge in Diamond Springs at 7:30 at night. I sent it down to Pacific Ranger Station. District Ranger Milt Morris said, "Judges don't work at night." The judge was a lodge brother of Morris, the Ranger. He called up and said, "Well, the judge says he'd make an exception." So we all went down to Judge Landis at Diamond Springs and the fellow showed up and said he did it. He got fined about \$10 or something like that, which was a lot of money in those days. When it was all over, we all went over the Diamond Hotel and the Judge bought a round of beers for everybody. So that was my first law enforcement experience.

How old were you then?

I was 18 or 19 then.

Was that the Diamond Springs Hotel where the restaurant is now?

Yes. The judge had the place right across the street where the old grocery store was.

Go ahead and finish up the pre-war stuff.

In 1938 I went to work as the CCC Foreman, but a Fire Suppression Foreman. I was actually working for the District Ranger at Pacific and had a 10-man fire crew.

Did you get a bronze badge then?

No. We had to wear a CCC Foreman's uniform, which is different, and there were no badges. In the fall of that year I got what was called a "Friant appointment" as a CCC Foreman. I got somewhere between \$1680 a year and when I left it was \$1800 a year. The Friant appointment meant you had to have the blessing of the Democratic Central Committee, which wasn't too big of a problem because one of the guys on it had

been a CCC Foreman (Gus Winkleman) and my mother was on the Democratic Central Committee. So I didn't have any problem getting that appointment.

In 1939 I was at Snowline. In 1940 I ran the spike camp of 40 men at Gerle Creek, we called it the airport camp, and built the road from Schline Ranger Station into Loon Lake. We didn't finish it. Then in the fall I came back to Snowline camp, worked all winter, and then in early 1941 I took over the CCC Camp at Lake Tahoe. I worked at the campgrounds there and did work at the Meyers Ranger Station.

Where was the camp located?

At the county campground there up by the lake, up there by Globins. You'd have to go through the barracks about 9 p.m. and kick all the girls out to have my crew working the next day. It was a nice little assignment up there. For 21 months I saved \$100 a month. I had enough money to go to college. In August 1941 I resigned to go back to college. Gerle Creek CCC Camp was interesting because I had to be the foreman during the day and be the camp manager at night. I had another foreman, Ray Ellis, who had the 10-man fire crew. I had to do the rationing. I had to feed those boys on 43 cents a day. The cook and I made out the menu. The cook was a 16-year-old boy from Mississippi. He was a good cook. He had hot biscuits every morning and nice yeast rolls every night. They would just melt in your mouth. He was pretty good on desserts. Most of my crew were Cajuns from south of New Orleans down the river. They had never seen a rock in their life and we were drilling in good hard granite.

When I first went up to Gerle Creek, Ed Smith, the old Supervisor who was a Army mess sergeant in WWI said, "You're not ever going to let those boys go hungry. The Army sometimes doesn't always get food there in time and they give you

pretty skimpy rations.” So we went down to the fire warehouse in Placerville and loaded a truck up with canned goods. Up by Schlien Ranger Station, which was two to three miles from the camp, they had an old powder house so I put this canned food and stuff in the powder house, along with the powder that was used for the road building. Whenever times got tough, I’d sneak up there and get some canned food to supplement the Army diet.

Did you ever figure out how much Forest Service time you had about by the time the war came along?

I had about eight years, interrupted. That’s all on the record. The reason it’s on the record is that when I became District Ranger at Susanville later on in 1950, the clerk at Eldorado N.F. sent me a note. At that time they were putting together these official records. She asked me to give her all the dates of the time I had in the Forest Service. I did, starting in 1931. She went through the records and found the fire time slips and got every single day on my record.

So you had about eight years before you went into the professional ranks?

You ask about badges. After I resigned in August 1941, I was in a chemistry class at University of California, Davis in September and the Forest Supervisor’s brother, Ira Smith, was the Comptroller at Davis. He walked into the class one Friday afternoon and handed me a note to get on the phone and call Ed Smith. So, I left the class with permission of the instructor and went with Ira and called Ed. Ed said, “I want you to come back up at Snowline. I had to send a bunch of guys off the forest and I need some help.” So back I went to the Snowline camp. I was there about 2 hours. Ed came up and said, “Joe, they’ve got fire in a bad situation on the Los Padres N.F.” He pinned a bronze

badge on me and said, "Now you go down there." So I went down to Monterey and that's the first time I wore a bronze badge. I was assigned this fire line; it was manned by a whole bunch of Army guys from Camp Ord. There was a lieutenant who was in charge of these fellows. We got into an argument about where to put the fire line. I said, "I think it ought to go this way." He said, "No, I think it ought to go the other way. You know, before I came into the Army, I was a District Ranger in southern Colorado." I said, "Well, I ain't nobody. They put me this badge on me just to tell sons-of-bitches like you just where to put this fire line." I had scouted that other line out; I didn't tell him that, but there was a big yellow jacket nest around there.

I was in college when Pearl Harbor came along. I was taking flight instruction, too, under Civilian Pilot Training at the university in the fall of 1941. I took the final flight test the day before Pearl Harbor and the written test the day after. In the meantime, I had been taking some applications and physicals for the Army Air Corps. Three days later, Major Powers from Mather Field called me up and said I was accepted. I spent two years in Europe. Following my discharge, I enrolled in the Forestry course at Oregon State College in Corvallis in August '45.

I graduated in June 1947. Graduation was Sunday night; I gave them \$5 to send me my diploma because I was broke and I headed for Big Bar on the Trinity N.F. Ed Smith, Forest Supervisor of the Eldorado N.F. had arranged with Ross Leavitt, Forest Supervisor of the Trinity, to put me to work on the Trinity. I went there as a non-professional SP-7, Fire Control Assistant.

That was your first job out of college with the Forest Service?

Yes. I received \$3021 per annum as an SP-7.

In 1948 I was promoted to a P-1 Forester. A P-1 Forester started at a lower salary than the SP-7, but against the advice of the administrative officer, and because I had a friend by the name of Ray Lawyer, who pulled this same stunt. He told me that once I had taken the professional test and passed, P-1 not to accept a lower salary. Ray said to tell them you're worth just as much afterwards as you were before. The administrative officer said that was a mistake, but they paid me. My first bargaining in salary.

You were officially assigned to the Trinity. What was the job called? On what district?

I was the Fire Control Assistant on the Big Bar District.

What did you think when you first laid eyes on your new duty station?

From some of the places I had lived in, it looked fine. They had some nice buildings there. We lived in a barracks that had one big room.....

What is your full name?

Joseph Vincent Flynn.

We were in the middle of your first job after college, so we'll pick up and go right on with that. One of the questions I don't think we answered was, "What did you think when you first laid eyes on your new duty station?"

It was a station that pretty much built in the CCC days in 1934, so the ranger's building was an "A" building, which was pretty modern in those days. The building we were in was a barracks building with a kitchen and a bathroom for a crew and one big room. Before we left we had a bedroom partitioned down one end of the big barracks. The new office was a nice office building. The old office had been converted

into a residence for our clerk. Then we had a crew barracks that was also converted into a living room for a family. Also a warehouse garage. Those were the five buildings plus a barn and a corral. Everyone who worked on the station lived there. Eventually we brought a garage over from the Big Bar CCC camp, which was across the river. This was the Big Bar Ranger Station on the old Trinity Forest. (Now the Shasta-Trinity N.F.)

Who was in command of the CCC's when it was operating?

I don't know who was over there. I do know that Charlie Yates, retired as the Regional Forester of the Alaska Region, was one of the CC boys there. Norm Farrell, who was Assistant Regional Forester in Fire when I was in the Region, was the District Ranger at the time during the 1930's.

What was your pay rate then?

My pay rate was \$3021 per annum as an SP-7. I went on that job on June 7, 1947. It was considered pretty good pay since I was used to \$75/month under the GI Bill.

Explain your duties and discuss how you carried them out. Describe a typical day and what sort of daily chores did you need to do?

I was a Fire Control Assistant, although I was in effect Assistant District Ranger. Johnny Beebe was the District Ranger and Bernie Leas was the District Clerk and we were the three people who worked year-round on the Ranger District. My job was not only the Fire Control, but all the trail and road improvements and just about everything else that the District Ranger didn't do.

When you got up in the morning, did you have a lot of paperwork in the office?

No, I was mostly the field go-er. In fact, we had about 3 horses and 5 mules up in the corral. I had never had any experience, or very little, in dealing with livestock. I had a couple of donkeys one time, but I think one job I had on the Eldorado N.F. during my non-professional years I used a ranger's horse to maintain a telephone line. It was probably 2-3 days is my total experience on horseback. This Ranger District was practically un-roaded; we had very few roads and a couple hundred miles of trail, so I spent an awful lot of time horsebacking and mule packing and what not. I had to do my own saddling and everything else. The Ranger wasn't very good at it, so I learned to throw a diamond hitch and pack a mule. Beebe was going on a field trip with his Supervisor, who was an old Idaho man, and so I had to teach the Beebe how to throw a diamond hitch so he wouldn't look so dumb with his Supervisor.

On your field trips were there many overnights?

Yes, there were lots of overnights. I was the principal fire go-er. We did have a summer guard out at Denny, which is on the New River Fork of the Trinity River which was about 50 miles from the ranger station. We could drive there; that was the end of the road. We'd take the horse and the horse trailer and go out that way and take off from there.

How many vehicles did you have?

I had a pickup and the ranger had a pickup and we had a fire truck and stock truck there too. In the summertime we had a fire truck driver. In the winter we had an old military surplus Jeep, which I learned how to drive since I never drove a vehicle in the military, only airplanes.

What accomplishment are you most proud of during this period?

I thought I did a real good job particularly on lightning bursts when they had four or five fires. I would take off with a horse and a mule and go from one fire to the other, put a line around it, go the next and put a line around it. Then I'd come back and check them out. We did have some cooperators, some old miners up in the New River country that we could depend on. Some of them had worked for the Forest Service before. I wasn't at all surprised when I got to a fire to find one of the old miners on the line. I guess you'd call them volunteers, but we'd call them cooperators because they had fire time slips and they'd keep those time slips. They'd put the fire out and go back home. Sooner or later we'd get these time slips in the mail. They got paid for their work. They were just as honest as the day was long. You never caught them on anything like that. One of them, Gordon Langworthy, had been a lookout and after they discontinued the lookout, he'd go up to the old lookout when there was lightning going around. One time I went to a fire on a weekend (I can't remember whether it was a Saturday or Sunday) and I had a brand-new fellow from the city who had no experience whatsoever and was starting to work as a summer employee. I took him with me. He was hired for the summer. We went up to Denny. It was an early spring, May or early June. They didn't have the horses down from the pasture at Mt. Shasta, so I went up to Denny and spent the night. During the middle of the night, they brought the horses and mules from Mt. Shasta and then stopped in Weaverville and put shoes on them and got them back to Denny just about daylight. So I got my horse and mule and went to where Langworthy lived--up in Virgin Creek. So we decided to spend the night at Virgin Creek and left the boy there with the livestock. I said we'd go over the hill with the horses, and Langworthy said we couldn't get the horses over there. He told us we'd better just walk. So it was in the next

drainage to the northeast. I said, "We'd better carry a saw." He said, "Oh, it's brushier than heck. You'd have a helluva time getting through there. We'll just take axes." At noon we were up on the top of the ridge where there was about three feet of snow on top of the ridge. We were standing up there and the airplane came over and we hooked up the "S" set. He said, "Do you guys see the fire?" We said, "We see it." He said, "Well, you ought to be there in about a half hour or an hour" not knowing the country. Gordon Langworthy said, "We'll be lucky to get there by dark." Well, it was just about dark when we got down to this fire. Believe it or not, it was a big, old, white fire snag--about 4-5 feet in diameter. Fortunately, it had a big, burned out cat-face on one side. So from 8 p.m. to midnight we chopped. I had a Pulaski and he had a double-bitted ax and we got on either side and we chopped an undercut, then we chopped the other side of the snag. Finally, it came down. There was fire falling down around us and we didn't have hard hats in those days. But we got the fire out in a couple of days.

Did you have chow and food?

We had those emergency rations. They came in a little sack with an insignia and sign printed on it that said, "Stay with them until they're out."

How about sleeping bags?

No. We didn't have any blankets either. In that country the ridge we went over was about 6,000 feet elevation. The creek where the fire was located was 1200 feet below us. It wasn't too cold. We had a fire.

What were the greatest problems or most important issues you faced during this period?

I was there 3 years. John Beebe was the Ranger. Johnny was transferred to

the Eldorado up at Lake Tahoe, and we got a new Ranger, Henry Trask. He knew nothing about being a Ranger. He'd been on a big blow-down in the northeast; I think in 1938 or '39 they'd had a big blizzard and a big blow-down, so they had four to five years of a big salvage operation up in Maine. He was originally from Vermont. When that job was over, he was transferred to the Eldorado. He did timber cruising on a big land exchange with the Caldor Lumber Company. As far as knowing how to run a Ranger District or fighting a fire or anything that like, Henry just didn't know what to do. He was about 40 or 45 years old. He'd spent his career up in New England until he came out west. One fire we were on turned out to be a pretty big hot fire. It had been just to the patrol status about a week or ten days after it started. I had been out in the field and came back. Henry had taken some food to the two guys that we had up there watching a bad part of the line. Henry said, "Those guys wanted to come out and quit." I said, "Well, did you look at the fire line?" He said, "No." I said, "Henry, that's bad." We didn't have much of a fire line. It was rolling stuff and real steep country. I said, "Well, I have to go back into Denny. There's a fellow down at Burnt Ranch who wants a job. I'll bring him back and we'll put him back up in there." A fellow and his son were up there; they lived next door to us. Actually, I had a suspicion they started the fire in the first place, but I couldn't prove it. Anyway, on the way back I heard on the radio the fire got loose. It burned another thousand or so acres. Then Rupe Asplund, the Fire Control Officer, said, "Why did you let Henry do that?" I said, "You know damn well he doesn't know anything about fire. Henry's my boss. You were the guy who should have told Henry." It was great experience. I thought the world of it.

