

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Region Five History Project**

Interview with: Harry Grace
Interviewed by: Gene Murphy
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[CD 1.]

GENE MURPHY: Okay, this is Gene Murphy, G-e-n-e M-u-r-p-h-y. I'm at Harry Grace's home in Sonora, California, where I'm going to conduct an oral interview for our Region Five 100th Anniversary next year. Harry is here, and I'll start asking a few questions. Maybe first, Harry, you could spell your name.

HARRY GRACE: Well, it's H-a-r-r-y G-r-a-c-e.

MURPHY: All right, thanks, Harry. That'll help the recorder all the way through. Maybe we can start with kind of a bibliography: where you were born and raised and what year.

GRACE: I was born in [Farwell?], South Dakota—that's about twenty miles north and east of Mitchell, South Dakota—December the 4th, 1913, which makes me ninety years old.

MURPHY: Wow. That's tremendous. All right. What was your background in education?

GRACE: Just general education until I got to Pasadena Junior College, which by the way was moved to Pasadena in 1924. I went through the city school system there and graduated from high school and went into a junior college, where they had a forestry class, one of at that time only two in the United States. I believe there was one in I believe it was Lassen County. I became interested. Of course, I had become interested in forestry long before that, as I hiked all over the Angeles Forest, and I probably could say that I covered more of the Angeles Forest than

90 percent of the forest officers who worked there. And I covered it on foot, alone and sometimes with a couple of buddies.

So got interested in forestry, and the prof [professor] made me his assistant, for which I received twenty-five cents an hour from the department of science there, and two bits an hour made quite a difference in those days. See, that was in '33—'32, rather. I went in there actually before I graduated from high school. So I worked for the forestry class for three years, and we had a forest camp up in [Mid Pines? Midpines?] Park on the Angeles, which we went to each year for two weeks' field work.

After I graduated from junior college, why, I had several friends in the Forest Service, mainly one who was well known, [Birds DeLapp?]. Do you remember DeLapp, the man who worked the forest and soils on the forest?

MURPHY: I remember the name.

GRACE: Well, his father.

MURPHY: Oh, okay. Now I do, yes.

GRACE: Ira Roberts was the fire dispatcher on the Angeles, and his brother was an assistant to him. And through them, I got a temporary job, which doesn't show up in any records because I was paid out of L.A. County money. In those days, we had undeposited funds [unintelligible], especially on the Angeles. Did you ever see any on San Berdue?

MURPHY: No.

GRACE: Well, I think the Angeles was one of the few that had undeposited funds from the Board of Supervisors, and they used these funds for miscellaneous employment and anything that the Forest Service couldn't afford to pay for, as we were destitute in those days, too. I worked two months, until the money ran out. I was a relief lookout. I would go around to—they

had around fifteen lookouts on the forest. I went to these lookouts and relieved the lookout for really a day is all he got relieved. I went up, say, today and got there by noon. He left, and then he was gone the following day, and the third day he came back at noon, and I went to the next guy. So I did that and learned the lookout racket from especially a real good old friend, who should appear historically, but I'm sure he doesn't, and that's R. T. Edwards, who had been a lookout most of his life. He was a real lookout. Well, I was a good friend of R.T.'s, and that's about the extent in '33.

And in '34 I went back to junior college and worked again for the forestry department, and at the end of the school year, why, Virgil DeLapp called me and said he wanted me to take the guard exam. Well, the guard exam in those days was really something. It was during the Depression, and the Angeles estimated they had 10,000 applicants for one guard job on the forest. So I said sure, I was more than willing.

This exam was rather interesting. Well, first of all, they had these 10,000 applicants, and they weeded them out by where they lived and what their backgrounds were. It was everything under the sun because everybody in those days was going around trying to find a job, and they went to all the government agencies and made application.

MURPHY: That was right in the middle of the Depression, yes.

GRACE: Yes. And so the first they did was weed out all of these guys. Then they got that down to 200, from 2,000 to 200, and they gave the written examination to 200 of us. At the end of the written exam, when they finally graded it, why, they gave an oral exam, in which we had: "Here's a bunch of fire tools, here's a fire line; what would you do with it? Which tools would you select? Select two tools." They had everything from back pumps to—oh, I don't know what all they had, but I selected a shovel and an ax and went at it. And then they had a sand table,

which had a fire break and a fire positioned on it, and where would I build line when this occurred and so forth.

And so when that ended, why, about two weeks later, I got an announcement that I had passed first. Well, as it happened, they weren't supposed to tell you how you passed. They were just supposed to tell you you passed, and you had a passing grade of such-and-such. So anyway, I went to—planning on going to work for the Forest Service, and of course, I hoped that I would get a patrol job because that was the guard's delight, was a patrol job.

But as it came up, I and another fellow were selected for the one and only patrol job that was open, and the other fellow won. He was about six-foot-two, and they wanted a guy to act as, well, sort of a law enforcement officer at the dance at Wrightwood, California. Wrightwood was on the edge of the Angeles. At that time, the Wrightwood area belonged to San Bernardino, but we administered it. When I found out what it was all about, I was real happy because I knew this fellow, Paul [Rattle?], could do a better job of tossing guys out of a dance than I ever could. I weighed 135 pounds, and he must have weighed 200.

So there was no other jobs open, so along came a job as a—I don't know what you would call it, but I worked for the Burbank Military Academy. My main job was herding a bunch of kids on hikes, on trail rides and such as that. I did that for a month, and the money ran out on that job, so an old friend of mine was working over in Bakersfield as an assistant—not an assistant, as a laborer in a dairy, and he said, “We got a job over here if you want one. It's a dollar a day and all your meals, and you can sleep with me out in the pump house.” So I said, “Sure.” A buck a day was really worth it in those days.

So I went to Bakersfield. You know, I got up at three-thirty in the morning, walked out about half a mile to pick up sixty cows. We had 120 that were being milked, and it was a

certified dairy. I talked to these cows and gathered them all up and ran them back to the barn and hooked them up in their stanchions, and then I washed them off. Then the milkers came in and went to work. Whenever one of these cows would decide that he had to have a bowel movement, or she had to have a bowel movement, why, I was hollered for by—you can understand what my name was. I ran with a shovel and cleaned up and washed the cow down again.

Well, that went on for a month every day. Oh, and then we went out at four o'clock in the afternoon, and we usually got through at seven, seven-thirty at night. They fed real good. My gosh, you couldn't ask for a better cook or a better arrangement than that, but I got awful sick of it after about a month. So one day I said to the boss, "I'm quitting." "Well, what are you going to do?" And I said, "Well, I got a job with the Forest Service." I lied to him. I didn't know what else to do. And he said, "Oh, well, good."

So I got in my car and took off. That was after the evening milk. I got home from Bakersfield to my mother's place in Pasadena, and she said, "Gosh, I'm very glad to see you. A Mr. DeLapp wants to talk to you on the telephone." [Laughs.] So it wasn't a lie! And so I called Virgil DeLapp. It was ten o'clock, and he wasn't in bed yet. He said, "Yeah, I want you to go to work tomorrow morning. Can you go? They have a lookout over on the Saugus Ranger District that we just built, and we want you to take the job." So I said yes.

I told my mother, and I gathered up all my stuff, some cooking utensils along with it, and at about six o'clock in the morning, I took off. I got over around San Fernando, and here's this guy on a motorcycle with a siren. He said, "Where are you going, to a fire?" [Both chuckle.] I said, "No, I just got a job with the Forest Service, and I'm in a hurry to get there." "Well," he said, "it's gonna cost you ten bucks." He says, "You were going over the speed limit."

So I went over to sign up with an old-time ranger, who was a real fine fellow, by the name of [William] “Bill” Durham. We all called him, not to his [face], but Bull Durham, but he was a real big, husky guy but really a fine gentleman. He took me over to this map, showed me where the lookout was. I knew where it was. I never did much hiking over in that country because it was too dry, in the Saugus District. And so I said, “Okay.” He said, “You go on up. The guard up there will be waiting for you, and he’ll take you up to the tower and show you all around.” So I did, and I became the guard on Grassy Mountain Lookout.

MURPHY: What year was that?

GRACE: That was 1934. We had a rather uneventful year for the rest of the year. Only had two or three fires. I guess it was about the first of November, why, it rained, and how it rained! The boss called me up the next day and said, “You’re laid off.” The old famous guard trick. So I packed up my stuff and took off and went down to my mother’s place. I was there about three or four days. I went first—after I got down there, I went up to see Virgil DeLapp, who was the fire control officer on the Angeles. But in those days he was called a dispatcher.

So I went down to see him in the Pasadena post office, where his office was, close to the forest. I told him—I said, “Is there any chance of any winter work?” And he said, “There’s winter work for everybody but ten guys.” And he said, “You’re the last guy that was employed, and so you’re the tail end.” So he said, “There’ll be no winter work for you unless something comes along.” And so I said, “Well, I’ll go over to my mother’s place.” She owned a soda fountain and restaurant.

I started working there, jerking soda. I guess I worked about three days, and Virg [pronounced verge] called me, and he said, “Hey,” he said, “[William] ‘Bill’ [Mendenhall?] has said that any of the guys who we didn’t have work for can go to work in the CCCs [Civilian

Conservation Corps], and you'll all be enrolled as an LEM." That was, oh, a local employment man. Thirty-six dollars a month. I said, "Man, I'll take it right now." He did, and I was assigned to Monrovia, which was only ten miles from my folks' place, or my mother's place.

So I went over there, and the first thing, the road locator said, "Have you ever done any surveying?" I said, "Yes, that's what I did most in junior college." And he said, "Well, did you ever locate a road?" And I said, "Well, yes, but I don't know much about it." "Well," he said, "do you know how to run an azimuth?" And I said, "Yes!" So he says, "You're hired."

So I became the assistant road locator, of all titles, at the Monrovia Camp. We had quite a crowd there. They were all from Chicago. They were all Lithuanians except one guy whose name was Murphy. And he was the forty-five-dollar-a-month man in charge of all of us boys, and these guys said, "You know, the first thing you got to do is fight Murphy." And I said, "I do?" And he said, "Yeah." And they laughed. I thought, *Now, this is gonna be great.* So sure enough, Murphy come around and shook my hand and said, "Don't let these guys fill you full of bull. You don't have to fight me." He said, "If you want to, okay, but," he said, "I don't fight everybody comes in the camp." So I was relieved.

I worked a month and a half in the C's, as the road locator. The Forest Service, through the San [Demos?] Experiment Station, started doing erosion control work on road fills, an experiment that DoA [Department of Agriculture] had been experimenting with. And so I went to work with a bunch of Forest Service guys over in San Gabriel Canyon on this big road fill. Oh, it was a tremendous fill. So we worked on that for I guess six weeks, and they said, "Well, they're all done with this. There's nothing else over in this area. If you want a job, why, we've got a job for you over on Mount Wilson, erosion-control work." I said, "Sure."

There were about ten of us, all guards. Went over there to Mount Wilson and stayed in a tent camp all winter on top of Mount Wilson. I worked on erosion-control work. And one day the boss said to me, "Harry," he said, "you're assistant foreman." I said, "What??" He said, "You're assistant foreman." I said, "That's the first time I've heard anything about it." "Oh, yeah," he said, "you've been assistant foreman all the time. You don't get any more money, forty cents an hour, but you take this truck and drive over to the Forest Service warehouse in [unintelligible] and pick us up a load of materials we need, and grub" and so forth.

So I did. Then, when I found out I was assistant foreman, why, he began to give me jobs, and small groups of the guys and I would go out and work. The season ended. Winter ended, and we completed the job there on Mount Wilson. We, of course, all began to wonder—old Archie Edwards was one of the crew always said, "Well, if I knew I was going to get a job as a lookout on Such-and-such Peak, I'd buy myself a new pair of jeans." Well, that was about the way all of us worked.

I got a call from a ranger over at Glendora. He said, "I wish you'd come over and talk to me." So I went over and talked to him, a fellow by the name of [Nils Peterson?]. He was a good ol' guy. He was a typical Swede. All Swedes are tight, and he'd make us go around and pull all the tacks out of signs and use them over again. He said, "How many signs are you going to put up?" "Oh, a dozen, I guess." And he'd count out the tacks. He knew how many tacks each size sign took. Well, I went over and talked to old Pete. He said, "You've been selected as patrolman at Crystal Lake," and I about dropped dead. I was so happy, because I had spent a lot of time at Crystal Lake as a kid, hiking around, knew that country. So he said, "You go to work the first of May, but you go to work on a trail crew consisting of you. I want you to maintain such-and-such crews, and you can move into the guard station anytime."

Well, about that time my [Dorothy?] “Dot” and I were getting serious, and so I asked her to marry me, and she did. We moved into Crystal Lake guard station.

MURPHY: What year was that, now?

GRACE: Nineteen thirty-five.

MURPHY: Thirty-five.

GRACE: I worked there all summer. I had a horse and a mule. I packed to the lookout, Mount Islip Lookout once a week and, oh, patrolled the park area, which was operated then under a special use permit to L.A. County. It was an L.A. County park.

Well, I guess it must have been about the first of August, why, we all received word that Bill Mendenhall had been assigned to Washington office temporarily, and we were going to get a new supervisor from the Lassen. I’ve forgotten his name. He was a real nice guy. He didn’t know anything about Southern California, so he came down there, and Bill pulled out. You know, it’s beside the point, but I worked with Bill a lot of years, and Washington frequently called upon him for I don’t know what; he never told me, but when he left, why, our main contact with the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, where we got all of this undeposited money, disappeared. The new supervisor—he didn’t know anything about it, so I was out of a job in about a week.

And a lookout died, so I had to go take this lookout’s place. Dot stayed at Crystal Lake. I went up to the lookout and worried about how soon I could get back to ground level, and I guess I was laid off [until] about, oh, November the fifteenth. I went back to the station, and Dot and I lived there about a week, and we knew we couldn’t find any jobs there, so we took off for Pasadena, where her folks did, and her aunts, and my folks, or my mother.

We stayed in Pasadena about, oh, I guess a week, working on and off. Dot got a job down in the [Crest? Kresge?] store—you know, the ten-cent store, working there as a waitress. I jerked soda for her mother. And so here again, we get a call from DeLapp. Said, “The Bureau of Public Roads up here in Red Box is building a section on the Angeles Crest Highway, and they want a guy to head up their erosion-control work.” So, man, I ran up there as quick as I could, met up with this fellow in charge of the whole project, the project engineer, and he signed me up as foreman. He said, “You get busy and hire a crew,” so I hired all these guys that had worked the last year past, and so I was foreman for the Bureau of Public Roads for about five months and then got a call that I’d go back on duty, but I was to go to Colebrook instead of Crystal Lake, which was only six or eight miles away, in north fork, San Gabriel.

So immediately we moved everything over there. It was a [unintelligible] building that had only been built two or three years, whereas our domicile at Crystal Lake was an old portable building, with outside plumbing, so it was really a nice deal for Dot. She liked it very much there, and we stayed there for two years. That following winter, when I got laid off from fire duty, why, the ranger, Jack [Kearn?], who was a wonderful guy, put me in charge of—well, put me on the job of painting all the toilets and doing any repair work in [unintelligible] north folk, San Gabriel Canyon campgrounds.

One of the campgrounds we had there, the Oaks, was 100 units, so I had three fair-sized campgrounds. And then below me was the Rincon area, and [Miller E.] “Mill” Newman, a very good friend of mind, had that area. Occasionally we worked together, but most of the time we were working alone. I worked all winter on that. [When] summer came again, why, I went back to Colebrook.