What were Forest Service relations like with local people at this job location?

The Forest Service was just sort of an intruder in the mountains. These were mountain people and many with mining backgrounds. That was my background too. My dad and granddads were all miners, so I understood exactly how they felt about the Forest Service. I got along pretty well with the locals and didn't have any problem at all. They didn't have any pot growers then.

As a District what were the relations like with the Supervisor's Office and the Regional Office? If you're speaking about an assignment at the SO or RO, describe your relations with the next higher and lower unit. You were on a District.

I had very good relations with the Supervisor Ross Leavitt (Roswell Leavitt). I had a lot of practical experience and they recognized that. It wasn't very much longer until I passed the junior forester's examination and got my P-1. Then, as I said previously, I told them I was worth just as much as a P-1 as an SP-7, so I held out for the salary. Then, believe it or not, a couple of months later for some reason or other they promoted me back to an SP-7.

Did they ever say why?

No. The money was all the same, so I didn't worry about it. I was there three years.

Did any political problems come up while you were there that you can remember?

No, not at all. Once in a while there was an old miner up in the river who would write to the Congressman and say that the Forest Service was trying to get him off of his claim. Well, he was too old; he didn't do any mining and was just living there. That had been going on for 20 years and they hadn't moved him. He finally died.

What was the operating budget of the unit you worked in during your time in the job?

The only thing I directly had control of was the trails, which was a big item. We let contracts and somehow or other the locals up New River, where we had most of the trail system, thought that we had a limit on how much they could bid on the trail. So we'd have a bid and say we wanted this trail done. It was how many miles we got for the price. I think it was \$99 at that time; they thought we couldn't go over that amount. Langworthy and another fellow up the river bid against each other. Both of them used the trail and they had an agreement that regardless of who got the bid, one of them would work the upper end and one of them would work the lower end. They put in competing bids.

What were the standards for the trail?

Just the standards in the trail manual. You had to have it cleared 4 feet wide and 12 feet high. In other words, a man on top of a horse had to be cleared. So you had a box that was 4 foot wide, 12 foot high.

How about the tread? Did they say anything about that?

We didn't do a whole lot of tread work. We did a few minor repairs, but the trails had been in use for pretty near 100 years, most of them at that time. They were pretty well constructed and some of them were county trails that the county maintained in the past. Some of them were pretty good trails. If we had to do tread work, this was extra. Practically the biggest problem was brush coming in.

What were the trails used for mostly?

Some of them were used for cattle grazing. During my period there, the

fellow who had the last grazing up in New River, Grover Ladd was born and raised up there. He finally took the last cattle out on horseback; went up and shot them one by one and hauled them out. He just couldn't get them out of the mountains; he was getting old. A little cattle grazing and then there were some hunters in the hunting season way back up there in the backcountry and a few miners. We didn't have any environmentalists and the Sierra Club never made trips in there, although the west end of the area was a spin off of the Trinity Alps. There was some pretty high country back in there. One peak was named "Mary Blaine Peak". Mary Blaine Peak was just a little way from Old Denny where they had a mine and mill. The present village was referred to as New Denny. Mary Blaine had a house of prostitution up on Mary Blaine Peak. When a preacher came to Old Denny, she made the girls all dress up and go down to the service. Incidentally, they had an automobile up at Old Denny. That had been hauled in there; taken apart, hauled in with mules and then reassembled. From the end of the little old town up to the mill was about a half-mile or more. They ran that car up and down there. The heaviest piece up there was a shaft that ran the stamp mill. The story was that it took six mules all crowded together with the shaft harnessed to them to deliver the it on the trail from Burnt Ranch to Old Denny, about thirty-five miles by trail. Every so often trees were available and the shaft was raised to take the load off of the mules and give them a rest. The 3C's built the road into the present New Denny in the 1930's. Before that, the trail started out from the from the road at the Trinity River, so it was about 35 miles back in there.

The trails then were mostly for people who were working in there or who had reasons for going in there? It wasn't recreation?

There wasn't a whole lot of recreation. The fishing was fantastic though. I

remember going up there one time and looking down. I was maintaining the telephone line and was looking down, seeing fish and steelhead in the river straight below. Come lunchtime, when I was bringing the mail and some groceries up to the people who lived up at the mouth of Virgin Creek, they were miners too. They invited me for lunch. I brought them their mail and groceries. When we finished, I asked Lew how fishing was. "Oh, Joe," he said, "fishing ain't worth a damn." I said, "My gosh, I thought I saw quite a few fish in the river." He said, "Oh, yeah. You can catch them big ones about 14"-18" long or the little ones about 8". I like them about 12." When I left he said he didn't think I knew what I was eating. His wife got real nervous and she said, "Now you know that's some of that goat meat we got from Daley's Ranch down there." I said, "That tastes like goat all right." I was raised on venison out of season, so I knew what I was eating."

How about law enforcement problems?

No, we didn't have any problems. The Ranger, Ralph White, who came in after us had a little problem. He arrested some fellow for dumping garbage along the road. The fellow beat up on him. They didn't like the game warden. If the game warden came in the "front door", as they called it, where the telephone line came up, they could pass the word that he was coming. Once in a while he'd go up the North Fork of the Trinity and come back over the mountain and come in the wrong way. They thought that was cheating; that wasn't the right way. Whenever Claude Gurley, the game warden, came to talk to you, he'd never sit out at a table; he'd always back into a corner where he could see who was coming.

On your station during the fall and winter and spring, how many were on the staff?

There were just three of us: the Ranger, the clerk, and myself.

Were there any odd characters among them?

We had an old fellow, Paul Polidary, who was from San Francisco, he was a lookout. His father was a street car conductor in San Francisco. I think Paul did a little streetcar conducting, and I guess he had a little pension. He was on the Ironside Lookout, which looked down over the Burnt Ranch area. He stayed at one of the campgrounds-Hayden Flat-during the winter. There was a house down there for the summer guard, so he stayed there in the winter. He was really a character. He was on the payroll during the summer only, not during the winter. Rupe Asplund and I went to inspect it and we took his mail up. He showed us his bank statement and he had about \$4,000 in his checking account. Rupe said, "Why do you carry that much money in that? Why don't you have it invested somewhere?" He said, "Oh, sometime I might see something I want and I just want to have the money to get it." He just lived up there because he didn't want to live in the city. He was arrested for murder later in Idaho when he retired and John Beebe was up in Idaho around the Coeur d'Alene area. One time some bully told him to get off the sidewalk. He went back home, got a gun. This guy accosted him again and Paul shot him. Everybody knew that it was justifiable, I guess, so they released him to the custody of Beebe, who had then retired at Hayden Lake, just above Coeur d'Alene. The jury turned him loose.

Did you have any family there?

Yes. I went there with two kids: a boy and a girl. I had a boy, Larry, born in 1944 when I was overseas. He was a little over a year old before I ever saw him. I came back and our daughter, Mary, was born in 1946 when I was going to college, so I

had two little kids when I came there. Then I had another daughter, Alice, born while we were at Big Bar. My wife came down to Placerville for the birth.

What year were you married?

1941.

How were the living conditions for you and your family?

We weren't used to a whole lot. They were okay. It was very satisfactory as far as I was concerned.

How about school?

Our kids weren't in school at that time. Across the river was the old schoolhouse and it was under Forest Service permit. It had originally been kind of a little community hall, clubhouse or meeting place. So when the old school burned down, they just moved into the old community hall. So they used it both as a community hall and school. We had dances and parties over there. The schoolteacher boarded with the clerk. She taught all grades. It was a one-room school.

How many students were there?

I doubt if there were ten, all told. They probably got a good education.

What did you do for entertainment?

We danced. We visited my mother one time in Sacramento and there was a used piano store down on Stockton Boulevard. We bought a used piano for \$99. They had a sign "Deliver Anywhere." We asked if it included where we were and they said, "Oh, yes." We hadn't gotten back from our Christmas vacation yet and what do you know about midnight, that piano showed up. They got the clerk out of bed and opened up the house and when we came back the piano was there. So we had a piano and we bought

a record player. That went anywhere we had a party in the Ranger District-even if we had to take along the little portable generator to make electricity. Our record player was the music. My wife played the piano and read music.

We were halfway between Redding and Eureka, which were the movie places. I don't ever remember going to a movie. But we had a little projector and we'd get the Forest Service propaganda films and we'd show them at the schools and the neighborhood gatherings and whatnot. There were two schools: One at Burnt Ranch and one at Big Bar.

We were in the canyon there and I can't remember that the radio reception was good. We had the telephone switchboard in our bedroom. I think 12 lines came in there. There was the main line between us and Salyer and Eureka and a line up to Denny and various lines coming in there. At night after the office closed, I'd switch over and we were the telephone operator. I can remember during the storms in the winter the PG&E guy had wires on their transmission line, but they weren't very good. I can remember getting up in the middle of the night and the PG&E guy wanted to get the electric system back in order using our switchboard.

Where did you go to shop?

Weaverville, which is 23 miles east.

Did you have your own car or did you use the Forest Service car?

We had our own car. When I was in CCC, we bought a 1938 Terraplane, brand new and paid cash for it in Placerville. I was at the Snowline CCC camp. That car got us through until we moved to Susanville.

Do you have any more information about the schools?

There was another school at Burnt Ranch, which was about the same. It was a little, one-room board and batten-type. The moss was about 6" thick on the roof. I got to looking at it and thought it was a terrible firetrap. So they decided to build a new school, which was on Forest Service land, naturally. They got a Special Use Permit to build this new school. As far as the school was concerned, it was just a community hall. After they got it built with all volunteer labor, PG&E (the biggest taxpayer in the area because they had a transmission line through there) furnished the nails and other hardware that went with it. The lumber company furnished the lumber. Just as quick as it was finished, we all went down to a dedication and some fellow was showing how a tractor worked. He got it in reverse and backed into the old school and it fell over. He did it on purpose. They just moved the desks and everything over to the new building and that was the new school. It didn't meet any of the standards for earthquake or for anything else.

How about medical services?

We had a doctor in Weaverville. He was a character. We think he was on drugs. Henry Trask and Bernie Leas were going to a fire. This contract pilot took off in the fog and crashed climbing out of the old Weaverville airport. Henry got badly injured. Anyway this doctor had an airplane and he flew Henry to San Francisco to the U.S Maritime Hospital they used for Forest Service patients at that time.

Where were your nearest non-Forest Service neighbors and what did they do?

The one downstream was an ex-con who beat up on his son all the time. He and his son were the ones up on that fire I was telling you about. He was meaner than the dickens. We had a little grocery store and post office right next door, too, just west of the

ranger station.

Was that a little community where the store was?

Other than the ranger station and the fellow below us and the fellow above us who had a ranch back up a trail quite a ways, but when the kids were in school he lived on a Special Use Permit home next to the ranger station. Then across the river there were about four families who lived over by the old CCC camp.

Were there any feuds? Other than this character beating up on his boy, were there any bad characters?

Right up the river about three to four miles across from what we called Big Flat there was a couple who lived over there by the name of Hosstetter. Mrs. Hosstetter was a little unstable in her mind, I would say. One time during the winter or spring I wanted to look at the trail across the river, so we had one of those surplus life rafts. We went up the river. A fellow who was pretty much full time employee rowed me across the river and then he came back and got in the car. He was to meet me down across at Big Flat, where Hosstetters lived. I walked down the trail and kept notes as to what work we needed to do on the trail. I got to Mrs. Hosstetter's and she came out with a 30/30. I said, "Mrs. Hodstetter I just want to go through the property." She didn't know about that, but she didn't want me to tell anybody. Then I got down to where the bridge was, but they had a locked gate there. Here's the pickup over there waiting for me, otherwise I had to walk another 3 miles to where I could get to another bridge at Big Bar. I said, "Mrs. Hosstetter, couldn't I just go across your bridge?" "Oh, no, we don't let anybody go across the bridge," she said. "Mrs. Hosstetter, I've walked for about 8-9 miles now and I'm tired. Wouldn't you just let me go across the bridge," I said. She said, "If you just

absolutely tell me you won't tell anybody, I'll let you go." I went across the bridge with her with a 30/30 behind me. She unlocked the gate and the pickup was there waiting for me.

They ran pigs on our permit and just sort of lived off the country. The Hostetters had some patented land there.

My brother, Bob, was the ranger there 4-5 years later and I came to visit him. Old Hostetter came down; he heard I was coming. He never was my real friend while I was there, but, boy, I was an old friend! At that time, Mrs. Hostetter was in an institution.

Do you remember any unusual place names around there?

We had Election Camp up on the summit. There was a sign there called "Election Camp" because they set a precinct up there during Lincoln's era. Lincoln was running for President so they put a precinct up at the camp, so miners could go up there and vote and ever after it was called "Election Camp".

What was that about Burnt Ranch?

Burnt Ranch got its name because a bunch of Canadian miners burned down an Indian rancheria in about 1849, and it got its name from that incident. Another story in the Burnt Ranch area, which was Hennesey. Hennesey had apparently been there since Day One. His daughter, Kate, was in her 80's at the time. Henry Trask and I were looking for a 1/4 section corner. We went down and asked Kate, "We're looking for a 1/4 section corner and it is supposed to be an oak tree with a mark on it and a witness tree." "Oh, yeah, it was right over there," she said and pointed about 6-8 feet from the front porch, "but Daddy cut it down one time." She turned to the old Indian, Pete, who lived on her ranch, and said, "Pete, you were with that survey party, weren't you?" Well,

that was in the 1870's. They both reminisced about that survey party and they said that the survey party had to go down and to cross the river and one of the survey party drowned in the river getting across.

You said there was some medical help there?