I got to the end of the fire season about the fifteenth of November, and so I got laid off. There was a big resort up there called [Headley's La Cienega?]. Old man Headley, Frank Headley, and his wife were very good friends of mine and Dot's, so Frank called me up and said, "Harry, you want a job as a carpenter?" I said, "Sure." So I went up and helped him build a garage and an apartment over the top of the garage. [When] we got through, he had Dot and I up for dinner, and he said, "Harry, the wife and I have talked it over, and we're getting along in years." (He must have been in his eighties.) And he said, "We want an assistant. We want you to take over as assistant here at the resort." And I said, "I sure appreciate it, Frank, but I just don't have a yen for working in resorts." "Well, he said, "if that's the case—we prepared for this—if that's the case, we want to loan you the money to go to college on." And I about dropped dead, because I didn't have any money. That was 1936.

MURPHY: You were how old, then? You were early twenties.

GRACE: Yes. And so I said, "Okay," so he said, "How much do you need?" I said, "I really don't know. I have to figure it out." And I figured it out, and he said, "Well, now, you got payments on your car." I said, "Yeah." "And have you got any other bills?" he said. "No." "Well," he said, "here's the check." I don't know how much it was. It was around eight or nine hundred dollars. And he said, "I'll make the payments on your car, and until you graduate or quit, I'll continue to do this."

So I did. I went up to Utah State because they had the quarter system, and I could go up there at Christmastime and sign up and go to the winter quarter and then the spring quarter. They found out I had a job, so they'd let me off two weeks early. [I'd] go back to work for Forest Service. So I went up there '37, '38 and '39 and got my degree.

MURPHY: In forestry.

GRACE: In forestry. The dean said, "I don't know whether you ought to go to school or not because your transcript shows you had lousy grades." I said, "Yes, I know, but I want to go anyway." So he said, "Okay," so he gave me a chance to go to school. Anything I wanted to take. He signed me up—you should have seen my first year's schedule. And I got all A's and one B, and the reason I got a B was I couldn't understand the prof. He was Russian, and he was teaching soils. I made good enough grades to make the Psi Sigma Pi honorary forestry frat [fraternity] and graduated in '39 with a half a unit short, so they gave me a half unit—he did, the dean gave me a half unit plus on my thesis, as I had an A-plus in English and an A-plus from forestry on it, so that's how I got out of school.

Well, in the meantime, in March of 1937, they had the big flood down on the Angeles, and it really poured. Boy, it just took out everything out of the canyons. All these campgrounds I told you about—they just went down the creek, all the toilets and all the concrete tables, and it just cleaned out the front-country canyons slicker than [elm?].

So I couldn't go back to San Gabriel Canyon, so they put me over to—well, they told me that I was to go to [Vallermo?] Ranger District, where I was to be the fire control assistant. I got there down. Dot and I got there from school, and the ranger said, "Are you going to go back to school?" And I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "I hate to have a man on this job that's only here part time." He said, "I'll pay you the same wages if you'll go to the Big Pines job and take over that job."

So I did, and I became the fireman at Big Pines, the fire prevention officer in the county park, and got to know the county park people real well. That went on from '37, '38 and '39. When I came back at the end of the season, why, the ranger says, "We're gonna take the park back." It was under a special use permit, L.A. County. It was a big layout. They had tried to

duplicate Yellowstone. They had spent millions of dollars. So I said, “Well, okay. I don’t much about running a park.” “You’ll learn.”

So I hired one of the guys who was a very good friend of mine who worked for the park as a ranger, but he had worked as maintenance and such in his early years. His name was Howard [Roe?]. I hired him, and there was 125 people on the payroll of the park. On July one, they all left. [unintelligible], lineup of trucks and equipment and such going down the road. And said, “Goodbye.” And here I was, with Howard Roe and three men to run the park. [Laughs.]

Well, we did our best, and finally next year we got a little money, a little more money, and I was able to hire seven guys. See, that was the years of ’37—no, ’39, ’40, ’41. The FCA [fire control assistant] at Vallermo was going to leave, so I was asked if I would like to move down there, which I did, and we moved down to Vallermo as the fire control assistant.

Do you want to stop now?

[Tape interruption.]

MURPHY: All right.

GRACE: After the experience at Big Pines Park, why, Bill Mendenhall, who was supervisor and the only supervisor I ever worked for on the Angeles, told me that he would get me a job as a JF, junior forester, as soon as I got my grade. Well, I flunked the first time, and that was the seven-hour exam. I got a grade of 62 on that. Then they did away with that exam and went to, oh, an intelligence exam, I guess. Boy, I sat at home and I took two weeks off, and Dot just threw the book at me, and I passed. And so when I moved onto Vallermo, why, Bill said, “Your name is coming up.”

MURPHY: On the register?

GRACE: Yes. And he said, "Don't be surprised if you get a call." So the first call I got was from the Park Service, wanting me to go as superintendent of the—oh, the Arches National Monument in New Mexico or Arizona—I forget which it is. [Transcriber's note: It is in Utah.] And I talked to him quite a while, and I said, "No, I'm making that kind of a salary here. I don't want to go there" and decided I want to work for the Forest Service. Okay. So then came Christmastime, and Bill called me and he said, "I wanted to call you and tell you you've become assistant ranger on the Mount Baldy Ranger District, but you can't move into the house or take control of the job until probably the first of March." He said, "We're rebuilding the ranger station." They were fixing it up. So I said, "Okay."

So a ranger and I—the ranger was George Ramstead—he and I said, "Okay," so I worked up till about the first of March. Bill called me on the phone again, and he said, "Well," he said, "you can move now, but you're not going to Mount Baldy." I said, "Well, where am I going?" He said, "You're going to Sierra Madre as the district ranger." And I about dropped dead, because anybody going from a guard into a ranger job was unheard of.

MURPHY: But you had an appointment then.

GRACE: Yes.

MURPHY: Permanent full time?

GRACE: Yes. And that had become effective—the permanent full time became effective the first of January. So I moved down there to Sierra Madre on the Santa Anita Ranger District, and I moved down there the first of March, and Dot came down shortly afterward. We really loved it there because it was a beautiful ranger station, and it was set up on the hill. It overlooked the whole valley.

MURPHY: On the Angeles.

GRACE: Angeles, yes. We really enjoyed the setup there. I had an FCA who was an old-time FCA and worked on a number of forests, by the name of [Thomas] “Tom” Henderson. Tom lived in Sierra Madre and had been a member of the Sierra Madre Water Department when it was first established, so he knew everybody in the country.

MURPHY: FCA is fire control assistant.

GRACE: That’s right, yes. Each district on the Angeles had an FCA, and three of the districts had assistant rangers in addition to FCA.

So I had Tom, and we went to work. The ranger station was really run down. The guy that was ahead of me evidently didn’t care much about the job. After I’d been there about a month, why, Bill came up and said, “Now, I don’t know whether you know or not, but the Army is going to build a firing range and a lot of other stuff right at the edge of the forest on your district.” And he said, “I want you to build a fire break” up these various ridges and back down in kind of a V-shaped deal. It was about a mile and a half up to the top of the V, another mile and a half back down. He said, “That’s one of the reasons I wanted you on this job, was because knew you could run this outfit and build a fire break.”

So he sent guys from all over the forest over to work for me. We built the fire break, got it going, then the Army moved in, and the agreement was they were not to fire any—oh—

MURPHY: Tracer—

GRACE: —tracer bullets in this firing range. So they moved in, and they started using the range. They had all kinds of stuff back in it that was kind of secretive. They had a big deal. They invited all the guests from all the cities around there to attend the opening of the firing range and the—what do you call it, the course where they lie down under fire?

MURPHY: The obstacle course.

GRACE: Obstacle course, yes. And so they told me they were going to open it up. I said, “Now, you remember there’s no tracer bullets.” “Oh, no, we can’t fire without tracer bullets.” And I said, “Well, you said you would and you signed this agreement that you wouldn’t.” “Well, who’s the Forest Service and what do they amount to?”

So I went back and called Bill Mendenhall, and Bill said, “I’ll send the assistant supervisor over and you go down and talk to this guy.” I talked to him on the phone. He was a colonel. So Bill Peterson was the assistant supervisor, and Bill came down, his jovial—you know him. [Chuckles.] He said, “Let’s go down and talk to this guy.” So we went down and talked to him, and I told him what the deal was.

We got down there, and so Bill Peterson said to the colonel, “We’re very glad to have the opportunity to talk to you about this. Now, the district ranger, Harry Grace, will tell you what it’s all about.” [Laughs.]

MURPHY: That’s Bill.

GRACE: That’s Bill, all right. And so I was a little flabbergasted, because I thought *he* was going to do it. So I started in, and I told the guy. So finally the guy said, “Well, okay, we won’t,” and they didn’t. They were very good about it. We went along on our business. I went along on the business, managing the ranger district, and I enjoyed it very much. It was a fine district. It was the last horse district on the Angeles, and that horse was going to disappear that year. We had one patrolman who was on horse, and the rest of the district, we had to go into other districts to get to it by road, going around the edge of it. I enjoyed it very much. It was the kind of country that I had hiked over and spent time on for years. I knew a lot of the people, so

we got along fine there. We had a good time, and the people in Sierra Madre were very good. And living in a little town like Sierra Madre was wonderful.

Everything was going fine until in February, Bill called me up and said, “Harry, you gonna be around today?” “Yes.” “Well,” he said, “the chief of personnel, regional office, would like to visit you.” I said, “Fine.” He got to the ranger station, and [unintelligible] said, “I’m going to let”—and I’ve forgotten this fellow’s name; he’s a fine guy; he was the chief of personnel. “Let him tell you what we’re thinking about.” I wondered, *What the hell is going on now?*

So he said, “Well, you know and realize that we’re at war,” and I said, “Yes.” And he said, “We’re having to cut back, and so we’re going to reduce the number of ranger districts on many of the forests.” And he said, “The Angeles is due to lose this district, and I want to talk to you about where you want to go.” Not telling me, “You go here,” [but] “Where do you want to go?” And I about dropped over. I said, “I haven’t thought much about it because I didn’t realize that the district was going to be folded up.” So he said, “Well, where do you want to go?” And I said, “I want to go up to Northern California.” Bill kind of grimaced a little, and he said, “Where do you wish to go?” I said, “I don’t know much about it, but I don’t think I want to go much further north than Lake Tahoe.” Well, he said, “We’ll see what we can do.”

So in about two weeks, I get a call from Bill. Said, “Well, you’re moving to the El Dorado as a ranger on the Lake Valley Ranger District, which was east end of Lake Tahoe.

MURPHY: What year was that?

GRACE: That was in—I have to count back now. Put it on hold while I count back.

MURPHY: [Chuckles and keeps the tape running.]

GRACE: Let’s see, it was ’43.

MURPHY: Nineteen forty-three.

GRACE: So I went up to the El Dorado on the train, and I got there, and the supervisor wasn't there; he was at a supervisor's meeting. So they said, "You can't go to the ranger station anyway, because it's snowed in, and so you'll work here in the supervisor's office." So I worked a week in the supervisor's office, and about went nuts. I did do some good work there in that I got acquainted with a number of people and could talk to them, which was much easier than had I got on the district and then had to talk to them on the phone.

He finally came. Ed Smith showed up on Saturday and came over to where I was staying and introduced himself and said, "Now, we can't get up to [Meyers? Myers?]"—which was the name of the city there or the post office—"until about two weeks, but in the meantime, I want you to work with me in doing some work on water rights and water development." I said, "Okay."

So I did, and then he told me the following week, "Well, the road is open. We can get in there now." So I went up and went to the Lake Valley Ranger Station. It's a beautiful spot, and I was very happy with it, and met Rex [Quiberg?], who was the fire control assistant.

MURPHY: Yes, your lifelong friend.

GRACE: Yes. And his wife, Alice. They had been in there all winter. Ed stayed a couple of days, and we went around. He introduced me to people, and then he disappeared. When he disappeared, why, he said, "Now, I have a lot of confidence in you, but," he said, "I don't want you to make a single decision on this ranger district for the first month you're here." He said, "You talk to Rex and ask Rex what he thinks about it, and if Rex says okay, go ahead." So I did. And Rex is a wonderful guy. He knew the district well, and knew the people and such.

At the end of the month's time, Ed called me up. He said, "The month is over with. I talked with Rex, and he says you make all the decisions from now on." Well, it was the start of an interesting phase of my life, working for Ed Smith. He was the most wonderful guy I ever met. Of all the supervisors I worked for—I liked them all—why, Ed was outstanding, and his wife, Lida. They'd worked on the forest nearly thirty years. He'd been there nearly thirty years. He knew everything there was to know about the forest, I think. He was a real fine guy to work for.

The first thing he did, though, which sort of amazed me and bothered me considerably, was every new ranger had to go through an examination with him, and the examination was two weeks' pack trip in the back country. Well, I wasn't worried about the pack trip because I had worked with stock quite a bit, and Rex told me—he said, "Now, this is what he's going to do." And so the time came to go on the examination, and he showed up with a forest engineer and a [joining?] ranger, [Milton] "Milt" Morris.

We took off down to [Meke's?] Bay, where we had the horses rented, and he said, "Do you know how to pack?" And I said, "Yes." "Well, you pack this one and I'll pack that one." "Okay." So I packed it, and everything hung on. [Chuckles.] And we started out. I said, "Well, Ed, don't you think we ought to lead these pack animals?" "Hell, no, who ever thought of leading a pack animal?" he said. "I never had a pack animal in all the years I worked for Forest Service that led." I said, "Well, okay."

So we went about twenty yards, and the mules took off in the brush. Well, I had a horse that was kind of spooky. It was a Forest Service horse. And so I shoved the spurs to her. She immediately tossed me in the brush. [Laughs.] Luckily, Ed and all the rest of them were up ahead, and they didn't see it. I come grabbing stuff and got out of the brush, and I got my horse

and gathered up the mules, and Ed said, "I've never seen anything like this, pack mules." (You had to lead them.) And I said, "I know from past experience that these mules that come from these pack stations are barn sour." He said, "What do you mean, barn sour?" I said, "Well, they don't want to leave their barn. Wait'll you get headed home. Why, they'll really take off and go home." He said, "Well, we'll lead 'em, then." So we led them.

I got out the first night, and Ed started cooking, and he told old Milt Morris, "Now, you take care of the horses." And, "Harry, you're going to do the dishes," and the engineer, whose name I can't remember—he wasn't there very long after I arrived; a pretty nice old guy. He said, "He's going to do some fishing, catch us some breakfast." So he went out and fished. He didn't catch a damn thing. I helped Ed.

We went out the next day, and met up with a cattleman. He was a gruff old German. He had lost a cow in there, had been in there all winter in that high country. It had found a spring, and it just stayed right at this spring. The grass or stuff didn't freeze up much around the spring, and had just mowed the country barren, and it was skin and bones. He didn't have his cattle in there yet, so he was picking them up. Well, he gave us quite a line. Ed says, "You want to watch him. He'll try to outlick you all the way along." I said, "Okay, we'll get along with him." We went on.

The third day out, why, Ed said, "Harry," he said, "you see that country over there? What do you think of that rock-bound country?" And I said, "It looks pretty nice from here." And he said, "Well, ask me a question about the land"—what do I want to call it? Legal—land descriptions. And I told him, and he got the map out, and I was a little bit shaky, and he said, "Harry," he said, "don't worry about things." He said, "You passed the exam. You don't need to worry. And quit shaking." [Laughs.]