O'Brien, I think his name was, ran the store. His wife was a registered nurse. So anybody who had real problems they called for the nurse to come out and help them. She was the medical assistant for that area.

Did your wife play any part in the functioning of the station or handle the switchboard?

She could run the switchboard all right, but other than that she had her hands busy taking care of the kids. The Ranger, Beebe, had a three kids about the same age as ours. The clerk had a boy who was slightly older, about 10 or 11 at the time. Henry Trask had a twelve year daughter. The kids had somebody to play with.

In a general way, what was the best thing about this job?

I think the best thing about it was that it got me back into the Forest Service and acquainted with the system. I had worked for a few years in the CC camps before that, so I was back into the administrative part of the Forest Service rather than the CCC Program.

Again in a general way, what was the best thing about living in this place?

It was isolated; that was one of the disadvantages. I guess the advantages were that you were on-duty all the time; there was no off-duty as far as anybody was concerned. You were the officials. The neighbors all came to you if they needed to borrow some tools, or needed this or needed that. Naturally, the Forest Service was where they went. Practically all of them had worked at one time or another for the Forest

Service.

How long were you there and when did you leave?

I got there in June of 1947. On June 11, 1950, I transferred to the Lassen Forest. I had been there long enough and they figured it was time I moved up. I went over to the Lassen Forest as an Assistant Ranger.

Did they give you any option?

I don't remember any options.

In other words, somebody just decided you ought to go over there and they didn't say, "How would you like to go to?"

That's probably how it started but you knew there wasn't any alternatives. I think my wife wanted to get into a larger town, so there wasn't any opposition to moving from Big Bar.

What was the new job like?

The new job was under an old Ranger who was non-professional. Pete Hook was his name and he came up through the Ranger's Examination. Pete was a small man, very energetic, very business-like all the time and was considered a top Ranger.

What was the new station like?

Well, we were in town. The Ranger District headquarters was in the Supervisor's Office right in the same building in Susanville, California. We had bought a house before, but this was the first house we bought while working for the Forest Service. It was in Susanville.

What were your duties?

We had a Fire Control Assistant. I did the Ranger work as the Assistant Ranger

and did some of the timberwork. Mostly I went with the Ranger and learned a lot about range work because we had a lot of range activity. I was Assistant Ranger for about 6 months, I guess. I remember one time going with the Ranger and we were running a section line and we got into a lodgepole thicket so we "offset". The Ranger said to me, "You're never going to find that section corner the way you're going." He was on the back end of the chain and I was on the front end of the chain with a compass. All the time I was looking at the yellow tags up there ahead of me and I only had to go 50 feet to get to them. He was moaning and groaning about me never finding it the way I was going. Then he caught up to me and saw we were right on the corner. He never said anything. It was kind of lonely out there in the Pine Creek Flats. That fall he called me right before quitting time and said, "You get the Timber Assistant and get my Chevrolet pickup and come out to Bogard Flats." I said, "stuck Pete?" I got a big "grump, grump, rump. Bring jacks, bring some work clothes, etc." I got to Smith (we called him "Snuffy"). I said to him, "Snuffy, it's cold as the dickens out there. The trees have quit using water and the water table comes up in those flats." Pete had a brand new 4-wheel drive Willys pickup, which he figured he could go anywhere in. So we started out there but before we left town, it was dark and cold. I said, "Snuffy, does Pete ever take a drink?" He said, "I don't know whether he does or not." I said, "My God, it's getting cold out there." So I stopped at the liquor store and got a pint of whiskey and stuck it in the glove compartment. We got out there, worked a couple of hours and never moved his pickup a bit. Finally, Pete said we'd come back in the morning with winches and stuff. Pete jumped in and as officious as ever and driving. I sat in the middle with Snuffy on one side. We started down the road and Pete Hook said, "My God, I'd give half my life for a good

drink of whiskey right now.” Snuffy reached in and uncorked the jug.

That’s great. It’s a wonder you didn’t get a promotion on the spot.

Believe it or not, the promotion came right after. They moved Pete down to Quincy as the District Ranger down there. He had been on the Lassen District for a long, long time. They kind of reshaped the Ranger Districts and I was made the new Ranger.

Did you get a promotion from Trinity?

No, that was a lateral.

So this was your first promotion?

If you don’t count the P-1, back up to GS-7, back up to P1.

Do you remember your pay rate when you got to be Ranger?

April 29, 1951, I was promoted to Ranger. I started out at \$3021. I got a promotion in 1950 to \$3825. Then when I got promoted to the District Ranger job in April, it was \$4600.

Art Greeley was the Forest Supervisor and I remember him taking me out to the Ranger District. They changed the Ranger District and called it the Bogard Ranger District on the Lassen Forest. They had changed the boundaries. Before I was on the Susan River District. Well, they made a Susan River and a new Bogard District. It was a large District. Summer station at Bogard and winter in Susanville. We’d close up the summer station out at Bogard late in the fall. At that time, the pavement ended about three miles off the highway between Susanville and Red Bluff. It was all dirt from there on. Nowadays there’s a big highway through there. There was not a single resident on the District. No summer homes. The experimental station at Black’s Mountain was in the District and some people stayed there year-round. There were about 5,000 cattle and

4,000 sheep permitted on the District. There was a big timber job and there was a big Fruit Growers Supply Company timber sale which I closed out. The contract started in 1922 and closed in 1954, cutting above 800 million bd. ft. Three other lumber companies had sales on the district. One time we had as many as eight sides, I had eight scalers. It was just a big job, but I had lots of help.

How was the road from Susanville south?

Highway 395 went south from just east of Susanville to Reno. To the west the highway went to Red Bluff. Susanville was a town of 5-6,000 people then. It had a theater, doctors, a hospital and all those good things.

Your boy must have been going to school there?

He started school in Susanville. We bought a house which was just a long block to the school.

When you went to the summer station, did you move the family up there?

Yes. They loved it there. There weren't any fences around the Ranger Station. The kids would say they didn't have a place to play and I told them they had 100,000 acres around.

What was the station like?

The old station was down in the meadow. They planned on building a new station up on the high ground and had put in a water system and built a barracks. The other buildings were down on the flats. One day, during the summer, we were doing water testing. I put some sea dye in the toilet down in the office and flushed the toilet. It wasn't about 30 minutes later that the dye came out of the kitchen faucet. There was a dug basement in the Ranger's house there. Until June or July the basement was always full of

water. The water table was right up there on the surface. There was a plan to move it. The first year we were there, we received money and moved all the buildings up to the new site.

What did you do when the dye showed up?

We started boiling the water.

What accomplishment were you most proud of during this assignment?

We built a lot of roads. We were just opening up the District for the big timber sales that were moving out in there. I had two timber staff people working full-time and as I said, one time we had eight scalers. I had to do all the range work myself. I didn't have any help on that.

What was your staff?

I had a Fire Control Assistant year-round. I had a prison camp during the summer at Harvey Valley and I had five foremen over there and a superintendent. It was really a training where during the summer they just did nothing hardly but firework. We were pruning the trees primarily and KV financed that. I recruited five new junior foresters each year. During the winter we put them on snowshoes and put them out pruning trees. Later as the timber job grew, William (Bill) V.) Jones, who was the prison camp Superintendent, was promoted to be my Assistant Ranger.

So they were permanent staff?

Yes. But financing them was always a problem and during the winter I had to get them into KV work. I had a lot of KV because of the big timber sales.

Explain about the KV.

Knudson-Vandenberg Act allowed you to collect money in the timber sale contract

that you could apply back to the ground after the logging to do pruning and thinning and things like that to improve the stand. It made financing the Ranger District with a heavy timber load pretty easy and it was pretty easy to keep help on year-round.

I always thought it was great because we were paying for ourselves. Did you have extra foresters from the schools during the summer?

Yes, we put on a fire crew in the summer. We had a barracks, a cookhouse, and a cook. Then I had an old fellow we used with the inmates as a fire prevention person; he was an old broken down cowboy. He was good at fixing fences and things like that, but he mostly went with the prisoners and watched out that they didn't set fires.

Was he good with them?

He was sometimes too good. He was getting into trouble sometimes with the correctional officers because he would mail letters for them and things like that. They just loved him. They took care of him.

In the winter, you were in the Supervisor's Office. Did you feel you got any special attention as a Ranger because you were in there as compared to the other Rangers?

Perhaps. We had a room in the back of the Supervisor's office with a separate entrance. My clerk was thought very highly of because she had a big payroll and she never made a mistake. They were perfect. They were on time. There was lots of fire time stuff from the prison camp and whatnot. Finally, after I left, they hired her and she retired as a clerk in the Supervisor's Office. My first year I hired a fire truck driver who had just come from Alaska. I said, "Do you have a wife?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "What does she do?" He said, "I just came off a big construction job in Alaska and she was a payroll

clerk for the construction company.” I asked, “Would she want a job?” He said, “Well, I’ll go ask her.” So I hired her as my clerk and then I got her year-round. She was a native of Nevada, around Reno.

Any political implications on your District? Any political battles of any sort?

No, I think rather than battles, I think we had a very large range improvement so I got involved with the Cattleman’s Association. We were always showing exhibits of what we were doing out at Harvey Valley working with the Experiment Station. The Regional Forester came with the Regional Forester’s Advisory Committee and I got acquainted with Carl Wente, who at the time was the General Manager or CEO of Bank of America and then became Chairman of the Board. We got personally acquainted which followed through for most of my career with the Forest Service.

When you say Bank of America, do you mean Susanville?

I mean the whole big shebang in San Francisco. Then we got acquainted with the Congressman for the area, Harold "Biz" Johnson. All my Forest Service career and even afterwards, Biz and I were personal friends.

He was really the mountain representative, wasn’t he?

Yes and very strong because he became Chairman of the Interior and Related Affairs Committee. When the environmentalists pretty much took over that, he went to the Chairman of the Public Works Committee where the Forest Service got all their road money.

Any law enforcement problems that you can remember?

No, we didn’t have any law enforcement. There was a lot of private property, but the private property was all in the Red River Lumber Co. and various ownerships. Fruit

Growers Supply Company was our big timber cutter, and when they took over Westwood, they worked out of both Susanville and Westwood.

Do you remember your operating budget for the District?

No. One of the things I do remember about the finances is that there was a certain year (I can't remember exactly when it was, probably 1952 or 1953) that they gave us just so many miles per month to run on our pickup. We were not to exceed that. We had a big Ranger District and a long distance between points. Because the timber operation was so important, I let the timber people use my pickup and use up the miles. I saddled up my horse and went everywhere on horseback, even inspecting timber sales. I would go up and ride through the timber sale on horseback.

Did you get to be a pretty good rider?

I don't know; I thought I was a pretty good rider. We had a Ranger down at Hat Creek, Jack Woolfolk, who was raised on a horse ranch in Colorado. He taught me a few tricks. I got a new horse from eastern Oregon. He had never seen a railroad track. There was a railroad track that went through the Ranger District - in fact, right behind the ranger station. The first time I went out with this horse, he wouldn't cross the railroad track. He wasn't going to cross that thing and there was no way I was going to make him. So, I went down about a mile or so and found where a little gully was. There was room enough to get the horse under the railroad track. So I got off and led him around under it and got back on. We went out and rode all day. We were helping a cattleman unload his cows off of the railroad and bring him over to the ranges in Harvey Valley. By nighttime that horse was real tired. I came to the railroad track and he never even paid any attention. He walked right across it. He was heading for the barn.

What kind of living conditions did you and your family have at this assignment?

We had an old building that was built probably in the late 20's. It was a two-story building that had some bedrooms upstairs with a kitchen and dining room and one or two bedrooms downstairs. It had been moved up from the old ranger station, so it was a pretty nice building.

How were the walls finished?

I don't remember. They were lumber and painted. So we had that. We had a barracks building that had been built on the site in anticipation of us moving the ranger station up there. The Forest Service built the barracks building. Then there was a scaler cabin over at Camp 10 at the Fruit Growers big timber sale. When they closed down, we didn't use the scaler cabin anymore. It was built so it came apart in three parts and bolted together. We got the whole crew together and in two or three days we tore it apart and moved it over to the ranger station. The last inspection I had, Supervisor Veldon "Bunky" Parker had written that he hoped there would come a time when we could move that building over to the ranger station. We moved it; it took about three days. It took the whole crew of 6-8 guys-the timber staff, the fireman, etc. I didn't know much about moving buildings, but we had this old fellow who had come from Alaska whom I had hired as a tank truck operator. He'd been in heavy construction all his life so we made him the boss and we all worked for him. We were trying to get this building under the telephone wires and we had poles and stretched them as much as we could. We finally got the first section of the building through. The next section we took around a different way where the logging trucks went under the wire and we got a better clearance. In the two or

three days it took us to move it over there, we didn't have any foundation for it. All we did is take old railroad ties and made up a foundation from them and cribbed it up to about the truck level. Then we just rolled it off with rollers onto this place and bolted it together again and let it sit on top of these railroad ties. The following Monday down in Chico we had a Ranger meeting. The Supervisor was sitting there having breakfast. I said, "Bunky (Bunky Parker), we moved that Camp 10 scaler house over to the ranger station." He said, "You did? How did you do that?" I said, "Well, we just did it." He said, "What did you use for money?" I said, "Somehow or other there was a little extra free miles on a truck and we got it from one of the other ranger districts and used up the miles on it." He was just amazed that we had moved that building over. With that, the engineer found enough money to put a concrete foundation on it. Bill Jones, who was my Assistant Ranger at that time, and his family moved into it.

What did you do for entertainment during the period you were stationed here?

Entertainment was work. Sometimes we'd all get together and have a potluck with the families who were there. We had three to four men who were on the fire crew at that time. We had a big timber cut. I think the biggest I ever had was about 90 million one season. I had eight sides running and 8-10 scalers. Just the year before I left there, they made a timber sale inspection. John Berry from the Regional Office and Fred Stillings came out there and they were just fascinated with the way we operated those timber sales. They said it was the smoothest operation they had ever seen. Everything went fine; they went out on the timber sales and looked at them. It was east side timber and a very light cut at that time.