So I felt better the rest of the trip. We had a real good trip. I was there two years and had a great time, learned a lot from Ed. One thing I never will forget about old Ed was that every time we came to a meadow and would be out riding, he'd say, "It's getting close to lunchtime." He said, "Wait'll we get to So-and-So meadow." And so we'd wait until we'd get over there. He'd say, "This is where we're going to eat," so we'd sit down and eat. We'd finished eating, why, he'd get up, he'd grab the ax off of the pack, and he'd say, "Now, you toss this stuff in a pile while I [core?] it." And he'd just mow down lodgepole pile that was encroaching on the meadow. We would leave with a pile of lodgepole ten feet high. And he'd say, "Now, the first chance you get when it snows, you come in here and burn that." Now, how in the heck could I ever burn that because I'd never get in here in the wintertime. It was, oh, eight, ten miles on snowshoes. So I suppose those old piles are still—well, they're probably pretty well rotted down.

But Ed was a wonderful guy to work for. I made a mistake with him. [There was] ski operator, who proceeded to tell me he was going to remove three summer homes right at the bottom of the ski lift, and I told him, "You can't do that. Those people have a permit." "I'm gonna do it." I said, "No, you're not." He and I got into a good argument about it. He left, and went down to the supervisor's office and told Ed. So Ed came up the next day, and he said, "I understand you had a discussion with this gentleman." I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "you were right in that he couldn't take those cabins out, but," he said, "that was a poor thing to do, talking to him as strongly as you talked to him." And he said, "Now, *we* made a mistake, and *we're* not going to make that mistake again." And I didn't! [Laughs.]

He was a real character. One day he called me up, and he said, "Can you be down here tomorrow morning at six o'clock?" I said, "Well, I'll try." And he said, "Okay." And he said,

“I want you to go down to the governor’s office with me.” I said, “Okay.” I didn't know who in the hell he was talking about, “the governor.” So I got down there, and we got in his car, and he took off for Sacramento. He said, “The governor wants to see me about some water problems, so we’ll go down there.” He had an appointment with the governor, Gov. [Earl] Warren. He was quite a guy.

He wanted to ask Ed about all this work he’d been doing on water in the forest. There wasn’t a water source up there that Ed didn’t have plotted on the map, and have records on it, and occasionally he had us measuring them with a can, measuring the flow. And so Ed started talking to him. It was a fifteen-minute appointment, and it got to fifteen minutes. One of the gals came in and said, “The time is such-and-such.” “Well, will you tell So-and-so,” the governor said, “that I’ll be with him in about a half hour?” He said, “I want to talk to Mr. Smith here a little longer.”

So he talked to Ed for forty-five minutes about water. He was really interested, and Ed was interested in everything that went on in the forest. Water, to him, was the lifeblood of California. As he was a kid growing up in—well, just north of Sacramento. They had a ranch up there. He was about eighteen or nineteen years old, and he got tired of working punching cows, so he went and applied for the Forest Service, and they gave him a job on the Lassen. He was up working on the Lassen for—well, they made him a ranger, and he was known—there were a lot of Smiths in the Forest Service, and they were all known by the name of the forest, like there was Lassen Smith, and there was Tahoe Smith, and there was Sierra Smith, and so old Ed was known as Lassen Smith.

He built a lookout station right up on top of Lassen, which was just completed when Lassen erupted and blew the thing all to hell. He went up there about a week later, and he said—

you wouldn't believe what he said. That was a terrible scene. He worked on the Lassen, I guess, two or three years, and then he became a ranger over at Truckee. He had the north end of Lake Tahoe. He was quite well known over in that country, and he married Lida, who was his wife. She lived in Truckee. She used to see him once in a while, when he'd come into town and such, and got acquainted with him. They're very fine people, wonderful people.

We lived out there at Meyers, and as you know, Meyers is quite a distance. Any time there was anything going on, a ranger meeting or anything, why, it was policy that the ranger and his family moved into Ed Smith's house. I didn't know that, and I came down there to the first meeting, and Ed says, "Where are you staying?" I said, "Over here at a place"—he said, "Well, you pack up and get over—you're staying at my house, and from now on, I want you to be our guest, every year down here at our meeting." That was a wonderful thing.

My kids got to know Ed Smith real well and thought of him as a grandparent. My daughter, Toni, used to call him "Mr. Smiff." I'd go out, and he'd come up to visit me at the station and talk business, and when I'd come back in or I'd be gone for a while, why, here he was, sitting on the floor, reading books, kids' books to my kids.

Let's take this [microphone] off. I got to—

[Tape interruption.]

MURPHY: Okay, we're on.

GRACE: Old Ed was quite a character. You know, he worked there thirty years, I believe. He was the third supervisor of the El Dorado. He was well liked by people. When he retired, he had

five parties that were given to him: one by the Forest Service, one by the City of Placerville, one by the cattlemen, one by the water people, and one by the loggers. I said “Lida.” I meant Lila. Lila, his wife—she said, “I got so damn tired going to parties” that she was getting pretty disgusted, but that’s how well people liked him. I never heard anyone ever say anything about him.

He used to—Rex told me this, and I saw it happen a couple of times—he’d go out in the field, and he’d see guys that worked on the road crew or various timber crews. He says, “Hi, how’s your wife?” Call her by name, and name off all their kids. Whenever we had a party, there was always a dance. He’d dance with every gal there was there. He’d introduce you, “This is Mr. So-and-so. Her name is Such-and such, and she’s got so many kids” and so forth. He knew everybody on the forest. He really was an extra-fine individual. I never heard anyone say anything bad about him in any way.

One story that—if we’ve got time to tell—I asked him one day. You know, you always had to order everything through him, and I said, “How’s chances of getting a trailer tape run with [unintelligible]?” I said, “This one we’ve got has been broken so many times and mended, I don’t think it’s quite accurate, and it’s got a twist in it. I’d like to get a new one.” “Okay.” So he orders me up a new trailer tape. And I get it. Shortly thereafter, why, he said, “Got a call from Tahoe, and they’d like to have you meet up with the ranger at the north end of the lake and meet with your joint permittee,” who was a sheep man. And said, “Lay out the boundaries of his range.” I said, “Okay.” He said, “Take along your surveying instruments and lay it out right.” So I did.

I got up there, and I met this ranger, whose name I won’t mention. He was kind of an officious guy, and he knew everything there was to know. He was an old-timer. He said, “Now,

this is the range,” and we went out and hiked around it and such. I said, “Where are we going to lay out the line between the two forests? It runs over onto the El Dorado part, and the boss wants that mapped.” “Okay.” So Ed Smith had told me before I went over there—he said, “Now, be careful of this guy.” He said, “If you’ve got anything he wants, he’ll find out some way to steal it from you.”

So I pulled out this trailer tape. “Oh, boy! Look at that! Pretty nice.” We went in, did the surveying. Got through about four o’clock, and he said, “Well, I’m going over to see this guy,” and this guy had a bar. This, I knew, because he had offered us a drink. I didn’t take a drink with him, but I knew he was going back over there. So he went over there, and I got my knapsack and had to hike about a mile back to the car. I got back to the car, and I started looking, and I didn’t have my trailer tape.

So I went back in, walked down to the area where—*I know I had it here because I rolled it up*. I knew damn well he’d stole it. So I went over to this guy’s camp, and he’s sitting there. I said, “Have you seen my trailer tape?” “No, haven’t seen a thing of it.” I knew he was lying about it. So I was so damn mad, I didn’t know what to do. I knew when I went back and told Ed Smith, he was going to give me the devil [for] trusting the guy.

So I got up to where our cars were parked, two pickups, and, *Oh, that dirty so-and-so*. So I pulled off his front wheel and his spare tire and put them in the back of my pickup, drove down the road about three miles down the road, and threw them off in a ditch and went on home [laughs] and told Ed about it. [Laughs.] He about died laughing. [Laughs.] And I never did hear anything more from this ranger.