Where was the location? What was the relation of that to Susanville?

The ranger headquarters was about 40 miles north and west of Susanville. The District went all the way over into the Pit River drainage.

Were you anywhere near Eagle Lake?

When I was first Assistant Ranger on the Susan River District, it included Eagle Lake. When they rearranged the ranger districts and made me the Ranger, Eagle Lake was excluded from the Bogard District. The new district came to about 10 miles north and west of Eagle Lake.

Where were you relative to 395?

We were quite a bit west. In fact, on the east side of Eagle Lake, the Madeline Road that went out to Madeline Plains. It was not a paved road at the time, but it was a very good county road. We used it in the wintertime if we had to go to the north side of the Ranger District.

Were there any musicians in your crew?

No, I don't remember any musicians. We had a cowboy, Lee Williams, at the ranch who worked for Abner McKenzie, down by the old ranger station. Abner had a cow camp down there on government land. Lee played the guitar and composed songs and knew all the old cowboy songs, so Lee would entertain us.

Where did you go to shop?

Everyone had to go to Susanville to shop; it was 40 miles one way. There was a nice, highway west from Susanville about five miles. Then you turned off to the north on the road to Hat Creek. That route at that time was paved just about 4-5 miles.

Do you know why it was called Hat Creek?

One story is that it named in 1852 because a fellow lost his hat crossing the creek, another that it was derived from an Indian name (*hawiwi*) for the creek. Hat Creek was the next Ranger District to mine.

Where did your kids go to school?

The oldest boy went to school in Susanville. We bought a house in Susanville. As soon as school started, the family moved in. Mostly, I stayed out on the Ranger District; sometimes I would come in on the weekends or else the family would come out on weekends. I lived on Fairfield Ave., which was an unpaved road on the east side of Susanville. Across the road was Red River Lumber Company's great big dry decks, where they decked all the logs over there for the whole winter's operation. Our house was about a block north of Main St., but on the east end of town.

What were the schools like?

One of the grades I wasn't impressed with the teacher; I thought the students ran the class. The other thing was about that time they had a standardized school, this was a brand new school, and they had to build to the state school regulations. The same design was used in southern California as it was in northeastern California. I went in there one time and the windows were all on the north side; they were nice windows, not double paned or anything. They had cement floor with the heating in the floor. All the kids were sitting on the floor trying to get warm; it was down to about 15 degrees with a north wind. There was just no way to keep them warm; they had all their coats on and were sitting on the floor. That wasn't the right design for that area.

Were medical services hard to get on this job?

No, we had a nice doctor in town. There was a little hospital there. In fact, two

of my children were born there.

What was the population of Susanville?

At the time I think it was around 4-5,000. It was the county seat. Placerville was about the same population. I got acquainted with the District Attorney there for some reason or other. I was on a jury one time and we had a deal that the bailiff could come into the Forest Service office in the winter and pick up people. His daughter worked for the Forest Service. The deal was that he would leave us alone in the summer when we were busy. So I got on this jury and it was a knifing in a local hotel. After the trial was all over, it was obvious the fellow got stabbed and they were fighting, etc. The bar was in the basement of the hotel and the knifing was on the stairs were coming up from the bar. The jury acquitted. We had one holdout. The District Attorney called me in afterwards and said, "Joe, what the heck happened?" I said, "Well, that fellow said that fellow didn't mean to hurt him. He said he did just exactly what daddy told me to do - put his thumb along the knife so it wouldn't go too deep." Stan Arnold, the District Attorney, became a State Senator and later a judge. Stan said, "I thought I got all those Arkansas people off the jury, but I forgot that fellow came from Arkansas; he's been here so long."

Where were your nearest non-Forest Service neighbors out on the District?

The nearest neighbors were in town. There were no residences out there except for three or four cow camps. In the summertime that the cowboys stayed in the camps. A lot of times the owners from down in the valley by Red Bluff would come up and stay at the camp in Harvey Valley. Then there was the Abner's right there in the meadow with us. There was a lot of range workload-about 2500 cattle, 6000 sheep. I had a lot of help for the timberwork, but I had to do all the range work myself. We had lots of antelope that

were pretty healthy. I was riding through Champ's Flat one time and all of a sudden right in front of me a little antelope jumped up. It just ran right through a barbed wire fence like it wasn't even there. It had obviously just been born. They're born running, I think. I saw our first antelope going up through that country. I hadn't seen antelope up until then.

The other thing that's interesting about antelope is when you find a herd of them, they'd be running, but they wouldn't run behind you. They'd always want to get ahead of you and cross in front of you. So, you had better slow down. One time we were taking a ride around Crater Mountain, which was behind (east of) the Ranger Station. It had a little crater on top with a little lake in it and lava, of course. There were some badgers out there in the road. They were young badgers; they were having a great time playing. We just stopped the car and watched them. Lots of wildlife out there.

How did the cowboys get along with each other?

Very cooperative. We had two kinds of cowboys: We had the kind that came from Sacramento Valley. We had several permittees down there. They always had somebody take care of the cows. Then we had a couple of permittees who came from over at Honey Lake Valley on the east. All summer long they were busy haying and putting up hay. You had to go down and lasso them to get one of them up to look at their range. Then we had one fellow who had a little private land at a place called "Champ's Flat", a big flat. I went by there one time and I think he had 8-10 cows. He was a lawyer by the name of Smith in Redding. Apparently, the well or the windmill had quit and the cattle didn't have any water. They were just walking around the inside of the fence and trying to get out. So I called Mr. Smith up and said, "Mr. Smith, if you're not up here to take care of those cows by dark, I'm going to cut the fence and turn them out so they can

get some water." He said, "Mr. Flynn, I'll be right up there just as fast as I can go."

About a week later, here comes a letter from Mr. Smith, the attorney, who told me to stop in at the haberdashery in Redding and get the finest Stetson hat that they had." I showed it to the Range Officer and said, "No way am I going to do that." He came up and took care of the cows and was my best friend after that. Anything I wanted, he would help.

Were there any feuds in the area?

We had one fellow (Perry Updyke at Champ's Flat also headquartered there. He had private land there where his headquarters was. He used to go from Champ's Flat down to Eagle Lake. He used to buy up those lots up at Eagle Lake. He had the nicest, highest-bred herd: Every cow looked exactly alike. He had cooperated with the University of California at Davis and they had managed his breeding and furnished him breeding stock and one thing or another as a demonstration. He was a contrary fellow, headquartered in Hat Creek Valley and was hard to get along with.

Did you get out on the lake ever at Eagle?

No. There was a story they told about Eagle Lake though. Those lakes vary a lot in depth and it had no natural outlet except in 1918 or so. They drilled a tunnel through to drain and take water from there into Honey Lake Valley. Something was wrong with the water and it spoiled the land, so they blocked the tunnel. They tell the story that it got real dry about 1924 and everybody said it was the driest it had ever been in the country. Then it dried up some more and what do you know, in the driest place there were wagon tracks that they could see in the bottom of the lake, so it had been drier than that at sometime before then.

Other than Hat Creek, were there any other unusual place names?

The Pine Creek was unusual inasmuch as the Eagle Lake trout spawned in Pine Creek. By the 1st or 10th of June it would quit flowing all the way, so those fish had to come up and spawn and hatch out and get back to Eagle Lake. Otherwise they would get caught in ponds and wouldn't survive.

Were there eagles around?

Well, there must have been at Eagle Lake. Either that, or it was the shape of the lake. No, there weren't too many eagles. There probably were some.

What was the best thing about this job?

It was totally resource management. Other than the hunters who came up there during hunting season, you had almost no visitors, whatsoever. There was no recreation to speak of. Rube Goldberg owned the camp where one of the cowboys from the Sacramento Valley came up. Rube, the cartoonist, owned 40 acres up there. We had a few conversations with him; he was a very wealthy man. I think he was from southern California. Anyway, that was kind of interesting; this cowboy could hardly read or write, but he could sure sign a big check if it was necessary. He had these cows up there. His range bordered on the Lassen National Park. We were up there and there were some strays that apparently got into the Park; we saw their tracks. We went into the Park and were riding along and finally came to a young park ranger. We asked him if he had seen any cows. He said, "Oh, no. No cows allowed in the Park." So we didn't pay any attention. There was a cow turd about 10 feet from him still steaming. We were tracking the cows. Not very far beyond him we found the cows and brought them back into the Forest.

Did you have any dealings with the National Park people?

Yes. In fact, Nels Murdock was the Assistant Superintendent there in about 1957. Later on in my career, Nels was the Assistant Superintendent at Yosemite and then he went on to be the head of National Park Police in Washington, D.C. during the riots. Then to cap his career, he was the first Superintendent of the Redwood National Park in California. He retired down at Finegold or Coursegold, I forget which one down there in Madera County.

In your career did you find much crossover-people working in the Parks for a while and then for the Forest Service?

No, other than Nels. When I was on the Sequoia, I was working in the burn; I was all black and everything. There was a forester's meeting up at Yosemite. I was working on the north end of the Sequoia Forest as a Timber Staff Officer in this burn, and I was just dirty and black. I came up to Yosemite and snuck around to the showers on the north side of the river there. I took all my clothes off, got in the shower. All I had was a towel and a pair of shower slippers. When I came out, I didn't have any clothes; they were all gone. I went out and I didn't have any car; it was gone. I didn't know what the hell to do, so I wrapped the towel around me. It was October or November, nobody in the Park, hardly. I walked across the bridge to where the clubhouse was. When I got over there, I saw my Forest Service car over there and I came into the building. They were all laughing. Nels Murdock recognized my car and stole it. Nels was in his late forties; that was about 1957.

Wrapping up on the Lassen, what was the best thing about living there-Susanville, Ranger District and all?

They were very severe winters, cold and snowy. The best part of it, of course,

was the summer vacations. The kids just loved it. One time they said, "There's nothing to do here." I said, "My, God, you've got this whole outdoors." One time I was with the Forest Supervisor and [Earl] Bachman was the Regional Recreation Officer. We were thinking of putting a little campground up at Crater Lake. We were up there looking at it and there were a lot of very old white fir trees that needed to be cut out. I wasn't going to cut anything if it was going to be in a recreation area. But Bachman, we gave him the paint can to do the marking and he cut a whole lot more than we would have. Just as we were about to leave, here came my kids. They had hiked all the way from the Ranger Station to the top of that mountain. All my kids, but my oldest daughter, who had given up and started to walk back. They had nerve enough to hike all that way.

I was at Lassen from 1950-55. I had my performance rating and had been promoted to GS-11 Ranger, one of the first few. Rangers were mostly GS-9's then. Bunky said everything was fine; just stay here. We're happy with you; you're running a great Ranger District and everything's great. About two weeks later, he called. Clare Hendee, the Regional Forester, had been out there because we had a big experimental thing at Harvey Valley for the range people and did a lot of range planting and sagebrush spraying, etc. So there were tours coming there all the time. I saw the Regional Forester probably once a month in the summertime. All of a sudden Bunky said, "They want you to go, (after [Fred] Stillings and John Berry had made this timber inspection), they want you to go to Willows in Mendocino and be Timber Staff Officer." I said, "Bunky, you and I have an understanding. We're just going to stay here." He said, "OK, I'll just tell them no."

You wanted to stay?

Yeah. I was just having the time of my life. I had just got promoted. This was not a promotion; this was just a lateral. Willows didn't sound like the greatest place in the world to live. About a week later, he called me in and said, "Clare Hendee won't take no. If you want to say no, you're going to have to go down to San Francisco and talk to Clare Hendee." I thought, if it's that, I guess I'll go. I had a daughter who had just been born-
February 22.

What grade level in school were your kids?

Larry was in the 4th or 5th grade.

What date did you say goodbye to the Lassen?

It had to be in 1955. March 27 was the official date that I moved to Willows, but I hadn't sold my house. My wife was still up there, so I was still driving back and forth on the weekends and whatnot and staying at the hotel. During that period before I moved, I was down doing some range work or getting permits. Phil Lord was with me. We were in a restaurant-bar in Red Bluff. It was the one the sheep men always used....there were two restraunts there. The Palomino Room the cowboys went to, and the sheep people went to this other place. We were dealing with sheep people that day and we were having lunch in this place at the counter. All of a sudden the sheriff of the county came up and asked if I was Joe Flynn. I said, "What the hell do you want me for?" He said, "I got a land exchange going on down at the Mendocino Forest and they tell me that nothing is going to happen until you get down there." So I got acquainted with the Sheriff.

That wraps up the Lassen.

Lassen was a great experience. At the time I went to the Lassen, Art Greeley, who became Associate Chief later on, was my first Forest Supervisor. Most of the five years

Bunky Parker was. Just about a week ago, Bunky passed away.

Did you have anything to do with the railroad people? There was a lot of railroad stuff coming through.

The Western Pacific line from Westwood to Gerber, where it hooked into the other lines going up to Portland went through the District. We had the right to ride the freight trains whenever we wanted to. We could go out and flag down a freight train because that was part of the permit. One time during a period of time when we were making snow surveys during the winter, I went up to Silver Lake to make this snow survey and we thought we'd get the ride back to Westwood on the train. We had it scheduled and everything, but we were just about half way through measuring our last course when the train went by a little early. We had a pickup parked out another 3-4 miles. Ed Grant was with me. Ed had skis and I had snowshoes. All the way up to Silver Lake, about 12-15 mile hike, the snow was bad and we were sinking in. It was the end of February. I was ahead of Ed all the way going in there. We didn't get in there until pretty near midnight. We measured the course the next day and came out. It was downhill and Ed was ahead of me most of the time.

You're off to the Mendocino as a TMO.

Remember what I told you about the Sheriff of Tehema County? I finally got there and we finished working on his land exchange. I was the sole timber staff; I didn't have any help at all. When I needed help in my office, Doug Liesz was a timber officer on the Stonyford District. I could call on Doug once in a while to come in and help me with the forest work. This was my first acquaintance with Doug Liesz and our paths crossed many times later. The Mendocino was cutting about 9 million feet of timber a year there and

they had a sawmill on Stonyford District. The Setzer Lumber Company had the sawmill. Crane Mills out west of Corning had a mill. Those two had a lot of their own private timber they were logging, but occasionally they would get a small Forest Service sale. There was another mill over on the middle fork of the Eel River, just below Lake Pillsbury. It didn't cut any public timber; it was all cutting private timber on Sanhedrin Mountain mostly. Did a terrible job, by the way. We did have road problems with them and I had to do the roadwork and lands work too with them. We did buy a road up the Middle Eel River up to Lake Pillsbury that they had built and we bought into that road and got rights-of-way across all of their land. In the couple of years I was there, working real diligently, we got a sale out in the Covelo District to a mill in Covelo.

Our office was in Willows. We were on the second story of the post office building there right in the middle of town. I lived about two to three blocks from the office. It was a real nice set-up.

Did you get a raise to go there?

No. It was horizontal. I had gotten a raise to Ranger GS-11 and this was a horizontal transfer. That was one of the reasons I was kind of reluctant to take it. Besides that, we tried to sell the house in Susanville and things were real tough; we couldn't sell it. Finally, another Forest Service employee came along-Al Weisgerber. Al moved in as a Fire Control Officer, I think, on the Lassen. So we rented the house to Al in Susanville. Eventually, we first rented and then bought a house in Willows.

Did Al eventually buy the house?

No, I had made a couple of moves and bought a couple more houses before I finally got that house sold. I sold it for \$1,000 less than what I paid for it. I think I paid

\$9600 for it. I bought it in 1950. It was about 1957-58 before I finally sold it. It was a very depressed market in Susanville. Some of the sawmills had stopped logging, etc. Just after I sold it, they decided to build a big state prison in Susanville and the market went sky high.

What was the physical office like in Willows?

As I remember it, upstairs the Supervisor had a private office and the clerical staff had a big room. The Timber Staff and Engineer and Fire Staff (Joe Ely was fire, Jack Ewing was the engineer). We had cubicles with walls up about five feet high. You could stand up and look over into the next guy's cubicle.

Were you able to get out of the office fairly frequently?

Yes. That was my way of doing business. I hated the office. I spent as much time in the woods as I could. In the meantime, we prepared a number of sales. They had 9 million cut the year before I arrived and the year I left we had about 90 million. I do remember one particular sale. We decided to have an oral sale, a little 8-9 million foot sale on the Stonyford District. Setzer wanted to buy it. We had to get a right-of-way from Setzer in order to sell it. Setzer Box Company from Sacramento called themselves Glenco up there because they were in Glenn County. Hardy Setzer was an instructor at Luke Field in the War when I was an instructor at Luke Field in Arizona. Hardy was the son of the founder and he pretty much ran things out there. Ben Gellerman was the forester for them. Gellerman was tough. I remember one time we had a confrontation. Gellerman was trying to really put me on the spot. I was standing up to him and told him, "Hell, no, I wasn't going to do that." Gellerman left and Jack Ewing, who was the engineer, Jack looked over the partition and said, "Good for you! You're the first guy

who has stood up to Gellerman.” Gellerman was very intelligent, very smart, but he had a cleft palate and he had a hard time making himself understood. Sometimes he would get frustrated because he couldn’t make himself understood. Nobody ever downgraded him as far as intelligence and being a fine forester, but he was stubborn. Then on this eight million foot sale we had to get a right-of-way from him. They didn’t give me the right-of-way until the very last minute; finally, they gave me the right-of-way. I said, “Well, we can go ahead with the sale.” We couldn’t sell without the right-of-way. There were two or three bidders, including Diamond National, who was going to move into it. They had built a mill up by Red Bluff and they were going to bid. The bidding went on. I had gone up to watch the oral bid up at Shasta-Trinity and it was just as smooth as nice and friendly as could be. We got into this one and it wasn’t smooth and nice; it was real competitive. Finally, when it was all over and Diamond National outbid Setzer, right there in Setzer’s backyard, really. Setzter didn’t go any higher. Then Setzer wanted his right-of-way back. I said, “No.” You had to have a \$30,000 certified check in order to be qualified for bidding. So we were arguing then and finally I said, “I’ll give you your \$30,000 back.” He said, “No, I don’t want the \$30,000. I want the right-of-way.” And somebody in the back said, “If he doesn’t want it, I’ll take it.” About 2-3 weeks later down at Ukiah there was a logging conference going on there. I ran into Setzer. Setzer said, “Come on, Joe, I’ll buy you a drink.” I said, “You talking to me?” He said, “Oh, that other? That’s business, don’t ever let that interfere with friendship.”

The other interesting thing there was a sale we put up in the Middle Eel, the one out of Covelo. I had put up a big sale there. Crawford had a mill there in Covelo and one in Ukiah. Finally, nobody bid on it. I said, “We put it up for Crawford.” I went over

there and I said, "What happened?" He said, "You've got that sugar pine up there. You've got a price way high on it." What we had done is when we cruised it, we graded the quality cruise based upon the Stanislaus mill study. The sugar pine in the Mendocino up there in that Eel River was not the kind of sugar pine you grew on the Stanislaus. So, then I got Doug Liesz and put him up there one summer to go through (lived up there all alone) to re-cruise that all by himself. He had a marvelous time up there fishing. So I stayed there. I went there in 1955.

How did the family take it?

The family stayed in Susanville for a couple of months until we rented the house. I lived in a hotel in Willows. Willows was about 4,000 people; it was the county seat in Glenn County.

I first rented, and then bought this house in Willows. Just before I came, my daughter, Carol, was born in Susanville, so she was a baby when we moved down. In Willows, it was the first time in 1955 that we ever had a place where we got television. That was all new then. Susanville didn't have it. We got down in the civilized country.

The family liked Willows better because the climate was better, although the summers were hot and there were lots of mosquitoes, but you got used to mosquitoes. The family next door had a big swimming pool; he was an airline pilot for Pan Am. He was gone a lot, but the family...In Willows they had water meters for everybody, but they wouldn't read. The only meters they read were the people with swimming pools because the others were on a flat rate. If you had a swimming pool, it was metered and read. We'd put a hose through the fence and filled their swimming pool and then we had swimming pool privileges. During this period I was an Air Reservist. The fellow next

door was flying Pan Am and they were flying Boeing Stratocruisers across the Pacific. He would be gone for 6-10 days, then he'd come back. I was a Reservist attached to Travis Air Force Base in the 1501st Transport Division of MATS (Military Air Transport). I was a ready reservist and I had a crew slot on the same kind of an airplane that my neighbor was flying. One of the periods, this was in 1957-early January, I went on my two week's annual duty at Travis. They put me on an airplane and I went to Tokyo as the third pilot. I was sitting there one night, out of Hawaii heading for Wake Island, and here was the Southern Cross and the Captain, Aircraft Commander, was in back reading a book and the other guy had to go to the bathroom or something. I was sitting up there all alone, a Timber Staff Officer with 60 people behind me in the seats, flying this plane. So I wanted to fly it; I took it off autopilot and was having a great time flying the airplane. Anytime anyone walked to the bathroom, you could tell because the altitude would vary.

Did you ever consider flying as a career?

I did try it. When I came out of the service, I could have gone right in to work for Eastern Airline because our commanding officer was an Eastern pilot and well up in the outfit. A lot of the people went there, but I decided I'd rather be a forester.

Anyway, on this trip, pretty quick the navigator came up and he said, "If you want me to hit Wake Island, you're going to have to put it back on autopilot. I can't get a good reading off the stars." He was a Reservist too. Anyway we went from there and then they sent me down to the Sequoia. That was a promotion. I went to GS-12. I did about 2 ½ years on the Mendocino. While I was at the Mendocino anytime the Supervisor, Bob Dasmann, was gone, I was always named Acting Forest Supervisor. Bob was a Navy Reservist. He went off on his cruises. Then they told me that I was in line to

be a Supervisor some day, but I was going to have to make some moves. So they sent me to the Sequoia as a Timber Staff Officer and my job down there was to get the roads just as far into the backcountry as I could with the timber sales to keep them from going into Wilderness. Try to preserve all the best timber for management. Eldon Ball was the Supervisor there. I was there just a couple of years. I was very busy; had a very heavy timber load and put up quite a few timber sales. Fact is, I put up one that was 80 million feet on the Greenhorn District. It was a BIG SALE. We received help from the Regional Office. We just got out and I just joined the cruising crews and got the sale prepared.

Your family joined you there in Porterville?

We bought a house there. We were just across the railroad track from the Supervisor's Office. Porterville was a real nice place to live. Kids had good schools and the climate was good. You never had to wear anything but a sweater in the winter. Probably sometimes in the winter the fog got into the southern San Joaquin basin. You'd go up the hill 500-800 feet and the mountains were there alongside of you. I went down there in August of 1957. I was there a couple of years and built a lot of roads. I was TMO and lands. On the Mendocino I was timber, lands and recreation. In Porterville in the Sequoia Forest I had timber and lands. We did some land exchange work along and acquired some redwood groves. Timber was a big job there. On the Hume Lake District we had big sales and a big planting job after the fire that burned up into there almost into the Grant Grove.

Did you get up into Mineral King at all?

Mineral King was a problem. I was there while they were starting to plan the Mineral King Ski Resort-Disney. Did I tell you about the last time I worked on the

burned plantation and having my clothes stolen? It was interesting. We had what they called a San Joaquin Forestry group...

Yes, you told us about that. Was Pete Wyckoff there?

Wyckoff followed me; he was right after me. I worked with Pete, but I can't remember just where. I knew Pete well. I think he was on the Plumas maybe before that.

Did you talk to the Disney people?

Yes. But I did more work with the Disney people after I moved into the Regional Office. We met down in their Burbank Studios.

What did you think of their ideas?

I thought they were great. They were planning the big Florida thing. They had a model of Mineral King, the hills of the ski resort and the highway. Then that was mounted up on a wall and they'd bring it down. On one side was Mineral King. Then they could flip it over. It was their big new proposal for Orlando (Disney World) on the other side.

Did you meet Walt Disney?

Yes. He would sometimes sit in on the conferences. He was easy to get to know.

When you would go down there, how long..?

I didn't really get involved in that part. It was when I got into the Regional Office as a lands man. It was just being talked about then. The reason Mineral King was talked about was because there was a bunch of ski people in southern California who wanted a ski resort up on San Gorgonio. The Sierra Club said, "No, that's our prime wilderness for southern California." The Sierra Club, itself, was the one that suggested going to Mineral King. That was the best alternative, better snow. The only reason Mineral King had been left out of Sequoia Park to start with was because it was mineralized up there and there

were a bunch of Forest Service summer homes up there.

There were working mines up there, weren't there?

I don't think they were doing much working mines up there; but there had been. Charlie Connaughton and Governor Pat Brown had got through the [state] Legislature working with Disney a proposed state highway right into Mineral King from Visalia. That was all wired for the highway to go in there.

I was there and got a lot of horseback trips back into the backcountry.

Do you remember roughly what the harvest was on the Sequoia in a year?

I think it was around 50 or 60 million, somewhere in there. I had an eight million foot sale I put up over at Beech Meadows on the east side out of Inyo Kern. It was interesting there that the old Forest Supervisor from the Eldorado, Ed Smith, was working for Wetzel. I told him I was interested in getting this 8 million sale up over there and I didn't know whether I was going to get a buyer or not. We were going to build a road into Beech Meadows from the east side and I was wanting to get a sawmill down there on the east side somewhere. Ed says, "Well, I'll come down and look at it." He brought Cecil Senior and Cecil Wetzel, Jr., who now runs the company, and Cecil's sister, and Ralph Hodges was their forester. We had to horseback in 8 miles into Beech Meadows and then we'd ride in the morning. Cecil was big and fat and couldn't ride very far. The kids were about the same. Young Cecil was about 16 then. We'd ride in the morning and look and come back and have lunch. Then Ed and I would go out and ride the afternoon looking the timber sale over. Ed was quite a horseman. This was when I was Timber Staff. We had the bidding and Cecil got the bid and then he harvested after I left. He didn't build a sawmill; he had a sawmill down in Redlands and he hauled the logs down

there. Later, I was on a trip into the backcountry and I had a Navy research rocket scientist China Lake, and a deputy sheriff and a newspaper guy from the Fresno Bee.

Why was the Navy guy there?

Because I invited him. He wasn't there officially, but it was just uphill from their outfit. I met him at some management conference and we got friendly, so I invited him to come along. I was out there--way out in the boonies--and a helicopter came over. I said, "What the hell is he doing?" We had gone over to look at a wrecked airplane and when I came back, there was Cooper Smith, the Range Officer, who was a real cowboy. He always wore cowboy boots and a big hat and everything else. He was sitting in camp in his street clothes. He'd come in on the helicopter and landed on an adjacent meadow and walked over to where our camp was. I was the Acting Supervisor at the time; Eldon Ball was gone. I said, "Cooper, what the heck are you doing here?" He said, "Well, I got a letter for you. I don't know just what it is. I'm supposed to deliver this to you." So I opened the letter and it was telling me I had been promoted to Forest Supervisor on the Eldorado Forest. I said, "Well, Coop, you read this letter; keep it quiet. You're not supposed to say anything. Tell them I will accept it. Also go over and tell my wife before she hears it." We were going on up into Tunnel Meadows and we were going to be another 3-4 days before we got back to civilization.

How long had you been on the Sequoia when you got that letter?

That was about two years. Then just before I was supposed to move to the Eldorado, they had a big fire up on the Tule River. Ken Fox was the Ranger, but they had an airplane accident. One of the water bombers, the load didn't release and he was depending on the load release in order to get over the ridge. So he hit the top of the hill.