But it was one party after another. I don’t mean “party” as party goes, but one enjoyable thing after another, working with him.

MURPHY: Where did you go after the El Dorado?

GRACE: After the El Dorado, I went to the Sequoia, as fire control. I didn't know anything about fire control officer's job. I'd been on a lot of fires.

MURPHY: What year was that, then?

GRACE: That was '46.

MURPHY: Forty-six.

GRACE: So we got there, and there was no supervisor. "Uncle Joe" [Elliot? Elliott?] had just retired.. They said, "They think that Paul [Sachum?] is going to be here." Some of the fellows were a little bit unhappy. I don't know the guy, so...And Paul finally arrived. I lived next door to him. I got to be a pretty good friend of Paul's. I liked him. I knew that he was always stringing people along. He was quite a character in many ways.

So I got to know Paul, and the first time I had with him was any time anybody died on the forest, and it seemed like the first year I was there, about half the forest died, or relatives, I had to attend the funeral. Some of them were Portuguese. There were a lot of Portuguese down at the lower end of the forest. I learned a lot about churches and religion, I'll tell you, then. But I worked there two years, and I liked it very much, and I wanted to stay there, and I got a call from personnel that says, "We want to send you back to the Angeles as fire control officer." And I said, "Oh, is there any way I can get out of this?" I said, "I've already put in a lot of years on the Angeles, and I like it up north."

So they said, "Well, we'll see if we can [unintelligible] over somebody else." I kept dragging my feet until finally they said, "You better make up your mind, or you'll never get another appointment." And that was the rumor in those days. So I said, "Okay, I'll go." So we

moved back to the Angeles, and I was eight years on the Angeles as fire control officer. I was getting damned tired of it.

MURPHY: You were fire boss on many fires, then?

GRACE: The rule on the forest was anything that went over 500 acres area was to be the boss. That was Bill's ruling. Some of the guys took it okay, and some didn't. I tried to ease it over for those that didn't, because I knew them all. You know, a funny thing about the Angeles: Bill Mendenhall was a wonderful guy. He'd started out on the Angeles when he was sixteen years old, as a packer. In those days, they had the forest split up into two ranger districts, one on the east side and one on the west side, and he'd been ranger at both of those for a number of years. He was well liked in Southern California. In fact, he was Mister Forest Service.

He spent most of his time working with people and very little out in the field after he'd been there so many years. The Board of Supervisors knew him personally, and I would occasionally go to the board meeting with him. I think it was about 1963 or '64. He had a stroke, a heart attack, and we had an assistant supervisor, but I was named acting supervisor over the assistant, which didn't go over very good with the assistant. But he wanted to know everybody on the forest.

At one time when I first went down there, everyone that was in a staff position had started on the Angeles. It was really an Angeles crowd. His idea was: *If I get a guy I like, I'll put him in a job that he can do, and then I expect him to stay there the rest of his life.* And that's just what he did with George Reynolds. He didn't do it intentionally. He didn't realize he was doing that. He just never gave it a thought. That was the way he operated in the old days, and so he went along with it. George came from Iowa State University as a guard for three years, came back as assistant ranger and then a ranger on two districts, then into the supervisor's office in

charge of recreation land, and he so badly wanted to go to the Indio. He wanted to be on the Big Pine. But he would never say anything about it.

And I'd say, "Well, George, go talk to Bill." I think Bill would have understood and been sorry to see him go, but would let him go. But he never did, and he lived and died on that forest. It's unfortunate. Well, that's the way Bill operated. He was a swell guy, and I liked him a great deal, and he did a lot for me. But he had this habit that he wanted guys he knew, and so he decided when he was having trouble with the other fire control officer and talked to the regional office about it—why, he wanted me.

MURPHY: You told me the story once when I was working for you that you ran the first office that cost over a million dollars. Could you share a little of that? Do you remember that?

GRACE: I'd like to forget it! [Both chuckle.] Yes, that was the second Iron Fork fire. The first Iron Fork fire was in '36, when I was a guard, and I was on it for nearly twenty-five days. And then the second was this—started across the canyon from the first one and burned up into some of our more extensive wilderness areas. It wasn't a wilderness as such in those days. I don't know whether it is now or not. But there were very few roads and very poor trails.

Bill Mendenhall was called back to Washington, and before he left, why, he named me acting again. When the fire came about a week later, I figured, *Well, this'll be another little—probably pick up another 15,000 acres or less.* It didn't. It went in all directions. It burned into an old 1919 burn, which Bill had been fire boss on. He called me from Washington to tell me about it. I knew about it because I had a copy of the fire report right in front of me, where it burned.

It just kept fooling around and fooling around. We used a lot of Indians on it. Brought in a lot of Indians from Arizona and New Mexico, and a lot of guys from a lot of other places

around here, [first name?] [Mullar?], for one. He got very unhappy with me because I sent him back to the same spot each day, which was way up, a helluva hike. It was a dirty trick to do, but he knew the way and what to go on. It was on an experiment station, so the experiment station was involved. They were very cooperative. I can't remember the guy's name who was in charge, but he was sure a fine fellow to work with.

But the thing that saved me on that fire was [Donald] "Don" [Dollar?]. In those days, we had a position we called chief of staff, and Don—I called him and asked him if he'd come over and be my chief of staff, and he said, "Sure." And so he took over, and he just sat in this one office at the experiment station with a blackboard and all the stuff that's going on, and a couple of telephones. And when we finally ended up, he couldn't speak, he was so hoarse. He really saved the day on that.

We had one incident where a group of Zuni Indians we thought were burned up when an area re-burned on them. We went through quite an ordeal with that. But in all, it was just another dirty fighter.

MURPHY: But it cost over a million dollars, the first one.

GRACE: Yes, the first one. I didn't realize that until I went back to Washington in '56 to accept a superior award. "Mack"—I can't think of his name—was the chief of the Forest Service then.

MURPHY: [McCardle?]

GRACE: I think it was.

MURPHY: Richard McCardle.

GRACE: Yes. And he says, "Oh, Harry"—I'd met him a number of times. He stuck his hand out. He says, "It's always good to shake the hands of the man who first spent the first million dollars on a fire." [Laughter.] I had a hard time living that down. [Laughs.]

MURPHY: While you were on the Angeles, I remember the author of *A Fireman's Guide*. You and another forester, I think from the Plumas—I forget his name [unintelligible]. I don't know if it was called *A Fireman's Guide* or *Handbook*.

GRACE: Yes, *A Fireman's Guide*.

MURPHY: Were you on the Angeles when you wrote that?

GRACE: Yes. We had the fire control man in the regional office was "Red"—oh, my God. My memory is going back on me. [Transcriber's note: Yeah, right!]

MURPHY: Farrell?

GRACE: No.

MURPHY: No? Before that.

GRACE: Before that. I kept after him and told hm, "All we got is this damn little flimsy deal that tells people how to fight fire. Can't we get somebody to write a manual on that?" And after about the third time I told him that, why, he said, "Yeah, you're elected." [Laughs.] "You're the man in charge. Who do you want to help you?" I said, "I don't know. I want some [unintelligible] guys." He said, "I'd like to suggest, then, that you have these two guys from the north help you." One was [Rupert] "Rupe" Asplund, who was an old-time Plumas man, and the other was [Joseph] "Joe" [Eely?], who was on the Mendocino, as fire control officer. We met for about a year and a half with a lot of other guys and wrote the damn thing. I was a hero, and really those guys did more than I did.

MURPHY: I remember seeing it. It was an 8-1/2 by 11 size. Now it's a *Fireman's Guide* that you can put in your back pocket. But you were the original author of that. That was [unintelligible]. What years would that have been, about?

GRACE: Well—

MURPHY: In the fifties.

GRACE: Fifty-five, '56.

MURPHY: Okay. That's just before you came to the [unintelligible].

GRACE: No.

MURPHY: No. Oh, you went up to the Shasta-Trinity.

GRACE: Yes, after I left the Angeles, I went to the—well, it's a long story, but I got damn sick of being fire control officer. I couldn't go anyplace, I couldn't do anything, because Bill expected you to be right there. He didn't fool around about it. And so I went to the regional office in sixty—fifty—what was it? Well, don't make any difference, the year. It was the next to the last year. I guess it was '55. And I went to personnel, and I said, "Is there any way I could get promoted back to a ranger? I'm getting sick of this job as fire control officer." And I said, "It's getting me down. My blood pressure—I'm having to take pills and such. "Oh, you can't do that. You can't take a demotion. You always got to take a promotion."

So I went back. Word got around to [unintelligible] that I was unhappy, so he started at the Shasta-Trinity at about that time. He called me up, or he called Bill, and Bill was very unhappy. He told him he wanted to offer me a job, so Bill had me call him, and I called him, and he offered me a job up there as—a dual job. He wanted me to be his deputy, and he wanted me to finish up a project which had been started by a bunch of guys on the Trinity River project, a series of dams, recreation areas, which they never did finish. The regional office and the Bureau of Reclamation were riding on Paul.

So I said, okay, I'd take it. So I went up there. We liked it up there. But as soon as I got through with the reclamation department, why, they made me officially, on paper, deputy supervisor, and I worked on that job until 1959, when I came to Stanislaus as supervisor.

MURPHY: I remember that. I was there.

GRACE: I remember one of the things that I always remember was you and a bunch of junior foresters were working for the timber man, and every morning you reported to the office in Sonora to get your orders of where you'd go. The thing I have always hated was having people work like that. I've always hated the ranger district that was in the supervisor's office. So I decided that you guys would all go out on the ranger districts, and I think most of the junior foresters were enthused about it. I never heard any complaints.

And then I wanted to get rid of that Sonora Ranger District, which we did. You were involved.

MURPHY: Yes. Do you remember the name process you went through to name it?

GRACE: Oh, gosh.

MURPHY: [Thomas] "Tom" Beard wanted to name it the Duck Wall District.

GRACE: Yes.

MURPHY: We came up with Miwok, and that [unintelligible] Harry [Hoffer?].

GRACE: Hoffer, yes.

MURPHY: [unintelligible] handed him the paper and so on. We [unintelligible]. There it is. You named the new Miwok District.

GRACE: Yes, it was quite a deal. Well, it was quite interesting coming to the Stanislaus. [first name?] [McCrary?] was a timber man, and I don't think he really paid much attention to anything but timber. He was a good man, I guess, all the way around. I always liked Mack. But it was a very interesting thing. And I think back, one of the things that really interested me was in the supervisor's office room there was a closet off to the right there—

MURPHY: This is the old office on Main Street?

GRACE: Yes. It was full of stuff. I [thought], *Gee, it looks like everybody just threw everything in there.* So I started in one night, and I started taking everything out of there. It was just like being an archaeologist. It was one layer of McCrory; next layer of—I've forgotten who his name was. Went down through all the different stuff I dug out of there. And one of the things I dug out of there was one supervisor had the idea that the Stanislaus was the "Gem of the Sierra," and he had a whole mess of maps. Must have been 200 maps piled there in that deal, all small size, "Gem of the Sierra." That was the most interesting digging through [unintelligible].

MURPHY: [As forest?] supervisor on the Stanislaus, the Job Corps was five miles—the Job Corps camp was created there on the forest. That might be interesting for historians. Any reflections on that?

GRACE: The Job Corps was something that I was really interested in because I had always been interested in the CCs [Civilian Conservation Corps], having lived next to a CC camp and worked in them and been with them for so many years. They did such a fine job, and we needed somebody like that on the forest, so when this came along out of the blue, we were picked as one of the forests to get a Job Corps camp. Our job was to pick a spot for it.

Well, first I thought the spot over in south fork of the Tuolumne would be the best over there, but then you and—

MURPHY: John Kennedy.

GRACE: —John Kennedy came up with this deal of Five Mile, which was so much better than where I had thought that that was where we selected and put the camp in. It was a real experience. I enjoyed it very much. I'm very sorry that it folded up. That was one of the things that I held against President [Richard M.] Nixon.

MURPHY: When he came in office, they closed [unintelligible] those camps.

GRACE: Yes, he closed them up.

MURPHY: [Robert] "Bob" [Reuters?] was the camp director.

GRACE: Bob was a fine guy. I remember the regional office called me up, and he said, "Who are you going to have for a director?" I said, "I don't know. I got to come up with somebody." And he said, "Well, we got a man we want you to look at. He ran a camp for the state, a boys' camp." I said, "No, I don't want him. I don't want one of those state guys." He said, "I wish you'd talk to him." So he came up and talked to me, and by gosh, it didn't take me long to make up my mind that he's the guy we wanted, so we hired Bob Reuters director, and he did a wonderful job. I've tried to find Bob. Do you know anything about him?

MURPHY: No, I don't. The last I heard, he was in the Denver area, and that's twenty years ago.

GRACE: Well, I saw him over in the Denver area. I called upon him, he and his wife while we were there. We were there two days and had dinner with them. But then when the Job Corps folded, why, he was out of a job, and he came back here and lived with his daughter. I guess it's been about ten years ago, I went down to a ham radio meeting in Visalia, and he was down there, not at the meeting but living there with her. So I called him up and talked to him and talked to his wife, [unintelligible], and she had had an operation on her throat, and she didn't talk like she did previously with it, [had] a hoarse voice. We were going to get together, but we never did. I had meetings there at night, and then I had to leave the next day and go home.

MURPHY: Another area that might be of interest on your tour as forest supervisor on the Stanislaus was when the Wilderness Act came in in 1962. I can remember you asking me, as one of your rangers, [unintelligible] to suggest the boundaries on that. I remember one, of Borland

Meadows. I said, “That timber on it should go in,” and it ended up I had already marked the timber. You had me go back in there with black paint—

GRACE: [Laughs.]

MURPHY: —and take out the white paint on those trees. But any reflections on the Wilderness Act on the Stanislaus?

GRACE: No, I don’t have any. I think it was a fine thing, and we did a fine job. The marking of trees, though, brings back some other things. Our boyfriend that was an assistant ranger over at Miwok there and then went to—oh, Summit. What the heck was his name? Beard.

MURPHY: Oh, Tom Beard.

GRACE: Tom Beard. You know, we had a whole mess of timber that was alongside the highway, from about, oh, I guess just above Strawberry until you get up to where the timber runs out near the pass, that really needed cutting, thinning. Barney Sweat, the good timber man that he was, said, “We got to cut that timber.” I said, “My gosh, Barney, if we cut that, the Sierra Club will be on our tail.” “Well, we gotta out it. We gotta get it out of there.” And he said, “It’s just a shame the way it’s going.” I said, “Well, okay. Let’s give it a try, but let’s do it this way: have nothing but tired vehicles, no Cats, and we mark the trees with paint on the back side, and when they’re cut, take the duff at the bottom of the tree and throw it all over the stump and cut them real close to the ground.”

Well, he didn’t want to get anybody to do that, but he did. He got some locals around here who were interested, and they did, and they did—well, the first thing the guys did [was] went out and marked it on the road side. I made them paint over that and mark them over. We cut that timber. I don’t know how many million board feet we took out of there, a lot of timber. The Sierra Club come up one day, and—the Sierra Club never wanted to do anything except on

Saturday and Sunday. They didn't have to work then, "but you guys can work on Saturday and Sunday." I wanted to play golf.

So they came up, and we went—took them [on] a trip clear up to above—well, the point where we called it quits on that marking, and they said, "My God, you as a forest supervisor have done the best job on the highway of anybody. Here, you've done this, and you haven't cut any timber along here, and"—[Laughs.] I think Barney had cut eight or nine million feet off of that darn thing. So we just laughed about it and thought that was real good.