It was an accident. Ken Fox kind of went all to pieces over it. I was the Fire boss. Anyway, Eldon Ball told me I couldn't leave until I got that fire out. That was very interesting. That was in the first of August. I did get a promotion. I got that GS-13. I came in the first of August and took over from Guerdon Ellis.

Was it down there on Clay St?

Yes, the Forest Supervisor's office was on Clay Street in Placerville. Interestingly before I came, they had announced that Doug Liesz was going to take my place on the Sequoia. So I got a call from Doug Liesz who asked what I was going to do with my house. I said, "I'm going to put it for sale." He said, "Could you hold off until I get down?" I said, "Sure." He came down on the bus. He was on the Six Rivers at the time at Salyer.

Doug borrowed my car, went around and looked at all the houses. Then he came back and said, "Well, I kind of like yours the best." I was anxious to unload. These were tract houses; there were a lot of houses. The builder instead of all his houses being in the same place, he had bought vacant lots all over town and put the same house on them. They were a little hard to sell at that time. It was walking distance to the SO. I made Doug a deal, "Since you're a good friend, I'll sell you my house for what I paid for it minus what I'd have to give a realtor." He said, "Great." We went down to the bank and the bank officer was the same officer who had arranged my loan in Susanville when I bought my house there. He had moved to Porterville also. We went in there and parlayed a little bit and then we made a deal that Doug would just take over my loan and we'd split the closing costs 50/50. The closing costs came to \$15. It cost us each \$7.50! I don't remember what the sale price was, somewhere around \$9-10,000.

When you left the Sequoia, what month was that?

August 1. The kids got new schools. I came to Placerville on the Eldorado. I went to Guerdon's Ellis' retirement party; I had known Guerdon for a long time. This was unusual to have returned as Forest Supervisor on the Forest you started out as a kid, and be in the town you lived in and graduated from high school and knew everybody in town.

What did you do for a house?

First, I rented a house up on Point View and then I bought a brick house up on Gilmore St. Interestingly enough, two years later when I got transferred into the Regional Office, Doug Liesz took my place in Placerville and said, "How about the same deal on the house?"

What did you friends and relatives think of you coming back?

They thought it was the greatest thing that ever happened. I had a nice career on the Eldorado. Scollay Parker's family was here, too. He was a ranger on the Placerville District. His wife had a very severe arthritic condition and she was taking 100 aspirin a day, or something like that. Before they were out on the Salmon River. He had a couple of kids. They moved them to Placerville so her mother could help them take care of the family. It was unfortunate. She passed away not long afterwards. Scollay was here in Placerville as District Ranger and Kenny St. John over at Georgetown; Gil Ward was out at the Lumberyard. Gil had taken Doug's job on the Mendocino, so I knew Gil on the Mendocino.

Who was up at the Lake?

Al Mullen. Mullen, incidentally, was in college at Oregon State when I was there. He was in the class behind me. It was kind of old home week when I came back to the

Eldorado. Mullen was replaced by Bob Rice.

Some of the things I accomplished on the Eldorado: We got Vern Sprock starting to plan the relocation from down on the highway to the present location up on the mountain. We went up and explored that new site and got that done. Vern started his first ski tow down on the highway. There was an avalanche path on the north side of the highway and his office was there. We got him moved up to the new location. I knew Cecil Wetzal from down on the Sequoia and even before, when I was a non-professional, and he was logging out there at Omo Ranch.

What grade were you as a supervisor?

I was a GS-13. I was promoted from a 12 to a 13.

Seth "Bud" Beech had the Beech Lumber Company with a sawmill up at Mosquito and a box factory where the Bank of America is now in Placerville. We were coming out of supper one night. Bud was sitting at the bar at the Liar's Bench. I told my wife that I'd like to talk to Bud a little bit, so I sat up there and said, "Bud, you have all that cut-over land in Rock Creek. What are you going to do with it?" He said, "Well, I'd like to make a deal with the Forest Service to trade timber for the Rock Creek land and then I could keep my sawmill running a couple more years at Mosquito." That happened in the bar at the Liar's Bench. At the same time we were trying to acquire the Georgetown Lumber Company lands above Georgetown, which was our other railroad alternate section lands. I went to the Board of Supervisors and asked Barbara Cook, who is a realtor now down at Cameron Park.... She was the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. I wanted to talk to the Board of Supervisors and she said, "They're having lunch at Camino. You go up there and meet them. You don't have to be in public, just have lunch." This was before the

Brown Act. So I went up to them and I said, "I've got two propositions: The Beech proposal in Rock Creek and the Georgetown Lumber Company. I'm working on them both. If you guys aren't going to approve them, I'm dead. What do you think of it?" Eugene Chappie from Cool was the Chairman of the Board. Jack Caswell was on it. Jack had gone to school at Davis when we did in the mid-30's. Jack Wallace had also gone to high school with me, so I had three good friends on the Board of Supervisors. They looked at Chappie and Chappie said, "Well, it's my district. As far as I'm concerned, I think it's a helluva good thing." The Board was worried about the Georgetown Lumber Company lands. They were afraid it was going to be cut up into little residential lots. He said, "Go ahead. We'll support you." So I got the Rock Creek one done, but I never did get the Georgetown Lumber Company because it just didn't gel. Later, it was cut up into residential lots.

In your staff meetings, as a Supervisor did you have any particular problems that you had to work on?

No. We had a real good staff. Johnny West was the Engineer and Ralph Bangsberg was the Fire Control Officer. Jack Moore was the timber staff, John West was Forest Engineer, and Stan Zieger, Grazing. Margaret Davis (she passed away recently) was my secretary. Bangsberg wanted to put sirens and red lights on his fire trucks and I hated those things. Finally, he said, "Well, there's so much logging traffic after the Icehouse Burn on that Icehouse Road that you can't get a fire truck up there unless we have them." So I made a deal with him. I said, "You can have sirens, but NO ACCIDENTS. Absolutely no accidents caused by somebody depending on those sirens to give them the right-of-way." You've got to train your people that that doesn't give them

the right-of-way. Now they've got sirens on everything. Nick Nielsen came into my office one time. He had run cattle in Alder Creek. I counted his cows in the first time he came on the Forest when I was a lookout fireman on Iron Mountain in 1936. Nick came into the office -a big, old, rangy guy, ornery as heck- he looked at me and said, "Joe Flynn, there's one thing I want you to know. I'm not a goddamned bit a scared of you," I said, "Nick Nielsen, there's one thing I want you to know. I'm not a goddamn bit a scared of you." Nick got up and said, "By God, Joe, you and I are going to get along real well." At that time he was having a great feud with the Board of Supervisors and they were about half-scared of him.

How did you like being Supervisor?

I loved it. I thought that was the greatest thing. I got around the county a great deal and was right at home. My aunt lived in Georgetown; they had a big fire over there out of Volcanoville one time. I could go down and sleep in a nice bed at my aunt's house in Georgetown.

You still had the Lake then?

Oh, yeah. We had Lake Tahoe and they had the Old Mill house at Fallen Leaf Lake, reserved for Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors.

How much was left of the lodge on Fallen Leaf Lake?

Spinney got rid of those houses. [Wes] Spinney was the Forest Supervisor when they acquired that and he said, no way could we maintain that lodge. I was involved in the land exchanges with the Catholic Church there and the high school, American Legion Summer Home Tract, and Camp Richardson. I got all those things working. Ray Nisely was a State Senator from Lovelock, Nevada, and he was Richardson's son-in-law. So we

did all the dealing with Ray. Incidentally, Ray was also Anita Baldwin's executor of the old Baldwin estate. So Ray was involved when we acquired the Baldwin lands at Fallen Leaf Lake at Lake Tahoe and knew all the ropes about this and was a very nice fellow to work with.

The Chief of Personnel at the Regional Office called me up one day and said that the Regional Forester wants you to go down and talk to him. I asked him what it was all about. He said, "Well, I think he wants you to leave." This was too much! So I went back down and talked to Charlie Connaughton. Millard Barnham had been Chief of Lands and Minerals for years and years and years. He was about 70 years old. Charlie wanted to replace him. Barney didn't want to go.

Did they have compulsory retirement at that point?

No. Still don't, I don't think. They encourage you to retire at about 65 and field people about 60. Anyway, I said, "Charlie, I've got the best job in the whole darn Region right now, and on the best Forest." He said, "As long as I'm here, you can stay there. I'm happy with you. Why don't you look around this regional office. Bill Fischer, Bob Dasmann, Earl Bachman." He named about four or five who had been Forest Supervisors when the a new Regional Forester came and didn't want them any more. So I went and talked to my brother Supervisors. Went up to the Tahoe NF. Hank Branagh said, "Oh, hell, don't go down there. That's nothing. My old Supervisor, Ed Smith, told me "when you go down there, you're just the eyes and ears of the Regional Forester. You ain't nobody." I went down to Harry Grace on the Stanislaus NF and he said, "Oh, yeah, we need you down there." Then when I got down there, Branagh was good. Harry always gave me more trouble. So, anyway, I told Charlie I'd go. But my wife didn't want to

leave town until the kids got through high school, so I went down there and commuted for a couple of years and came up here(Placerville) on the weekend. Anyway, that's how I moved down there.

Where did you stay for the first year or two?

It seems like my mother had a nice little old cousin lady who had a spare bedroom. She was just as happy as heck to have me for company. That was in Noie Valley in San Francisco on 23rd Street. I caught a bus that went down Mission St. and walked over from Mission to the office. I looked at a house and lot for sale right up on Twin Peaks; it looked right down Market St. It was \$75,000. It had a mother-in-law apartment, rental thing, and everything. It belonged to a former City Supervisor. I said, "Well, how about the taxes?" He said, "They're low. It hasn't been reassessed for years." The City Supervisor didn't get the assessments done. I didn't buy it. A couple of years later my wife and I broke up; she left me for someone else. So, the kids and I moved to Santa Clara. My oldest daughter had a scholarship at Santa Clara University from Placerville high school. I commuted by train up the peninsula. It was real good place to live in Santa Clara. We were right there close to Kaiser Hospital and the swimming pool. We weren't far from our church. I'd get up at 4:30, take a shower and turn on the 5 o'clock news and have breakfast, go to the depot and catch the train at 5:45 a.m. I'd get home at 6 o'clock. When I got in the car, the 6 o'clock news would come on if the train was on time. It was a long day. You got some rest while you were on the train; I'd get the Wall Street Journal and read it going in.

You got involved with the Ehrman Estate at Sugar Pine Point while you were there?

Yes, that was kind of interesting. I was involved in a lot of State Park acquisitions, one way or another. I was real friendly with Jim Warren who was in charge of the state park acquisitions. When I went to talk to Al Hildeman, the Manager of Michigan-Cal (Lumber Company) he said he'd heard that we were interested. He also said, "We'll be glad to buy that and take it out in timber." So that sounded like a good deal. I don't remember the price-about \$4.5-5 million. The Ehrmans talked to their lawyer. Old man Ehrman was a partner in the law firm, so there was a young lawyer by the name of Bill Mackey, who was kind of handling it. We were really dealing with Richard Guggenheim, I think his name was, the head of the Board of Directors at Stanford University. Anyway, all of a sudden when we were just really going great guns. I announced that I had talked to the State, and they said they didn't have enough money to buy it anyway. "You guys go ahead and get it." We had that little forest guard building on the property. Everything was working great. The State said they were short of money and if we could do it, that would be great with them. Anyway as we had this meeting in San Francisco with the Michigan-Cal lawyer who came down from Sacramento and the Ehrmans were there and young Mackey, the attorney. All of a sudden the Michigan-Cal lawyer said that Michigan-Cal had decided not to go through with this, that they had that money and it was worth a lot more in the selling of the company. The owners from Michigan were going to sell out and turn the money over to the new buyer. That made the Ehrman people very angry. That's why we backed out of it. Then all of a sudden.... the Ehrman family was very powerfully connected in San Francisco. Old man Ehrman had died and I think that Mrs. Ehrman had just died and the property had gone into the estate. The daughter was married to the head of the Bank of France and lived in France. They

hadn't occupied the estate much-only once in a great while. They had a caretaker there. They were very upset. Anyway, they had the State Senator there make a deal. We had the deal at \$4 or 4.5 million. The State paid \$9 million for it. There was some stink that they had overpaid, but anyway they got it.

How about the Baldwin stuff?

That was all done before I became Supervisor. The Baldwin land acquired with timber the old Caldor (California Door Company) Lumber Company logged. Their lands had been acquired previously in another land for timber exchange.. There was a mill in Modoc County that got the timber that paid for it. They paid for some of that Lake Tahoe property. Then, while I was there also I had the Pope Property. Pope worked that out so that he bought it. As far as he was concerned, it was a trade. He had to form a dummy corporation that bought a horse ranch down around Merced and traded that for the Pope property. Pope got just an investment property transfer. Met with George Pope up at Lake Tahoe couple of times. I did the Pope property transfer.

Were you involved with the management unit?

In the Regional Office, yes. I was their contact with Andy Schmidt. I was the one who saw to it that Andy got his money for running his unit up there.(The Lake Tahoe Basin Unit) Also during that same period I was often the Regional Forester's Representative in that interstate compact that was trying to sort out the water problems at Lake Tahoe.

Did you spend much time at the Lake?

It seemed to me I spent more time there than I did on any of the other Ranger Districts at the time. The ski areas and the recreation that we were developing then and

the development of the Pope and Baldwin beaches.

What years were you actually in the Regional Office?

I was in the Regional Office on September 30, 1962, and stayed there until I retired at age 55 on a Friday in June 1973. The following Monday I was in the same job as a rehired annuitant because they couldn't get a replacement. So I was six more months in that job. That was a Deputy Regional Forester job. I was Chief of the Division of Lands until the last couple of years I was in there, then they named a new Chief of Lands and I was the Deputy Regional Forester. Doug Liesz by now was the Regional Forester, so I was working for Doug. I was still living in Santa Clara.