MURPHY: [On?] those days on the Stanislaus, I think our annual cut was about 120, 140 million.

GRACE: About 140, and it went up when [President Ronald] Reagan got wanting to cut. It went up to 170.

MURPHY: Yes, I remember those days. Barney Sweat, the timber management officer.

GRACE: Barney was a wonderful guy.

MURPHY: Yes, he was. We made those cuts. All you hear a lot now is that's all we did, was cut timber, but we ran a multi-use forest. We did.

GRACE: Yes, I think we did. You know, I used to make Barney awful mad. Barney is the most wonderful guy to work for. He's a staff man. He'd want to put in a clear-cut here and there, and I'd say, "Okay, but no clear-cut larger than five acres." "What??" [Laughs.] He did. And made it work. Oh, he was a wonderful guy, that Barney.

MURPHY: Well, let's see, what year did you retire, then?

GRACE: Nineteen seventy-two.

MURPHY: Seventy-two, as supervisor of the [Stanislaus?]. How many year career was that, then?

GRACE: Thirty-eight years.

MURPHY: Thirty-eight years.

GRACE: And some months. I don't know. It was enough.

MURPHY: All right, let's pause for a second here.

[Tape interruption; then microphone noise for a few moments.]

MURPHY: There, we got it. Go ahead.

GRACE: When I worked on the Angeles there was hardly a week went by that I didn't go out and put on a program of some sort, show a movie or a talk or work with the Boy Scouts or something like that. I think that's one thing we don't do much anymore. I think one of the things that we don't do is contact the people and let the people know just what the Forest Service is going to do and does. You know, I think about this. When I first came here, the former supervisor said that he didn't go to the Board of Supervisors meetings, or he had been to one when he first came here. So I started going to the Board of Supervisors meetings. Not every meeting, but when I had anything to say, and I'd stand up and spout off, tell them, "We're going to cut timber up in such-and-such an area" or doing this or we're doing that.

When I retired and we had that party, the thing that impressed me most about the party was the fact that all five of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors came, and I've been to a lot of retirement parties for Forest Service people, and I can't remember one that the county Board of Supervisors ever attended. I'm sure that they did when Ed Smith retired and they had the party for the city of Placerville, but all the others, I've never seen. I think one of the reasons was that I tried to keep those guys informed and let them know what's going on. I, at the present

time, spend very little time—I know very little about what the Forest Service is doing, except I know they do not keep people informed.

We had a supervisor here a few years back, who lost his job because of that (so I heard), and I don't know how this one is doing that we have now, but he seems to be getting along with the people. But I think the big thing is our people seem to think, Hell, we're the Forest Service, and we can do practically what we want. We're actually working for the public, and we should get out there and talk with the public, meet with the public, and find out what their problems are as well as our own. We don't do that enough.

And down on the Angeles, this was one thing we did. For example, the Board of Supervisors down there are pretty high-powered people. When I was acting and Bill was sick, something came up that had to be attended to at the board, so I went down to meet with the board. I walked in the office. It was maybe forty, fifty people in there, visiting, to see the board in operation. The man who keeps the records and is the secretary of the board and such said, when the things kind of died down, said, "Excuse me," he said, "I've just seen Bill Mendenhall's assistant come in here. I'm sure he has something to say."

So I had something to say, and it was a matter of money. [Chuckles.] We were short of these undeposited funds, and we needed some, and I asked if there was any possibility of the board coming up with a couple of thousand dollars for this and told them what it was for. Fine. But you seldom see this. For example, we had five boards of supervisors on this forest. The Mariposa board—I went over there, and they said, "This is the first time we've ever had a supervisor attend our meetings." I went to the Alpine, and they said the same thing. The Toyabe never came. I never did get to really speak with the Amador because we traded little pieces of land that were Amador County to the El Dorado.

But that's the way—it appears to me that we don't let the public and the people who are interested in what's going on in the forest really know what's going on. All you read in the paper here, and that could be different elsewhere, is the fact that we're in trouble. Something's wrong. People are unhappy. A lot of these things could have been corrected had somebody got over there and talked to these guys. Maybe we *were* in the wrong and maybe we could have amended our ways of doing things to change it, but it just seems to me like it's a thing that goes on.

I read a great deal about our present chief, [Dale Bosworth], whom—I knew his father, of course, very well. He and I were guards on the Angeles, [Irv? Irwin?] Bosworth. Of course, he was supervisor at the El Dorado, and we'd grown up together. I don't know the present chief forester, but it seems to me that there's an awful lot of things going on that are unfortunate.

MURPHY: Yes, times have changed, yes. Your career from the 1930s to the 1970s was an expanding time in the Forest Service. It sounded like it was a great, great career.

GRACE: Well, you know, we had a lot of fun. There were a lot of things we could do. And one of the things that I miss nowadays is the fact that there aren't Forest Service families like there used to be. You know, in the older days, the thirties, there were five or six big families that were all Forest Service in the Region Five.

One was the White family, and I knew one of them, [Glenn? Len?] very well, and the girl—there was four boys and a girl, and the girl married the supervisor of the Tahoe. I guess he was up north, someplace up there first. And there was the Kloppenburg family, two boys, two girls, all Forest Service. [unintelligible]. It was just all kinds of—well, you didn't go far in those days, so [chuckles] the first girl that came along that would take up with you, why, you married, evidently.

MURPHY: [Chuckles.]

GRACE: And, by the way, one of the Kloppenburg women married Bull Durham, that I worked for first. She was a very fine person. He worked on the Mendocino, which was originally called the California National Forest. At that time, it was pretty wild. It hadn't been calmed down for too long.

MURPHY: I didn't know that, and I've worked there. It was the California National Forest?

GRACE: California National Forest.

MURPHY: I didn't know that.

GRACE: He worked over there, and he told me one day—he said he was out riding a range inspection, and he said somebody shot at him and shot the horn right off his saddle.

MURPHY: [Laughs.]

GRACE: Well, there were many old guys like that, and many a tale was told by those kind of people. They were interesting. That was half the fun of being in the Forest Service, was knowing about these people. Like, on the Angeles there, I knew a lot of old-timers. One was Miller E. Newman, who was known as "Mill" Newman, who was an old-time guard, a wonderful guy. Boy, he had friends from all over the country that visited him. He was one of these kind of guys that people just can't stay away from. When we were working on the Mount Wilson, he was one of the members, and we'd be on the road, right on the highway, working. There'd be eight or ten of us right along, doing jobs, cleaning up the place there. And people would come along and want to know something. Invariably, they stopped at Mill Newman. They'd ask him.

MURPHY: He used to tell me about a dispatcher he had at the Angeles, Shoemaker.

GRACE: Shoemaker, Virgil Shoemaker.

MURPHY: Yes. I met him one day, and I thought he was a myth. He was a great one, a great dispatcher.

GRACE: He was a very religious individual, but a wonderful guy. He did a lot of fine things. He developed a lot of fine things for the dispatchers that are still in use, methods and such. He was quite a guy. Yup.

MURPHY: Well, that'll conclude our oral interview.

GRACE: One thing more I want to say was that we talk about this time that I worked for the Forest Service, but we don't talk about the amount of fire that I was on. When I first began with the Forest Service, that was the thing that I wanted to do, was fires. I wanted to go on every fire. Of course, the dispatcher that I knew, [Ira] Roberts, knew that, and so I would go on damn near every fire they had. He would send me to these fires, and so I gained a lot of experience through being able to go there, off forest and on forest. A lot of interesting things developed out of them. Some of them, I don't dare tell you.

MURPHY: [Chuckles.] All right, now we'll conclude our oral interview with Harry Grace here in Sonora in Tuolumne County on April 29th, 2004. Very interesting, and we'll get this transcribed.

[End of interview.]