They had just come up with Multiple Use Act in 1960. Did that affect you?

There is a famous story. Wherever we talked, we talked about multiple use. We'd make that the subject of our speeches. It was a well-known story that there was a fellow as a Ranger out in Nevada in the Toiyabe, our neighboring Forest. He went to a funeral and finally they asked if anybody had anything to say about the deceased. A couple of people got up and they wanted some more. Finally the Ranger got up and said, "If nobody wants to talk about the deceased, I want to talk about multiple use." Anyway, we pushed that real strong there. We did have a very active right-of-way program.

Incidentally, the Ranger Harry Davis, who was the ranger up on the Lumberyard District on the Eldorado, came down as head of my Right-of-Way unit in the Regional Office. We had all that surface rights determination--who owned the surface rights. I was in charge of minerals, rights-of-way, land exchanges and purchases. We kept the status land records for the whole region, the property records.

When you first went in, was it Connaughton, then later Doug?

Yes, but Jack Dinema was in between. He went into the Chief's office and I think he retired from the Chief's office.

Any other big events that you can think of? Did you have a particular goal in mind when you went into lands?

I had done lands work on the Eldorado, Mendocino, and Sequoia. Connaughton had wanted to change Barnum and make Barnum a special assistant. In order to get Barnum to do this, he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. You get to pick your successor." So I went in after Barney said he wanted Joe Flynn. So for the first year or so the two of us sat in the same office. I sat with the old boy who had been running the office. Barney was real good. During that period we were changing Primitive Areas to Wilderness areas and whatnot. Barney did the face-to-face negotiations with the Sierra Club people, because he knew all the old directors. I did all the fieldwork for him. During this same period and just after we made South Warners into Wilderness, there was a member of the Sierra Club living in Davis who reported that we had cut timber there. I went up there and sure-enough we had! The boundry followed a section line and we had sold timber up to a lava bluff which was a quarter mile or so into the wilderness. Easy to fix then. Bizz Johnson added legislation to move the boundry back to the bluff.

What were the three most difficult issues you had to deal with in your Forest Service career?

I don't think they were particularly issues, but sometimes controversial, were the land exchange and land acquisition programs in the Forest Service. Normally, the land acquisitions were those kind of lands that generally were being pushed for public acquisition by the counties or state and some of the land exchanges were not all that

popular. We were trading primarily in most cases timber for land, although later on we did trade land for land. Some of the more complicated ones were the ones at Lake Tahoe. Some of them were timber for land; some were land for land.

You talked about the Ehrman land at Sugar Pine Point.

Sugar Pine Point was one we attempted to acquire, but did not succeed.

Did we already have the Baldwin Estate?

Yes, the Baldwin Estates were primarily started under Ed Smith and finished with Spinney. [Wes] Spinney had followed Ed Smith as Supervisor in 1950 and then Spinney was here on the finish of the Baldwin Estate. Spinney was the one who got rid of the old Baldwin home on Fallen Leaf Lake because he thought it was going to use up all his money to maintain it. So it was nothing but a foundation when I was there.

Were there any other big, specific land exchanges that you remember?

One of the big ones that I was involved in in San Francisco was the 10,000 acres of Fiberboard land at the north end of Lake Tahoe. Fiberboard had mills all the way from Shasta County all the way down to Tuolumne County. They had timber already purchased under an open market and bidding system, so the value was not in contention and they were going to trade credit for the land. It was very interesting. This was roughly in 1967-68. They had an appraisal of about \$15 million; we had an appraisal of \$12 million. It included rights to take water out of Lake Tahoe because they owned property right down to the Lake. A couple lots were across the state line in Nevada. We're not supposed to make land exchanges across state lines, so as part of the exchange we negotiated in the price to about \$9,300,000 for the 10,000 acres, plus they had to donate the lands in Nevada to us.

Where did you carry on these discussions?

Right in San Francisco, primarily in my office or over at Fiberboard's headquarters. Originally, they appointed a fellow by the name of Ralph De Moisie, from Eugene, I think, or Medford, to do the negotiating. Ralph and I were getting along too well because he was one of my classmates in college. The president, George Burgess, apparently found this out, so he took over the negotiations himself, personally. George and I went head on; I got copies of their annual reports and I could see they neededthat \$9 million cash would have made a lot of difference, not having to pay that out. So we got that. Then, because it affected the county receipts in 12 counties and the county supervisors got up there at a hearing in San Francisco in opposition. Ralph Thiel from Tuolumne County led it. They had plenty people coming from around the counties opposing this exchange, although Placer County, in which the land was located, did not want it to go into big subdivisions. Fibreboard had just developed the North Star Development on the other side of the hill near Truckee. This was adjacent land on the Lake Tahoe side. There was a lot of opposition to development. The upshot of it was that finally, Biz Johnson came up out of the Land and Water Conservation funds with a \$9.6 million to buy it, which was done after I retired. I got it pretty well greased by the time I retired. The price was just a shake of the hand. Just George and I shook hands on the deal. Afterwards he was involved in the Sun River up near Bend, Oregon. Fiberboard people were developing up there. Burgess asked me, after I retired, if I would work for him. By this time he had found out what all the figures were.

One of the other principal things was the surface rights determination issue during the sixties. We had to examine all the unpatented mining claims, primarily residences were

the ones we were involved in, all over the state to determine who had the surface rights or got them signed off or contested them, or whatever. We wanted to get the surface and the mineral rights separated, so we could operate and manage the Forest. If they were anywhere near legitimate miners we gave them the benefit of the doubt. Bill Sanborn was our Chief Mining Engineer at the time. He did a lot of the work. One time, Hank Branagh, Supervisor of the Tahoe, had me appear at the Board of Supervisors in Sierra County up at Downieville. They met in the Superior courtroom and they put Hank and me in the jury box and really gave us a working over on this mining claim.

What was the main bone of contention?

That particular one there that they were hot about, was there was a guy very prominent in state politics, a writer who wrote articles for the newspapers and was on strictly an illegal mining claim about 4-5 miles east of Downieville. He was making a big fuss. He just had a summer home with nothing else other than a summer home on a mining claim. I don't know if we successfully contested it. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he is still occupying it as a summer home.

There was a lot of that, wasn't there? What did they have to do--\$100 improvement a year?

They called it assessment work. Actually doing something to improve the mine. Interestingly enough, there were several which when examined proved to be legitimate, One of them right here in Eldorado County, out near Volcanoville, that belonged to my great-grandparents and had been sold by my mother and my aunt to a fellow from San Jose. When the mining people examined it, it qualified as a legitimate mine and the fellow took it to patent.

Was he actively mining?

He was a gambler from San Jose, but he had someone mining and the mining engineer went in and looked at it and said there was enough gold there.

Anything more on difficult issues?

Certainly, during the period I was there Barnum ahead of me and then I took it over. That was the time they were reclassifying the Primitive Areas into Wilderness areas. We went carefully over the boundaries and I got to look at practically every boundary in California and our Region, either by helicopter or horseback or whatever. Sometimes we'd have the Sierra Club or Wilderness people with us and we'd hash it out and determine where the best boundaries were.

You went up on the ground?

On the ground on every one of those. I really liked it; it was almost like a vacation. One of the things we determined was the San Geronio Wilderness in southern California had a paved parking lot up in the Wilderness so wilderness people could get into it. It was strictly not according to Wilderness. Maybe I told you about the one on the Modoc where the timber sale got up into the wilderness on the south borders. We put the parking lot on San Geronio and the situation on the south borders where we had logged. It was in perfect agreement with everybody. We had a Wilderness bill that just excluded those from the Wilderness. We did it all legally. Primarily, no confrontational things; we just met on the ground and worked things out. Mike McCloskey then came in as the Executive Director following Brower. He was a lawyer and changed it all over to suing and going to court. Rather than being cooperative and getting things done, it had become adversarial.

Did you ever run into Arthur Carhart?

No. He was around, but I didn't run into him.

We put the first Wild River into the Middle Fork of the Feather River. After the legislation passed, I don't know how it happened, it turned out that the sewer effluent out of the City of Portola went into the river. The Wild River ran right through town and the sewer effluent went into the Wild River.

Did you spend much time in Portola?

Not a whole lot, but enough of it that I knew the issues up there. We had a proposed land exchange just out of Portola that never went through, but I looked at it.

There are two big reservoirs up there, too.

Lake Davis and Frenchman Reservoir. They were part of the California Water System.

You followed the Davis Reservoir thing with the (fish) pike?

Yes. Interesting enough, when they dug that dam and got down to the foundation of the dam and went through all the lavas and got down to some good foundation, they found a coast redwood log 70 feet down and it was in perfect shape, perfectly preserved. At the Supervisor's Office in Quincy there is a round taken off of it. It was coast redwood, which is out in the semi-desert. As far as I know it's still there.

What do you think it takes to be a successful Ranger?

I'm sure there are all kinds of ranger districts. Like you get the High Sierra Ranger District (Sierra NF) where the Ranger was kind of a Wilderness patrolman taking care of the primarily Wilderness areas on horseback. Plus a Ranger District in southern California where you got hordes of people involved, to the kind of one I had up in eastern

Lassen Forest where it was all timber and grazing. I don't know. I think primarily first you have to get along with your Forest Supervisor and hopefully have a nice relationship with him. The other thing is to be able to get along with the people you work with.

Do you think your military training helped you in your Forest Service career?

Not too much, although I did get involved in the first aerial drops. I was an observer. Doug Liesz was on the ground. I was talking to him on the radio and I was in a helicopter and guiding the first Stearmans that, as far as we knew, dropped water on a wildfire in the Black Rock River area in about 1956 or 1957. Joe Ely was Fire Control Officer and Joe had been experimenting with this. They had been dropping water on the airport at Willows; they put little cans down to see how the dispersal would be, and how much water would get on the ground, etc. He was working with Clive Countryman of the Experiment Station. This particular fire they loaded the fire tankers at Lake Pillsbury, which was only about 20 miles or less up to the fire.

Was that when you were on the Mendocino?

I was timber staff on the Mendocino at the time. The Nolta brothers had the Stearman and did the crop dusting. They did our reconnaissance flying for us and they participated in that. They were the old Stearman biplanes. They carried about 100-150 gallons of water.

When did they change to slurry?

They painted it red so you could tell where you were. They used to call it borate. They were using that before I left the Sequoia, which was in 1960, so between about 1957 and 1960 they had gone to the bigger airplanes-the TBM's.

Do you know where the idea of the slurry came from?

I expect it came out of the Experiment Station. I don't know for sure, but I think Clive Countryman was working on something that would stick to the vegetation and retain the water and retain the moisture.

Would you say that they probably put you on the project because you were a pilot?

No, I just happened to be the guy who was there. Later, on the Sequoia I often was in the lead plane doing the same thing on fires.

Were you ever involved with the smokejumpers?

No, not at all.

How about fire fighting techniques, organization and operations and how they changed over the course of your time?

I can remember if you had enough water to drink, you thought you were in pretty good shape fighting fires and that included the gallon canteen of water on your back. Nowadays, they deal an awful lot with water. We were always just shoveling, using McCloud tools and handwork on fires, back firing torches, etc. We used a few of those hand pumped 5-gallon cans, but they wore you out pretty fast. It was all right for mopping up, but as far as the initial attack, they were useless.

How about logging operations, techniques and tools-how have they changed?

First of all, they went from hand tools. I was there when they started sometimes using electric saws and sometimes gasoline saws, which were big, awkward things that took two men to handle. The old hand buckers took two saws out with them in the morning. They used one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The saw filers

sharpened them at night. They were paid piecework. They'd get so much a thousand board feet, fallers and buckers too.

When would you say was the last big logging show that you were on that they were doing hand cutting?

I think about 1950 the Fruit Growers Supply Company big timber sale. Finally, I wound it up with 800 and some odd million feet. But it lasted from 1922 to 1954. It was the basis for putting a big sawmill in Susanville. They owned 22,000 acres of land up there and this sale was supplementing their land, they were intermingled to a certain extent. The Fruit Growers Supply Company was the Sunkist Growers in southern California and they bought the timber to assure themselves a supply of orange boxes.

Were you ever injured during your Forest Service career?

In 1935 I fell out of the lookout at Big Hill on the Eldorado about 8-10 feet and then wound up on some iron stairs, then rolled down onto a landing that was half-way up. I just bruised myself, had water on my right knee and was skinned up. My dignity was certainly injured. The fellow who had the lookout had to go to the dentist or something. I was just the substitute. I went up there early in the morning and he had the trap door wired open because he was too lazy to lift it up and down. I walked clear around the platform and was looking up at the Crystal Range with my binoculars and stepped backwards out the deep end.

While I was maintaining telephone line, I cut myself on the knee one time when I was up in a tree with a little hatchet trimming. I had to have stitches.

Did you have to make out a report?

After my first accident I went to the office and they made the report. The only

nice part about it was by the report time I had just reached 18 years old, which was the legal age to work, after about three to four years of working.

Then, another time on the Trinity Forest, a horse and I were leading a mule on a trail that wasn't very good. The horse wanted to go one way and I wanted to go the other and we went halfway in between. The horse rolled off the trail in very steep country. I went off ahead of him. I can still see that horse coming at me still. He rolled onto my leg. I unloaded the mule, unsaddled the horse and made a camp right there on that trail. The next morning my leg was all swollen. A couple hours before the accident I was up on a high point and had a little S-set. I talked to the lookout and said everything was fine; I was going down to check out a fire we had on Pony Creek to make sure it was still out. The next morning I finally got packed up and got the horses and got down to where I could get onto a high place to get onto the horse. I rode down and could hardly walk. I crawled around that fire on my hands and knees. Three days later when I finally got back to the ranger station, I made a report out. By that time I was pretty well. I was still black and blue.

Can you remember three great characters you met while you were in the Forest Service?

Certainly Ed Smith was great. There were several of us that he nursed through college. We were always referred to as "Ed's Boys." Ed Smith was the Forest Supervisor on the El Dorado Forest for 30 years from 1920 to 1950.

Bob Deering in the Region Office was another one. Bob pretty near held all the various functions that now have ARF's in charge. He was from the southwest. I always went to him for advice. Even after he retired, I always liked to talk to Bob.

I think Charlie Connaughton, too, was a great guy.

Was Charlie the one who had the Shasta-Trinity?

No. Charlie was a researcher. He came out of New Orleans or somewhere and came into the Regional Office as Regional Forester. He had a sharp mind, good speaker, loved to fish. He went in the backcountry. He said he and I had two things in common: We were both from Placerville. His family was raised in Placerville, Idaho, which doesn't amount to anything.

They mentioned Bob Marshal and Aldo Leopold. Did you have anything to do with them?

I never had anything to do with either one of them.

Tell me about relations with the State Fish & Game.

We cooperated with the State Fish & Game. I don't remember, except probably in some of our projects, of ever having a very close relationship. I know that when I was a Ranger, without telling me a thing about it, they poisoned all the fish in Pine Creek. The next thing I knew a cowboy came down and said, "Hell, you know the fish are all dead and bellied up in Pine Creek? I got about a sack of them. There doesn't seem to be anything wrong." Then we found out that they put rotenone, or whatever that fish poison was, in the creek. They were trying to get rid of everything other than the Eagle Lake trout. They killed them all off. No, I didn't have any dealings with them on that, but the public had a lot to say about it. The State Division of Forestry was different; we worked with them very closely. I knew the head guy and worked with them. The State Division of Water Resources I was very much involved with them and the California Water Plan and the California Project. Primarily on the Angeles and San Bernardino Forest they had

projects down there and reservoirs. Even before they got the first license on the power plant that's down by San Bernardino, we issued a permit for them to go ahead.

Who did you like best of all the Chiefs you worked with?

Max Peterson and I were sort of buddies. I helped train him on a fire on the Angeles one time when he was a young engineer on the San Bernardino. We lunched together in the Regional Office where he was Regional Engineer and I was ARF there, too, and deputy. Max had come and we would have lunch together once a week. After I retired and was a consultant to the County Water Agency and I was back there for the Irrigation District trying to get a license for the big SOFAR (South Fork American River) hydro-power and water project. I went up to see Max and he said, "Where are you staying? Where's your office?" I said, "I don't have one; it's in my hat." He said, "You sit at Gifford Pinchot's desk. That's your office." That was a GOOD address for people when I was going into the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The fellow before Max, John McGuire, came out one time to the Regional Office. We had a little problem in Truckee. He came out from Washington when he was a Deputy Chief. We went up to see if we could solve that problem. Personally, I knew them. I think I broke my pick with Ed Cliff. I was on a red-eye from San Francisco and got into Washington, D.C. about 6 o'clock in the morning and went to a meeting that started promptly about 8 or 8:15 a.m. in Washington. The only seat I could get was in the front row and I couldn't keep my eyes open. Ed was not an inspiring speaker; he was kind of dull and went on and on and on. Russ McRorey, who was the Lands Chief back there, said I sure made an impression sleeping in the front row through the Chief's speech.

What was the worst fire you were ever on?

I think one of the more challenging ones was on a little 30-acre fire on the Klamath about Labor Day 1955. The initial attack was made by a crew from the Colorado Dixie Forest, I think, on a lightning forecast. They put me in charge of it down there. Then the Haystack Fire ran over us. The Haystack Fire went about 85,000 acres. I damned near lost some people on that. I thought I had. They turned up alive and they were back in the fire camp before I was. I saw them. They burned up their saws; they burned up their hard hats. They were out ahead of us falling snags. They had gone down the creek. The crown fire went out over them. They got out. I saw them in camp and they said, "By God, we don't want any more of this." I said, "I'm so goddamned glad to see you alive that I don't care. I hope I never see you again."

Did they have any gear?

No, we didn't have anything. I think we had hard hats, but that was it. I was a line boss on 8 miles of that fire. I was line boss during the day and plans chief at night. The high school principal from Yreka was the chauffeur they had given me to drive me around because they were afraid I'd go to sleep.

Why did the Forest Service go to large-scale clear cuts following WWII?

My interpretation of the clear cutting in Region 5 is that it was the direct result of the creation of the Redwood National Park in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. The environmentalists were the people who were pushing that so hard. They said they could make that up by having the Six Rivers National Forest cut their annual growth, which they were far from doing because they didn't have the roads and so forth at that time. So, Congress gave them direction to increase the cut. Clear-cuts, which was common practice in the private land up there, hadn't been used in Region 5 at all. The only way that Six

Rivers could increase their cut with the same amount of money and same sale preparation money and so forth, was to go to clear cutting. If you can do it on the Six Rivers National Forest, you can do it the rest of the places.

Who said that?

The idea that the Washington Office pushed onto the locals here was that it was a much cheaper way of getting sale preparation and you could get the volume out without building so much road. I was just sick. After I retired, I saw a clear cut just south of Yosemite Park, right up against the Park on the Sierra Forest. I never thought that clear cuts in the mixed pine regions of the Sierra was the proper way to do it. You could make a selective cut, come back rather frequently, 20-25 years apart, and get out just as much volume and make the forest look pretty. Clear cuts, to me, don't look pretty.

They called them patch cuts later.

I never let a clear-cut occur on a Forest where I was a Timber Staff Officer or Forest Supervisor. I just wasn't going to do it.

How about relations with Indians?

I didn't really have any except on the Trinity Forest, next to the Hoopa Reservation. I knew the Hoopa people pretty well and the other Indians up and down the Trinity River.

Did they have any requests or anything that you had to deal with?

No, I thought they were just great to get along with. I got along with the Indians real well.

Was their reservation big?

The Hoopa is a big reservation, but there were a lot of them who didn't live on the

reservation. They worked for the Forest Service. The European descendants married the Indians and there were a lot of mixed breeds.

Did they have the Hot Shot crews then?

The first Hot Shot crews I ran into were when I was on the Sequoia Forest. They had them started in southern California first.

Were those Indian crews?

The Indian crews that were used in the fifties were primarily from the Apache and Zuni. I had a Zuni crew on the Angeles. I worked a couple of fires down there with them and they were great people. One of them told me one time that he didn't like the hot fires and climbing the steep hills, but he liked the money.

We have pretty much covered everything. Are there any particular episodes or incidents that stand out in your mind?

The big land exchange is certainly one I was involved in. One particularly of acquiring Meeks Bay at Lake Tahoe. Meeks Bay originally was the summer cow camp for my dad's uncles. They lived down on Luneman Road here in El Dorado County and took their cows up through Georgetown and Wentworth Springs, so I was very familiar with the property. They later sold it and when I was in the Regional Office, there was a real estate firm, part of the New York Central Railroad (they called it Marcore). They had bought it and wanted to make a big subdivision of it and the county was against it at that time. The New York Central Railroad went broke. This property was up for sale. There was a fellow who was the head of the Stouffer Chemical Company in San Francisco who came to me one time and said, "I think we can work out something. (He was in the Save the Lake Tahoe League) I think we've got a guy who can help you out and get that." Bill

Hewlett from the Hewlett-Packard Company came up and talked to me and Jack Deinema and we went to lunch. Hewlett said, "Yes, I'll work with you on it." He paid \$600,000 cash and assumed a \$2.2 million note and held that property for us until we were to get the money to buy it through Congress. Bill Hewlett and I were on very personal terms for a couple of years.. He also had a place on the North Fork of the American River. I could go into his office any time. He called me up one Sunday morning when we were deep in negotiations. He said, "I've got to be gone for a couple of weeks. I'm going over to Hong Kong and eventually around the world. In the meantime, Elaine, my secretary, will get in touch with me every day if you have anything you want to pass on to me." Bill died here just recently at 90 years old. David Packard died before Bill. I didn't know Packard that well. Packard had a summer home on Fallen Leaf Lake. Hewlett was very familiar because the North Fork of the American River is just over the hill from Meeks Bay and he had a summer home in the "Cedars" over there. Hewlett died within the last few months. A very nice guy. Just as common as all get out.

How about Jack Deinema?

Jack was very fine. The favorable response I had about Jack was that he depended on me to tell him what to do about lands. Jack got me promoted to GS-15. So I retired at GS-15 out of the Regional Office. I came back here. This house was being built then. They wanted me on the County Planning Commission, so I came up and the house was just framed. There wasn't even a roof on it. I put a sleeping bag in it, slept the night, and went down and just registered with this as my residence. Next week I was on the Planning Commission and was there for three years. Later on I was County Supervisor for eight years.

What made you decide to run?

My old buddy who started out in the Forest Service in 1933, the two of us working together. Ray Lawyer was a graduate of Oregon State College, too. We batched together when we went to school at Davis; we had apartments together. He was County Supervisor. He wanted me to be his Planning Commissioner. When he got cancer and had to resign, he wanted me to be appointed in his place. Governor Jerry Brown, a good Democrat party man, appointed a county Democrat party worker. I lost the first election for the remainder of Ray's term, but ran for the full term two years later and won. One of the things we made a point of was once a year we got the Forest Supervisor to take all the five County Supervisors out to tell them what's going on in the Forest. They dropped that. I think it was a good idea.

Was your being ex-Forest Service helpful to you as a Supervisor?

One of the things I did as a Forest Supervisor was to turn all the summer home roads over to the county for maintenance. As soon as I got to be a County Supervisor, I turned them back to the Forest Service. It depends on who you're working for. Joe Harn was the Forest Supervisor at the time. I never had a bad time with the Forest people.

Were you a Supervisor when Bosworth was there?

No, I was in the Regional Office and we had a regional supervisors meeting. Bosworth and I had about the same jobs, ranger, timber staff, and Forest Supervisor. We did lots of work together and were the best of friends. We went to dinner and Bos and I sat together at dinner that night. He went and was trying to open a window in that old hotel and fell out.

How about Desolation Wilderness? What about the determinations that

people have to sign up, i.e. limited access?

I was against the Desolation being a Wilderness. I thought it was too close to too many people, too small, and it was going to be overrun with people. The Wilderness wouldn't allow you to build toilets and facilities to handle people. That has proven to be the case. Rather than change it to a roadless recreation area or something of that nature where you could make facilities for people, because it was put into Wilderness, they have to now limit the number of people who go in there.

How about the current struggle now about our water and watershed?

We are in a very fast-growing state and a very fast-growing part of the state. Right now it's electricity, but everybody recognizes that we've got to have more storage for water. We live in a semi-arid area where we do not normally get summer rains and we have to depend on the winter snow pack and rainfall. If we don't store that water, we're not going to have enough water for both farming and people. Incidentally, the State of California feeds half the world, I think, in specialty crops. The corn and wheat people furnish our bread, but specialty crops that California raises, like fruits and vegetables, are used all over the nation and some all around the world.

The watersheds are mostly in the National Forests, aren't they?

The heavy rainfall areas are in the National Forests, both up on the north coast and in the Sierra Nevadas.

What about the recreation use?

Recreation use is going to be here. People are going to use the forests for recreation. I think recreation can be accommodated. People are only attracted to certain areas: the rivers, streams, lakes, and some of the mountain meadows. Most of the forest,

the steep and wildland, they could care less about it. Some of the hunters get into it, but I think the hunting is going downhill all the time. The deer population doesn't support as much hunting as the hunters would like. I don't think it's as popular as it used to be.

What about the future? What do you feel should be the management goals?

I'm still a multiple-use person. I think that we can do a little of everything and fit them together. We're going to have to because sooner or later we're going to have the same problems with timber supply as we've got now with water and electricity. They're saving the resource for another generation with the logging moratorium. They're gonna have to use it.

Any last comments you want to make?

I appreciate my inquisitor because he's a trained man, who has done this before. You've just been great.

I have one thing I want to throw in: Can you think of a better career for a young man, at least in your time, that is more satisfying or interesting than what you did?

During my time, the Forest Supervisor ran his Forest. He took advice from other people, or asked for it. So often from the Regional Office I was asked to come on Forests and help them out and sit with the Forest Supervisor and hash things out. Now, the Forest Supervisor, as near as I can tell, merely passes on what somebody in Washington decides-one size fits all. The old story about Ed Smith. Ed came into the Forest Service in 1909. There was a Chief of Fire Control in San Francisco by the name of Frank Jefferson. Jefferson came in 1910, so they were both old-timers, but Ed didn't like Jefferson. He told Regional Forester Show that if Jefferson ever came on his Forest, he

could have his job; he was quitting right then and there. Jefferson's assistant could come on any time he wanted; he was a nice guy and was all right, but by God he didn't want Frank Jefferson sitting a foot on his Forest. There were Supervisors who felt that as far as they were concerned it was their Forest, they ran it and were totally responsible. But nowadays they try and make a forest "one size fits all" and there are differences in every Forest. Differences in people, differences in economics, differences in the resources and they can't fit all in one pattern. I think the past administration was trying to make everything run to a national pattern.

How about recommending a career in the Forest Service to young people?

I think it's a good life. At times it's challenging. I was raised in the period when 8 to 5 wasn't even heard of. I remember one time when I was a CCC foreman and I wanted to go to a shivaree for the ranger's son up at the ranger station. I was a Fire Suppression Foreman with a ten-man crew, on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I wanted to go to that. The old Camp Superintendent said, "You were looking for a job when you got this one, didn't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You got one now. Take care of it." He wouldn't even let me go up to the ranger station to go to a party even though I had a substitute. I don't think I ever drew overtime all the time I was in the Forest Service. Now a lot of them depend on overtime to make their living, particularly on fires.

Okay, Joe, I guess we can wrap it up. We're just about through with this tape. If anything occurs to you after we close down, you can still do something.

Nord Whited here is an experienced interrogator. He has done this a lot before both for the Forest Service and National Park Service. He's been trained in it and he's been a great help. Thank you very much.